



Expanded noun phrases

A noun is a naming word: kite. A noun phrase is built around a noun: the kite. An expanded noun phrase adds words that tell the reader more about that noun, so they can picture exactly which kite you mean.

Build one up, a word at a time

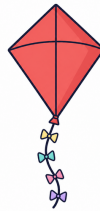
the kite



a noun phrase: the (determiner) + kite (noun)

- names the thing

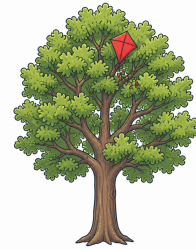
the small, red kite



add adjectives that describe the kite

- tells us what it is like

the small, red kite in the tall tree



add where it is

- tells us which one

Worked example

Expand the noun phrase "the dog" so a reader can picture it.

Find the noun: dog. Choose adjectives that add real detail: muddy, excited. Say where or what kind: with floppy ears.

Put it together and read it aloud: "the muddy, excited dog with floppy ears". Every added word tells us more about the dog, so it still makes sense.

The common mistake

"The dog ran very fast" is an expanded noun phrase because it is longer.

"Ran very fast" tells us what the dog did, not what the dog is like. The extra words in an expanded noun phrase must describe the noun itself: "the fast, brown dog". A longer sentence is not the same as an expanded noun phrase. (A comma goes between adjectives when they form a list, as in "small, red"; "a sticky chocolate cake" needs none, because chocolate says what kind of cake.)

Test yourself

- ☐ 1 What is the noun in "the tiny, green frog"?
- ☐ 2 Expand "a cake" with two adjectives.
- ☐ 3 Add where to "the cat".

Build your own

the __, __ dog

a __ cake with __

Next topic

Sentences with different forms

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Answers: 1. frog. 2. Any two that describe the cake, for example "a huge, delicious cake". 3. For example "the cat on the warm windowsill".