

LESSON THREE: THE PREPOSITION

Prepositions are words used to show relationships between other words in a sentence. A preposition is never used alone in a sentence; it is used to introduce a prepositional phrase.

COMMON PREPOSITIONS

| | | | | |
|---------|--------------|--------|----------|-------------------------|
| about | before | down | of | through |
| above | behind | during | off | throughout |
| across | below | except | on | to |
| after | beneath | for | onto | toward |
| against | beside | from | opposite | under |
| along | besides | in | out | underneath |
| among | between | inside | outside | until |
| around | beyond | into | over | up |
| at | but (except) | like | past | upon |
| | by | near | since | with within, without |

COMPOUND PREPOSTIONS

according to
ahead of
aside from
because of
by means of
in addition to
in back of

in front of
in place of
instead of
next to
on account of
on top of
out of

Prepositions have different meanings, so you must be careful when you select a preposition. For example, notice how each preposition changes the relationship between "passed" and "City Hall."

The parade passed **near** City Hall.
The parade passed **by** City Hall.

The parade passed **behind** City Hall.
The parade passed **opposite** City Hall.

Prepositions travel in phrases! A preposition cannot operate by itself. The phrase is created in the following way:

| Preposition | + | (modifiers) | + | noun or pronoun |
|--------------------|---|--------------------|---|------------------------|
| down | | the | | street |
| under | | a large | | tree |
| near | | the long dusty | | road |
| to | | | | me |

The noun or pronoun in the prepositional phrase is called **object of preposition**.

| | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| above the trees | into the trap | inside the house |
| under the roof | after the game | beyond the fence |
| | between you and me | |

NEVER between
you and I !

EXERCISE ONE: Circle the 20 prepositions in the following sentences. Put parentheses around the 20 prepositional phrases.

1. The ticket holders waited patiently outside the theater.
2. A new dining room was built beside the old one.
3. The telephone book is under the table in the living room.
4. She placed the flower pots along the windowsill over the sink.
5. How did you get through the traffic jam?
6. The stamp show begins on Monday during vacation from school.
7. A new housing development has been constructed across the river from town.

8. Meet me in twenty minutes at the corner of Bay Street.
9. Let's study together before the math exam on Friday.
10. The exam, a test of two of the chapters from last week, was difficult.

EXERCISE TWO: Put parentheses around the 25 prepositional phrases in the following sentences and label the objects of the preposition OP.

1. Let's pick the strawberries near the fence.
2. The doctor's office is around that corner.
3. Opposite the old statue, you will see the library.
4. The broken lawnmower is behind the barn.
5. Above the entrance is a large warning notice.
6. I walked inside the building into a smoldering heat.
7. The building obviously had no air conditioning in the lobby.
8. What do you expect to buy in the village during our day in town?
9. The climbing party approached the Rockies near dusk.
10. This novel is a romantic tale of the Old South during the Civil War.
11. In the morning the cattle train continued its journey to the West.
12. The trunk in the attic contains some old dresses.
13. Just between you and me, I think the test on adverbs was easy!

"to buy" is an infinitive, not a prepositional phrase!

14. I crawled inside the large closet to see the old clothes against the wall in back.
15. Then I looked under the bed for a glimpse of the shoes she had hidden.

THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT PREPOSITIONS

1. A preposition without a phrase is an adverb. In other words, if the preposition has an object, it is a prepositional phrase; without the object, the preposition becomes an adverb.

EXAMPLES: We waited (**inside the house**). (prep ph)

but

We waited **inside**. (adverb)

The boy turned **around** and stared at us. (adverb)

but

The boy ran quickly (**around the corner**). (prep ph)

2. Prepositional phrases often travel in packs.

EXAMPLE: They rode (**down the slope**)(**in pairs**)(**at full speed**).

3. None of the important elements of the sentence are found in a prepositional phrase.

EXAMPLE: We had worked hard (**for months**).

I gave my mom a gift (**of candy**).

4. Only certain personal pronouns can be objects of prepositions (me, her, him,

them, us, whom).

EXAMPLES: between Hilary and I ^{me}

5. When there are two prepositions next to each other, the first one is always an adverb.

EXAMPLE: The doctor went **in** (after the surgery).

6. When “to” is followed by a verb, it is an “infinitive” and NOT a prepositional phrase.

EXAMPLE: I want to go to the game.

PREPOSITIONS REVIEW EXERCISE

PART ONE: Put parentheses around the prepositional phrases and label the objects of preposition OP.

1. By spring vacation we had already held four auctions and five food sales.
2. The Middle School Players donated the proceeds from their play to the fund for Mrs. Fulton's retirement.
3. Everyone at the fund raiser worked under great pressure to get the job finished on time.
4. Despite our efforts we had not reached our goal of five thousand dollars.
5. Without another auction we were in great trouble.
6. We decided that Mrs. Fulton would have to work for another ten years.
7. However, she forced us to wash cars, walk dogs, and do yard work throughout the entire school year.
8. During the last two weeks, we finally raised enough money for her.

9. If she decides to stay for another year, we may tackle her and throw her out the door!

10. We slid down the hill in a rush to arrive at the bottom first.