Verb Phrases: Sub-Categorized Items

You may think that we still have a long way to go as we have only addressed the noun phrase. Have I got a surprise for you! Lets take a look at several sentences:

The boy ate the sandwich.
The boy ate my rather delicious lunch.
The boy sat on the stool in the lab down the hall around the corner.
The boy was very quit . (loud, obnoxious, small).

If you look closely at these sentences you will notice that all of the verb phrases in these sentences(the "predicate" of the sentences) include the verb itself (we'll talk more about the verb itself over the next day or two) and some items that we have already seen when discussing sentence subjects. Specifically:

Noun Phrases…

The boy ate the sandwich.

The boy might have eaten my rather delicious lunch.

Prepositional Phrases…

The boy had been sitting on the stool in the lab down the hall.

and Adjective Phrases.

The boy was very quiet.

A verb phrase then could be described as follows

VP➔(Aux) V Subcat. Items

Where " Subcat. Items" could be a NP, AdjP, or PP . We'll use this "Subcat. Items" term for a bit because the situation is actually a little more complex than it looks right now….but we'll get to that later. For the time being let's diagram a few sentences using what we know so far:

1. The book on Mr. Jones' desk is a rather compendious dictionary.
2. It has many pages of useful information about word in the English language.
3. The big, musty thing is very heavy.
4. This supposedly complicated grammar is not very difficult.
5. Other students have diagrammed this very long adjective-intensive, mind-numbingly-difficult, sometimes awkward sentence on the old-school, slate blackboard of Mr. Jones' classroom on the second floor of Mackenzie High School in Deep River.
6. I smell a pizza question.