~ Grammatical Terms and Diagramming Symbols ~
by Eugene R. Moutoux

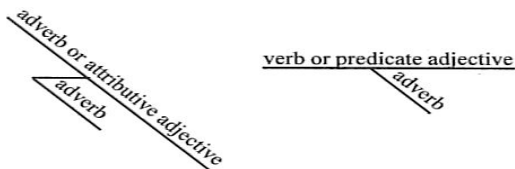*Words followed by an asterisk (*) are defined on these pages.*

Absolute phrase - a phrase* that has a logical, but not a grammatical, connection to the rest of the sentence*. See *nominative absolute*.

Active voice - a characteristic of transitive verbs* that indicates the relationship of the verb* to the subject* as doer or performer. A transitive verb is in the active voice* when the subject of the sentence* is the agent, i.e., when the subject is doing something.
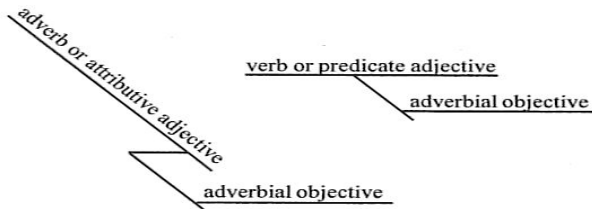
Adjective clause - a clause* that functions as an adjective* by modifying (qualifying, describing, limiting) a noun*, pronoun*, or equivalent expression. There are two types of adjective clauses: 1) *relative clauses** and 2) clauses linked to nouns in other clauses by means of a *relative adverb**.

Adjective - a word that modifies (qualifies, describes, limits) a noun*, pronoun*, or equivalent expression. One differentiates between attributive adjectives* and predicate adjectives* according to their position relative to the modified nouns and pronouns

Adverb - a word that modifies verbs*, adjectives*, and other adverbs, as well as prepositions*, prepositional phrases*, conjunctions*, clauses*, and sentences*

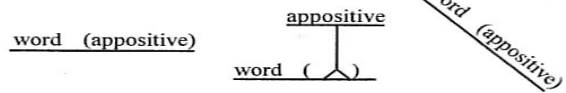
Adverbial objective - a noun* or pronoun* used as an adverb* (indirect objects* are included among adverbial objectives)

Antecedent - a word, phrase*, or clause* to which a pronoun* refers (for which a pronoun stands)

Appositive - a word or group of words whose purpose is to identify or explain another word or group of words in the same sentence. The appositive usually follows the word(s) with which it is in apposition. Appositives can be restrictive or non-restrictive. An example of a restrictive appositive is the word *John* in *his brother John* (he has more than one brother; no comma is used between *brother* and *John*); on the other hand, *John* is a non-restrictive appositive in *his*
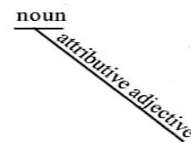
brother, *John* (John is his only brother; a comma separates the two nouns).

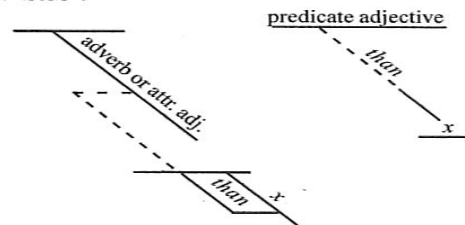
Article - definite (*the*)* and indefinite (*a, an*)*

Attributive adjective - an adjective* that either precedes the noun* or pronoun* it modifies (*a pleasant evening, a certain someone*) or comes immediately after it (e.g., *there will be time enough for that tomorrow* or *let's do something different*)

Auxiliary verb - a helping verb. Auxiliary verbs help to form such things as tense*, voice*, emphasis, and mood*. They are underlined in the following examples: the present progressive* *am seeing, are seeing,* and *is seeing*; the emphatic *do see* and *did see*; the perfect tenses* *has seen, had seen,* and *will have seen*; the future* *will see* and *shall see*, the passive* *is seen, was seen, will be seen,* etc.; and the modal* forms *must see, can see, may see,* etc.

Clause - a group of words with a subject* and predicate*

Comparative degree - forms of adjectives* and adverbs* with the suffix -(e)r or with a preceding *more*, e.g., *larger, more beautiful, faster, more abundantly*; also *worse*. Comparisons using the comparative degree* and the relative adverb* *than* are called unequal comparisons*.

Complement - a term that includes subjective complement* (predicate nominative* and predicate adjective*), direct object*, indirect object*, objective complement* and retained object*

Complementary infinitive - an infinitive* used to complete certain verbs*. The complementary infinitives are underlined in the following examples: *they ought to study, she used to collect stamps, I have*