

Other ways of adding information to noun phrases 2: prepositional phrases, etc.

A

We commonly add information about a thing or person using a prepositional phrase. Often these have a meaning similar to a relative clause:

- What's the name of the *man* **by** the window? (or ... the man **who's** by the window?)
- It's in the *cupboard* **under** the stairs. (or ... the cupboard **that's** under the stairs.)
- She lives in the *house* **with** the red door. (or ... the house **which has** the red door.)

In some cases, however, these prepositional phrases do not have a corresponding relative clause:

- You need to keep a careful *record* **of** what you spend.
- There is likely to be an *increase* **in** temperature tomorrow.

We often prefer a relative clause rather than a prepositional phrase in non-defining relative clauses with **be + preposition** or with **have** as a main verb:

- Mr Chen*, **who was in** the store at the time of the robbery, was able to identify two of the men. (rather than ... Mr Chen, in the store ...)
- Davide Gallo*, **who has** a farm near Pisa, has decided to grow only organic vegetables. (rather than Davide Gallo, with a farm near Pisa, has ...)

B

In written English, particularly in academic writing, a series of prepositional phrases and relative clauses is often used to add information about a previous noun phrase. Note that prepositional phrases can also be used with an adverbial function (e.g. '... taken the drug *in the last six months*' in the sentence below):

- Doctors are contacting patients with diabetes who have taken the drug in the last six months.
- Scientists in Spain who have developed the technique are optimistic that it will be widely used in laboratories within the next decade.

We can also use participle clauses and noun phrases (see Unit 56) in a series of clauses / phrases which add information to the preceding noun phrase:

- The waxwing is the only bird found in Britain with yellow and red tail feathers.
- Mr Bob Timms, leader of the Democratic Party, MP for Threeoaks, has announced his resignation.



C

Note that adding a series of prepositional phrases can often lead to ambiguity. For example:

The protesters were demonstrating against the mistreatment of animals on farms. could mean either that the place the protesters were demonstrating was 'on farms' or that the animals were 'on farms'. We could make the sentence unambiguous with, for example:

- The protesters were demonstrating on farms against the mistreatment of animals. *or*
- The protesters were demonstrating against the mistreatment of animals kept on farms.



Exercises

57.1 Match the sentence halves (there may be more than one possible answer), adding an appropriate preposition. **A**

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|---|-------------------------------|
| 1 Maja's the girl ... | a ... green shirts. |
| 2 She's in the photograph ... | b ... the back garden. |
| 3 I plan to cut down the tree ... | c ... blonde hair. |
| 4 There's a team of people ... | d ... the canal. |
| 5 We took the footpath ... | e ... the piano. |
| 6 The children can't get over the fence ... | f ... Paris to Lyons. |
| 7 Go along the lane ... | g ... the houses. |
| 8 Nico's a boy... | h ... New Zealand. |
| 9 Follow the main road... | i ... the pool. |
| 10 She's a teacher... | j ... a quick temper. |

1 + c Maja's the girl with blonde hair.

57.2 Rewrite the sentences in 57.1 using defining relative clauses. **A**

1 Maja's the girl who has blonde hair.

57.3 Complete the sentences by adding the information in brackets. Use relative clauses (Unit 53), additional noun phrases and participle clauses (Unit 56) and prepositional phrases (Unit 57).

1 Police are questioning men ... between 25 and 30 living in the village, who are known to have a criminal record.

(The men are between 25 and 30. They live in the village. They are known to have a criminal record.)

2 Teachers

(The teachers work at Queen's College. Queen's College is in the city centre. The teachers went on strike last week. They have appointed Kristina Borg as their spokesperson. She is the head of English.)

3 Marge Scott

(Marge Scott has died. She was aged 95. She was educated at Marston College. She was the first woman to be educated there. Marston College is in south Wales.)

4 The conference

(The conference was held in Singapore. It approved the world trade agreement. The agreement was drawn up by European and Asian states. The conference has now ended.)

5 A book

(The book is on gardening. It is called All about Plants. Anna wanted to borrow it. It wasn't available in the library.)

6 A painting

(The painting was found in a second-hand shop. It was found by Lara Gruber. She is an antique dealer. She is from Austria. The painting is thought to be by J.M.W. Turner. Turner was a British landscape artist.)

57.4 Why are these sentences ambiguous? Can you rewrite them to remove the ambiguity? **C**

1 A man was talking with a grey suit.

2 A lorry was stopped by a police officer carrying thousands of stolen cigarettes.

3 I discussed my plan to decorate the room with my parents.