

Revision Card – Using Noun Phrases

Making Words Work Harder



Poets tend to use **less words** than writers of prose.
They are often limited by features such as line length, rhythm and form.
Poets use less words so **their words have to work harder!**

Instead of writing,
I think that Golden Time is very valuable and each minute is like a precious jewel.

A poet might write,
Golden Time - jewelled minutes

These words are more powerful because the image is condensed into few words.

Nouns and Noun Phrases create Powerful Images



You can check which words are part of the noun phrase by replacing them with a pronoun.

The precious, ruby ring was hidden.

I found a rather unusual gem.

What is the **head noun** in each noun phrase?

Which words make up the **noun phrase**?

The words in the noun phrase depend on the **head noun** and build on its meaning.

How to build Noun Phrases

Add words before the **head noun**:

The rocks surrounded the beach.

The horribly craggy rocks surrounded the beach.

Add words after the **head noun**:

The rocks, with sharp points and deep grooves, surrounded the beach.

The rocks, like ancient sleeping trolls, surrounded the beach.

Or you can do both at once:

The horribly craggy rocks, with a sharp points and deep grooves, surrounded the beach.



Noun Phrases to Convey Information Concisely

I held onto the **fin**.

I held onto a scarred fin.

I held onto a scarred, firm fin.

I held onto a scarred, firm fin of a breaching whale-shark.



What do we know about the **fin**?

There is a lot of information contained in this expanded noun phrase.

*It is one of a number of fins.
It is scarred.
It is firm.
It belongs to a whale-shark.
The shark is breaching.*