

Prepositions

Note: This document should only be used as a reference and should not replace assignment guidelines.

Prepositions begin phrases that modify other words in the sentence. Often, they tell when or where something is in relation to something else. See the back page for prepositions in example sentences.

Prepositional Phrases

A preposition is most often followed by a noun or pronoun that serves as the **object of the preposition**. The preposition, its object, and all words that modify the object make up a **prepositional phrase**.

Prepositional Phrase	Preposition	Modifiers	Object
under my old table	under	my old	table
because of his horrible attitude	because of	his horrible	attitude

The Role of Prepositional Phrases

Prepositional phrases normally function as adjectives or adverbs within a sentence.

Adjectival Prepositional Phrases—As adjectives, prepositional phrases usually follow the noun or pronoun they modify and answer questions like *Which one?* or *What kind?*

EXAMPLES: The girl **from Canada**. (Which girl? The girl *from Canada*. The phrase modifies *girl*.)
 A day **like today**. (What kind of day? A day *like today*. The phrase modifies *day*.)

Adverbial Prepositional Phrases—As adverbs, prepositional phrases modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs. They answer questions such as the following: *When? Where? How? Why? To what extent? Under what conditions?*

EXAMPLES: I slept **in the barn**. (The phrase modifies the verb *slept*. It answers the question *Where?*)
 For you, I'll do it! (The phrase explains *under what conditions* you'll do it.)
 I am tired **of this show**. (The phrase, *of this show*, modifies the adjective *tired*.)

Identifying Prepositions

The words *before*, *after*, *until*, *as*, and *since* sometimes act as prepositions and sometimes act as conjunctions.

If you find one of these words with **both a noun/pronoun and a verb** following it, the word is functioning as a conjunction. (See *Conjunctions* handout.)

CONJUNCTIONS: **Before you went to school**, mom told you to eat breakfast.
 Before is followed by both a pronoun (*you*) and a verb (*went*), making it a conjunction.

If one of these words is followed **only by a noun/pronoun** (and words describing the noun) and no verb, it is functioning as a preposition.

PREPOSITIONS: **Before school**, I always eat breakfast.
 The phrase *before school* contains *before* and a noun but no verb, so *before* is a preposition.

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Common Prepositions

Below is a list of common prepositions in example sentences.

I wrote a paper **about** the Civil War.
Let's get **aboard** the boat.
The eggs are **above** the milk.
I need to rest, **according to** my doctor.
We walked **across** the bridge.
He wants to eat **after** the movie.
The broom is **against** the door.
They ordered fries **along with** their burgers.
My necklace is somewhere **among** this jewelry.
She works **as** a therapist.
Bobby will meet us **at** the park.
The party is canceled **because of** the rain.
They arrived **before** us.
The cat is **behind** the chair.
The cereal is somewhere **below** the bread.
Our invitation is **beneath** that book.
The towels are **beside** the pool.
Your phone is **between** the seat and the console.
Everyone liked hunting **but** Mary.
The salt is **by** the stove.
The water went **down** the drain.
I love the outdoors **despite** the cold.
Please don't talk **during** the movie.
Dean ate every cookie **except for** three.
I'm playing **for** the prize.

Sam returned **from** the cemetery.
The letter is **in** the drawer.
We got a prize **in addition to** a trophy.
She's still **inside** the house.
He keeps a pet bird **in spite of** the noise.
This summer is just **like** last summer.
The matches are **near** the candles.
I'm a member **of** the club.
Will you take **off** the lid?
The flyswatter is **on top of** the fridge.
The bear came **out** of its cave.
I heard a sound **outside** my window.
There's a rainbow **over** the mountain.
We drove **past** the new school.
He hadn't seen her **since** last year.
They drove **through** a tunnel.
She kept coughing **throughout** the day.
We won't get there **till** tomorrow.
John is going **to** the store.
A rabbit is hopping **towards** me.
I found it **under** the couch.
The button is **underneath** the monitor.
Don't open this present **until** your birthday.
We walked **up** the stairs.
Come **with** me!
The treasure is **within** this cave.
Ruby won't leave **without** her phone.