What Job Is It Doing in the Sentence?

Teacher		**Class**	Grade 7
Subject	ELA	**Topic**	Phrases and clauses
Date		**Room**	
Lesson length	60 minutes	**Country**	United States

Students learn what phrases and clauses do in general and in specific sentences. They discuss jobs, build sentences, and explain each added part.

Curriculum links

- Explain the function of phrases and clauses in general and their function in specific sentences. [1]

Learning objectives

- Students will explain how different phrases and clauses work in sentences generally.
- Students will identify phrases and clauses and explain their job in specific sentences.
- Students will expand plain sentences with phrases and clauses to add clear detail.

Success criteria

- I can tell a phrase from a clause and independent from dependent.
- I can explain what a phrase or clause does in a sentence.
- I can add a phrase and a clause to improve a sentence.

What students already know

Ask: What is a verb? What is a subject? Get one example of each from the class in 2 minutes.

Key words

phrase	a group of words that works as one part of a sentence [8]
clause	a group of words with a doer and an action word together [5]
independent clause	a doer-plus-action group that makes a full thought alone [3]
dependent clause	a doer-plus-action group that cannot stand alone and needs another part [4]

Materials

- Slides 1-5, 7, 10-12
- Worksheet Task A copies
- whiteboard and markers
- notebooks or paper

Before the lesson

- Load Slides 1-5, 7, 10-12 and check they display.
- Print Worksheet Task A, one per pair.
- Write the three main sentences on the board for groups to see.

Lesson outline

0–7 min **Starter** 7 min · Whole class

Hook students and surface ideas about parts that add detail but cannot stand alone.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 1 and read the title about small word groups building powerful sentences.
2. Say the hook sentence and ask what happens if the last part is removed.
3. Show Slide 2 mystery: Because I ate breakfast late - can it stand alone?
4. Take a quick vote and confirm it is a dependent clause that needs a main clause.

STUDENTS DO

1. Listen to the hook and turn-talk about the job of before dinner.
2. Vote on Slide 2 and explain why it cannot stand alone.
3. Share one idea about what detail was lost when parts were removed.

Say: If I say 'I finished my homework before dinner,' what job do those last two words do? What if I take them away? Turn and tell your partner. The sentence still works without them, but we lose an important detail.

Worked example: 'I finished my homework' -> doer = I, action = finished = clause that can stand alone. 'before dinner' -> no doer + action together = phrase that tells when. A phrase functions as a unit within a sentence and cannot stand alone [8].

Ask: What job do the words before dinner do? (They tell when the homework was finished.) · Why can't Because I ate breakfast late stand alone? (It has a subject and verb but does not express a complete idea, so it needs an independent clause [4].)

Check understanding: Thumbs up if you can say why the mystery group cannot stand alone. Reteach with I finished my homework if many are unsure.

Support: Give the sentence with before dinner underlined and ask: does it tell when or where? **Stretch:** Ask students to add a different when part and say how the meaning changes.

Use: Slides 1-2

7–20 min **Teaching** 13 min · Whole class

Teach the test for phrases and clauses and for independent and dependent clauses.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 3 steps and model the test aloud on two word groups.
2. Show Slide 4 fact and stress that every sentence needs at least one clause.
3. Think aloud with underlining of subject once and verb twice.
4. Summarize the general function: phrases add detail, clauses carry doer plus action.

STUDENTS DO

1. Copy the 5-step test from Slide 3 into notebooks.
2. Test each example with the teacher using hand signals for phrase or clause.
3. Repeat the rule that a sentence without an independent clause is a fragment.

Say: Here is our test. First find the action word. Then find who or what does it. Got both together? It is a clause. A clause is a group of words that contains both a subject and a verb [5]. Missing one or both? It is a phrase that cannot stand alone [8].

Worked example: 1. in the morning -> no doer + action together = phrase. 2. She left early -> doer = She, action = left = clause that expresses a complete thought, so independent clause [3]. 3. Because she left early -> doer + action but starts with Because and leaves you hanging = dependent clause that cannot stand alone [4]. Full sentence: Because she left early, she finished her work.

Ask: How do you know in the morning is a phrase? (It has no subject and verb together and cannot stand alone as a complete sentence [8].) · How do you know Because she left early is dependent? (It has a subject and verb but does not express a complete idea and needs an independent clause [6].)

Check understanding: Mini-whiteboards: hold up P for in the library, I for She studies hard, D for When she has a test. Reteach subject plus verb if mixed.

Support: Give clause cards with the subject underlined, since a clause includes both a subject and a verb [6].
Stretch: Have students add a phrase to She studies hard and explain what detail it adds.

Use: Slides 3-4

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20–35 min **Guided practice** 15 min · Pairs

Model how to name the job a phrase or clause does in a specific sentence.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 5 vote sentence Our team won the game with three add-ons.
2. Model the frame: this part is a phrase or clause, and in this sentence it tells when, why, or which one.
3. Show Slide 7 cards for Where/When, Which One, and How.
4. Lead pairs to decide the job of each add-on in that specific sentence.

STUDENTS DO

1. Vote with a partner on which add-on to choose and why.
2. Practice the frame aloud for in the last minute and because we never gave up.
3. Sort the add-ons into tells when, tells why, or describes which one.

Say: Good writers do not just find phrases and clauses. They ask what job it does here. A subordinate clause may serve as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb [5]. Prepositional phrases act as adverb and adjective phrases that connect nouns and pronouns to other words [5].

Worked example: Our team won the game in the last minute. in the last minute = phrase, no subject plus verb, in this sentence it tells when. Our team won the game because we never gave up. because we never gave up = clause with doer we + action gave, but incomplete alone, in this sentence it tells why, so adverb job. Phrases add information, description, or detail to a clause [8].

Ask: In this sentence, what does in the last minute do? (It is a prepositional phrase that tells when we won.) · In this sentence, what does because we never gave up do? (It is a dependent clause that tells why and needs the independent clause to make sense [5].)

Check understanding: Cold-call pairs to give the frame for one add-on. If jobs are vague, model where/when/why/which-one again.

Support: Provide the two sentences with the added part underlined and a word bank: where, when, why, which one. **Stretch:** Have pairs move in the last minute to the front and explain how the emphasis changes.

Use: Slides 5, 7

35–53 min **Main activity** 18 min · Groups

Explain in groups what each underlined phrase or clause does, then build and label sentences.

YOU DO

1. Put groups of three and hand out Worksheet Task A.
2. Display these three sentences: 1. Our team won the game in the last minute. 2. Our team won the game because we never gave up. 3. When the bell rang, we cheered loudly.
3. Direct groups to name each underlined part as phrase or clause and its job using the frame.
4. Direct groups to then complete Worksheet Task A to build three sentences and label phrase and clause.

STUDENTS DO

1. Discuss the three sentences and record phrase or clause plus job for each.
2. Underline subjects once and verbs twice to prove which parts are clauses.
3. Complete Worksheet Task A: build three sentences, write them out, and label the phrase and the clause.

Say: Your job is a detective job. For each sentence, decide: is the underlined part a phrase or a clause? Then finish this frame: in this sentence it tells where, when, why, or which one. Prove a clause by underlining the subject once and the verb twice.

Worked example: Sentence 3: When the bell rang, we cheered loudly. When the bell rang = doer bell + action rang = clause, but cannot stand alone, so dependent. In this sentence it tells when we cheered. we cheered loudly = doer we + action cheered = independent clause that acts as a complete sentence [5]. If the dependent clause comes before the independent clause, there must be a comma [4].

Ask: In When the bell rang, we cheered loudly, what does the first part do? (It is a dependent clause that tells when and must connect to the independent clause to form a complete thought [8].) · How do you prove a group is a clause? (Find a subject and verb pair, since a clause contains both a subject and a verb [8].)

Check understanding: Collect one frame answer per group on whiteboards. Check Task A labels for phrase versus clause before plenary.

Support: Provide two everyday sentences with the phrase or clause already underlined and a word bank: where, when, why, which one. **Stretch:** Have students rewrite the same sentence by moving the phrase or clause and explain how the emphasis changes.

Use: Slide 11, Worksheet Task A

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53–60 min **Plenary** 7 min · Whole class

Check that students can explain phrase and clause function in general and in specific sentences.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 10 compare of phrase versus clause for quick review.
2. Show Slide 12 quiz and ask both questions without giving answers first.
3. Link answers back to objectives and success criteria.
4. Set homework and collect Task A sheets.

STUDENTS DO

1. Answer the Slide 12 quiz with a partner and justify each answer.
2. Self-assess with fingers 1-3 against I can explain the job in a specific sentence.
3. Note homework in planners.

Say: Let us lock it in. A phrase has no subject plus verb together and cannot stand alone. A clause has a subject and a verb, and it can be a complete sentence or part of a complete sentence [3]. Every sentence needs at least one independent clause, or it is a fragment [6].

Ask: After school — phrase or clause, and why? (Phrase, no subject plus verb together [6].) · We stayed inside because it rained. Which part is dependent? (because it rained, it needs the main clause to form a complete sentence.)

Check understanding: Exit thumbs: can you explain the job of because it rained in that sentence? Pull a small group if many hesitate.

Support: Point to Slide 10 and reread the phrase and clause tests one step at a time. **Stretch:** Ask students to combine the quiz sentence with another independent clause using and, but, or so.

Use: Slides 10, 12

Common mistakes

Mistake	How to spot it	How to fix it
Thinking a long word group must be a clause.	Student labels in the last minute of the game as a clause.	Underline doer and action. No subject plus verb together means phrase, not clause [6].
Thinking a dependent clause can stand alone as a sentence.	Student writes Because we never gave up as a full sentence.	Ask then what? Show it depends on an independent clause to make sense [5].

Support

- Provide two everyday sentences with the phrase or clause already underlined and a where, when, why, which-one word bank.
- Give clause cards with the subject underlined and ready-made phrases like on the bus to build around a clear independent clause.

Stretch

- Have students rewrite the same sentence by moving the phrase or clause and explain how the emphasis changes.
- Have fast finishers build a compound-complex sentence and explain the link among ideas.

For the LSE or teaching assistant

Stay with the main activity groups. Prompt underlining subject once and verb twice, and cue the frame: phrase or clause, plus when, why, where, or which one.

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Check for understanding

Question	Answer
Is under the table a phrase or a clause? Why?	Phrase, no subject and verb together.
In We stayed inside because it rained, what does because it rained do?	Dependent clause that tells why and needs the main clause.
Add a phrase to Our class finished early and explain its job.	Example: in the library, phrase that tells where the class finished.

Homework

Starting with Our class finished early, add one phrase and one dependent clause, label each, and explain its job.

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