

## TO THE TEACHER

By Lesson 17, we have looked at the main elements of noun boxes:

**Finding the Main Subject** (the noisy black bird, )

**Determiners** (the smartest student.) and

**Describers** including

**adjectives** (the busiest week) and

**nouns used as describers** (my coffee cup)

Still to come are prepositional phrases, gerunds, infinitives, prepositional phrases, and clauses.

**Noun boxes are not easy.**

Most students have trouble with **determiners**, especially the *articles* "a" and "the," *possessives* vs object and subject pronouns (he likes / his mother likes), and demonstratives, especially that, which has other uses

As far as **describers** go, there are a lot of them—many with

- *different suffixes* (-ic, al, -ful, -ive) plus the
- *comparatives* with their "-er/more" and "-est/most" distinction between short adjectives ("smart") and longer adjectives ("intelligent").
- The *word order* is strange to many learners who put describers after the noun, and partly because of this, it's hard for some students
- to find *the main word* in sentences that use a *noun as a describer* (a soup spoon, an English class.)
- On top of that, the describers must be in the right order (the beautiful little pink plastic doll)

**Main subjects** themselves might be *singular, plural, uncountable, gerunds, gerund phrases, or pronouns*.

- They are usually **at the end** of the noun box, but they might have
- a *post-describer* like
  - a **prepositional phrase** (the bird <with | the red head>) or
  - a **clause**. (the class that he likes the most is grammar.)

**Why do we care ?**

Lesson 17 shows students why we care about noun boxes. Along with verb phrases, noun boxes make up most of the English sentence. The word order and other rules are always the same. Although students won't know all there is to know to produce them, most of my students can describe the parts of the noun box and spot errors. After Lesson 17, most can identify the box's job in the sentence. The main uses are

TO THE TEACHER

Subject—Object—After a preposition— After a clause word— After an infinitive

**Activities**

- 1) On the board, expand a sentence. 2) Students label each box with its job. 3) Identify the word or structure that comes before the noun box. 4) Mark each word

Our soccer team won.  
 Our soccer team won the game.  
 Our soccer team won the game in the last minute.  
 Our soccer team won the game in the last minute to win the championship.  
 Our soccer team won the game in the last minute to win the championship because the goalie made a spectacular save.

Subject	Object	After preposition	After an infinitive
Dt Ds *	VxD	Dt * pr Dt Ds *	Vinf Dt *
Our soccer team	won	the game <in the last minute >	to win the championship

After clause word

CW	Dt *	VxD	Dt Ds *
[because	the goalie	made	a spectacular save.]

- 2) practice on a sentence in a book or magazine article.
- 3) practice on their own writing.
- 4) Hand out some skeleton sentences to groups of 2 or 3 and have them fill in the blanks with noun boxes that they make up.

\_\_\_\_\_ took \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_  
 in \_\_\_\_\_.

Why did \_\_\_\_\_ adore \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_

even though \_\_\_\_\_ never did \_\_\_\_\_.