Noun phrases

Study the following sentences:

I want something.
I want to go home.

In sentence 1, the word something is a noun and is the object of the verb want. In sentence 2, the group of words to go home is the object of the verb want and hence it does the work of a noun. The group of words ‘to go home’ is therefore a noun phrase.

Definition
A noun phrase is a group of words that does the work of a noun.

More examples of noun phrases are given below:

I enjoy playing tennis.
Did you enjoy reading this book?
He hopes to win the first prize.
He refused to answer the question.
I promise to come again.
I hate having to punish my servants.
The wicked vizier loves getting people into trouble.
Horses prefer living in dark stables.
I should hate to do such a thing.
He denied stealing the money.

Exercise
Complete the following sentences by supplying suitable noun phrases.

1. I want ————
2. I don’t expect ————
3. We all hope ————
4. ———— surprised me.
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5. Do you wish ————?
6. My father hates ————.
7. ———— gives me no pleasure.

Answers

1. I want to become a great writer.
2. I don’t expect to finish the work today.
3. We all hope to succeed in life.
4. His winning the first prize surprised me.
5. Do you wish to go home?
6. My father hates having dinner so late.
7. Having so many children to look after gives me no pleasure.