Noun phrase and prepositional phrase

A phrase is a group of words that does not include a subject and verb. Note that if the group of words contains a subject and a verb, it is considered as a clause.

A phrase doesn't make complete sense, but it must still make some sense.

The groups of words given below are not examples of phrases because they do not make any sense.

- the on roof
- girl a beautiful
- the bench on

In order to make sense, the words in these groups need to be rearranged.

- on the roof
- a beautiful girl
- on the bench

There are different kinds of phrases. A good understanding of their structure and function in a sentence will boost your confidence in writing sentences that are sound in structure and form.

Noun phrase

A noun phrase obviously has a noun. It also includes some associated modifiers.

Examples are given below
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A lovely long drink
A wet morning
Black and white socks
The tall and handsome professor

The modifiers that accompany a noun can be adjectives, participial phrases, infinitive phrases or prepositional phrases.

Prepositional phrase

A prepositional phrase consists of a preposition and a noun or pronoun that acts as the object of the preposition. This object is sometimes modified by an adjective or two.

Examples are given below

Across the valley
At a table
Outside the building

A prepositional phrase usually answers the question ‘when’ or ‘where’

Examples are:

In the sun (where)
In the morning (when)
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At his bedside (where)

In thirty minutes (when)

A prepositional phrase coming at the beginning of a sentence is usually separated by a comma.

Except John, everybody turned up.