Expanded noun phrases to convey information concisely
Joseph Coelho's Poetry

Making Words Work Harder

Poets tend to use **less words** than writers of prose.

They are often limited by features such as line length, rhythm and form.

Poets use less words so **their words have to work harder**!

Instead of writing,

I think that Golden Time is very valuable and each minute is like a precious jewel.

A poet might write,
Golden Time - jewelled minutes

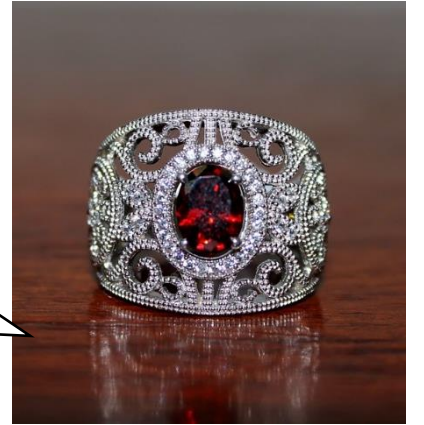These words are more powerful because the image is condensed into few words.

Nouns and Noun Phrases create Powerful Images

The precious, ruby <u>ring</u> was hidden.

I found a rather unusual gem.

You can check which words are part of the noun phrase by replacing them with a **pronoun**.

What is the <u>head noun</u> in each noun phrase?

Which words make up the noun phrase?

The words in the noun phrase depend on the <u>head noun</u> and build on its meaning.

How to build Noun Phrases

Add words before the head noun:

The rocks surrounded the beach.

The horribly craggy rocks surrounded the beach.

Add words after the noun:

The rocks, with sharp points and deep grooves, surrounded the beach.

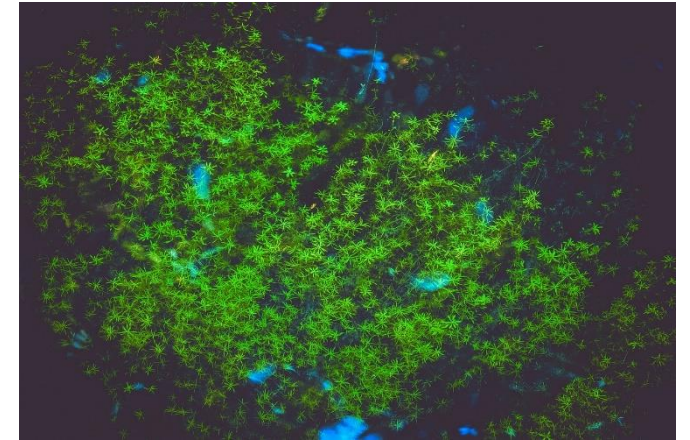The rocks, like ancient sleeping trolls, surrounded the beach.

Or you can do both at once:

The horribly craggy rocks, with a sharp points and deep grooves, surrounded the beach.

How to build Expanded Noun Phrases

Different types of words, phrases and clauses can all be used in an expanded noun phrase.

determiner
adverb
adjectives

The rather tangled slimy weeds tickled my toes.

weeds

The weeds like an underwater forest swaying in the waves tickled my toes.

Prepositional phrase

The weeds, which were creating dark shadows in the water, tickled my toes.

Relative clause

Expanded Noun Phrases

You can develop an **expanded noun phrase** by adding a prepositional phrase.

*a diamond **clock***

*a diamond **clock** <u>in</u> my imagination*

*a diamond **clock** <u>with</u> gleaming hands*

*a diamond **clock** <u>from</u> my dreams*

The prepositional phrase
modifies the **noun**…

and expands the image of the noun.

noun phrase

a diamond <u>clock</u>

Try adding your own
prepositional phrase.

Prepositions
with, of, by, from, on, under, below,
between, inside, next to, over, by, in

Expanded Noun Phrases

You can develop an **expanded noun phrase** by adding a relative clause.

*a diamond **clock***

*a diamond **clock** that counts each minute*

*a diamond **clock** which lives in my head*

*a diamond **clock** whose numbers are magical*

The relative clause modifies
the **noun**…

and expands the image of the noun.

noun phrase

a diamond clock

Try adding your own
relative clause.

Relative Pronouns (& Relative Adverbs)
who, which, when, whose, that
(where, when)

Spotting **Expanded Noun Phrases**

Spiders have [them].

The body is [it].

A web is [them].

The test: Which pronoun could replace each noun phrase? Does the sentence still work?

Identify the <u>head nouns</u>.
Which other words make up the noun phrase?
Hint: Can you replace them with a pronoun?

ANSWERS

Noun Phrases to Convey Information Concisely

I held onto the fin.

I held onto a scarred fin.

I held onto a scarred, firm fin.

I held onto a scarred, firm fin of a breaching whale-shark.

What do we know about the fin?

There is a lot of information contained in this expanded noun phrase.

It is one of a number of fins.
It is scarred.
It is firm.
It belongs to a whale-shark.
The shark is breaching.

Noun Phrases to Convey Information Concisely

The cat is a cushion.

The cat is a warm purring cushion.

The cat is a tightly curled, warm purring cushion.

The cat is a tightly curled, warm purring cushion like a furry spiral.

Try combining this information to create an expanded noun phrase.

The information is concisely combined.

It purrs.
It is warm.
It curls round tightly.
It is like a spiral.
It is furry.