Noun Phrases

What is a noun phrase?

A noun phrase is a phrase which includes:

1. a noun (also called head)
2. and optionally modifiers.

Examples:

- *Love* is *a beautiful feeling*. (*Love* is a noun phrase without modifiers. However, *a beautiful feeling* is a noun phrase that includes a noun, *feeling*, and the determiner *a* and the adjective *beautiful*)
- *My house* is over there. (*My house* is a noun phrase which consists of the noun *house* and a modifier - the possessive adjective *my*)

Possible noun modifiers

A noun phrase may optionally contain noun modifiers. If these modifiers are placed before the noun they are called **pre-modifiers**. However, if they are placed after the noun, they are called **post-modifiers**. Possible noun modifiers include the following:

1. Determiners:

- articles (*the*, *a*),
- demonstratives (*this*, *that*)
- numerals (*two*, *five*, etc.)
- possessives (*my*, *their*, etc.)
- quantifiers (*some*, *many*, etc.).

In English, determiners are usually placed before the noun;

2. adjectives (*the **delicious** food*)

3. complements, in the form of a prepositional phrase (such as: *the student **of physics***), or a That-clause (*the idea **that the world is a small village** *)

Functions of a noun phrase

Noun phrases can function as subjects, objects:

1. *That sophisticated woman* is beautiful. (*That sophisticated woman* is a noun phrase that functions as a subject.)
2. I like *the book that you bought*. (*the book that you bought* is a noun phrase that functions as an object.)