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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prepositional Phrase</th>
<th>Preposition</th>
<th>Modifiers</th>
<th>Object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>under my old table</td>
<td>under</td>
<td>my old</td>
<td>table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>because of his horrible attitude</td>
<td>because of</td>
<td>his horrible</td>
<td>attitude</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.
Prepositions

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

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.