This handout summarizes the structure of five main types of constituents in English: noun phrases, verb phrases, prepositional phrases, adjective phrases, and adverb phrases. Many of these examples are drawn from Herman Wekker and Liliane Haegeman, *A Modern Course in English Syntax*, Croom Helm, London, 1985.

Common Abbreviations

Abbrev	**Meaning**	**Example**
Art	Article	the
N	Noun	frog
NP	Noun phrase	her pet iguana
V	Verb	hitchhike
VP	Verb phrase	bought a candy bar
P	Preposition	from
PP	Prepositional phrase	just after dusk
Adj	Adjective	grotesque
AdjP	Adjective phrase	electric blue
Adv	Adverb	exquisitely
AdvP	Adverb phrase	painfully slowly
S	Sentence	It found the crypt
S' *or* $\bar{\text{S}}$	S-bar	that all men are created equal

Noun Phrases

Function:	Specifier			Pre-modifier	Head	Post-modifier
Category:	Pre-determiner	Central determiner	Post-determiner	AdjP / ...	Noun	S' / PP / ...
Examples:		the			tramp	
	half	a			page	
		his			magazine	
	both	these		lovely	children	
			two		boys	with red hair
		that		German	girl	
	all	the	ten	French	soldiers	who survived the crash
					they	
			five	Dutch	students	of English
		no			milk	in bottles
					John	
					he	
		the tramp's			magazine	
		the			news	that he was ill

Verb Phrases

Function:	Specifier	Head	Complement	Adjunct
Category:	Auxiliary Verb(s)	Verb	AdjP / NP / S' / PP / ...	NP / PP / AdvP / ...
Examples:		laughed		
		was	interesting	
	must have been	reading		with great interest
	may have	told	the girl an interesting story	
	would have	called	her a clever girl	if she had known the answer

Prepositional Phrases

Function:	Specifier	Head	Complement
Category:	AdvP / NP	Preposition	NP / S' / PP
Examples:		with	red hair
	right	on	the spot
	two minutes	before	her arrival
		about	this topic
		regarding	whether he might come
		inside	with her

Adjective Phrases

Function:	Specifier	Head	Complement
Category:	AdvP	Adjective	PP / S'
Examples:		young	
	extremely	handsome	
		worried	about the future
		afraid	that she might die
	rather	fond	of the sea

Adverb Phrases

Function:	Specifier	Head
Category:	Adverb	Adverb
Examples:	very	recently
		typically
		then
	extremely	slowly