

What Is a Preposition?

Monday

Teaching

A **preposition** is a word used to show a relationship between a noun or pronoun and some other word in the sentence. A preposition is always followed by an object, either a noun or a pronoun.

Some common prepositions are *about, across, behind, beneath, beside, between, by, during, for, from, in, like, of, on, over, to, under, until, with, and without.*

A **prepositional phrase** consists of a preposition, its object, and any modifiers of the object. The **object of the preposition** is the noun or pronoun following the preposition.

Dogs help humans in many ways. (The preposition is *in*, the object of the preposition is *ways*, and the prepositional phrase is *in many ways*.)

Sometimes the same word can be used as a preposition or as an adverb. If there is no object, the word is an adverb.

Adverb My dog jumped up.

Preposition The cat climbed up the tree.

A. Finding Prepositions and Their Objects

Underline the preposition in each sentence. Underline the object or objects of the preposition twice.

1. Dogs have been trained to perform a wide variety of jobs.
2. Watchdogs protect their owners' homes from burglars.
3. Guide dogs help their owners across the street.
4. Police dogs can smell drugs in suitcases.
5. Hunting dogs lead hunters to wild game.
6. Dogs are good companions for older people who may be lonely.

B. Recognizing Prepositions and Adverbs

Decide whether the boldfaced word is a preposition or an adverb. Write **P** on the line if it is a preposition. Write **A** if it is an adverb.

1. **Over** our heads, great formations of geese were flying north. _____
2. As they flew **over**, we thought we could hear their wild cries. _____
3. Please ask the children to come **inside** because of the storm. _____
4. With all that lightning, they will be safer **inside** the house. _____
5. After years on the bench, the judge decided to step **down**. _____
6. Alice fell **down** the rabbit hole. _____

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More Practice

*Tuesday***A. Identifying Prepositions and Their Objects**

Underline each preposition once. Circle the object of the preposition. Sentences may have more than one prepositional phrase.

1. Above her head sat the Cheshire cat.
2. The train roared through the tunnel, blasting its horn.
3. On Tuesday my father's car was parked inside the garage.
4. Hundreds of people swarmed into the theater for the concert.
5. Jan showed the lizard to her teacher before class.
6. At noon the colonel strode across the courtyard toward the gate.
7. Without doubt, spitting in the subway is against the law.
8. Our class has been running behind schedule until now.
9. Some of the disagreements between us are beside the point.
10. In the evenings of August, the katydids sang in the trees.

B. Writing with Prepositional Phrases

Underline the prepositional phrase in each sentence. Then replace that phrase with a different prepositional phrase, and write your new sentence on the line. Be sure to use a different preposition and a new object of the preposition.

EXAMPLE The dog with the leather collar is mine.
The dog behind the fence is mine.

1. I took my dog to obedience class.

2. My dog's problem is that it runs after squirrels.

3. The class was held in the school gym.

4. The instructor made us walk around the room together.

5. We practiced walking beside each other.

6. During class my dog seemed happy and calm.

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Application

A. Writing with Prepositional Phrases

Add one or more prepositional phrases to each simple sentence. Write your new sentence on the line.

1. The sheepdog ran.

2. It barked.

3. The sheep moved.

4. The dog saw a wolf staring.

5. The dog got up and ran.

B. Writing with Prepositional Phrases

Use three of these prepositional phrases in an original story. Write your story on the lines below.

in the barn
by the pump
after sunrise

with a strange name
for fun
over the fence

down the road
after the stranger
near the house

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Using Prepositional Phrases

A **prepositional phrase** is always related to another word in a sentence. It modifies the word in the same way an adjective or adverb does.

An **adjective phrase** is a prepositional phrase that modifies a noun or a pronoun. It can tell which one, how many, or what kind.

The room with many doors was confusing. (The phrase *with many doors* modifies the noun *room*.)

An **adverb phrase** is a prepositional phrase that modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. It usually tells *where, when, how, why, how many, how much, or how far*.

Modifying a verb I stepped into a huge hall. (The phrase *into a huge hall* modifies the verb *stepped*.)

Modifying an adjective It was awesome in its beauty. (The phrase *in its beauty* modifies the adjective *awesome*.)

Modifying an adverb The doorknob turned easily for its age. (The phrase *for its age* modifies the adverb *easily*.)

Placement of Prepositional Phrases Place the prepositional phrase close to the word it modifies, or else you may confuse your readers.

Confusing With an angry roar, the mouse ran from a lion.
Better The mouse ran from a lion with an angry roar.

Identifying Prepositional Phrases

Underline the prepositional phrase in each sentence. If it is an adjective phrase, write **ADJ** on the line at the right. If it is an adverb phrase, write **ADV**.

1. Last night I had a dream about a strange castle. _____

2. As I remember, I was walking down a long hall. _____

3. On either side were beautiful statues. _____

4. Suddenly, a little man with a long beard called my name. _____

5. He asked me to follow him through the wall. _____

6. The wall before me was solid and hard. _____

7. The man disappeared before my eyes. _____

8. I decided that his request was impossible and continued my walk toward a tiny door. _____

9. The door had a small lock with a tiny key. _____

10. After I opened the door, I stepped into a dark forest. _____

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