

Level Three: Phrases

Let us now move on to the third level of grammar: phrases. People who do not understand grammar sometimes have the impression that phrases are difficult, but actually, there are only a few kinds of phrases, and each one can be defined in a single sentence. They can be strange at first, but they are not complicated.

Phrase: What is a phrase? A phrase is a kind of multi-word. It is a group of words that acts like one word. Imagine that the subject of a sentence was not one particular word but a group of words. Look at this sentence: “Chasing the whale exhausted the entire crew.” You see that the verb is *exhausted*, but what is the subject? *Whale*? No, it was not the whale that exhausted the crew, it was *chasing the whale* that exhausted them. The whole three-word phrase, *chasing the whale*, is the subject. We see three words playing the part of a noun/subject. This is interesting. It is as though the three words are glued together into a single noun: *chasingthewhale*. This group of words acts like one word. For this reason, we will put entire phrases into their own circles in our t-models, and that makes the secret simplicity of phrases beautifully visible:

