

Chapter 14: The Parts of Speech

Verb Phrases

A **verb phrase** consists of a main verb preceded by at least one **helping verb** (auxiliary verb).

Helping verbs: *has been*

Verb phrase: Our class *has been reading* a story by Nicholas Mohr.

Sometimes a verb phrase is interrupted by another part of speech.

Have you ever read any of her works? [The verb phrase *Have read* is separated by the pronoun *you* and the adverb *ever*.]

NOTE: The word *not* is never part of a helping verb, even when its contracted form, *-n't* is joined to a verb.

Exercise A Underline the verb phrase in each of the following sentences. Then on the line provided, write the helping verb or verbs.

1. The South Bronx was known to Puerto Rican immigrants as El Bronx. _____
2. After World War II, many Puerto Ricans could buy inexpensive, one-way tickets to the mainland of the United States. _____
3. Some Puerto Ricans had already settled in El Barrio, in Spanish Harlem. _____
4. Because of the language difference, Spanish-speaking Americans may have felt like strangers in their own country. _____
5. That couldn't have been easy for them. _____

Exercise B Underline the ten verb phrases that appear in the following paragraph. Be sure to include all the helping verbs.

No one has ever enjoyed their own mistakes. And admitting a mistake can take real courage. Because of their pride, some people will not admit their errors. Fear of exposure and ridicule may be another reason. Punishment might very well follow such a confession. As a result, a person may simply deny the results of an error. Yet honesty will often compel acceptance of one's mistakes. Most people do adhere to their consciences, which can override all the fears of confession. And of course, a desire for justice should be considered an important factor in owning up to the truth.