# PREPOSITIONS

## COMMON PREPOSITIONS

(*NOTE: Some prepositions contain several words working as a unit.*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preposition</th>
<th>Preposition</th>
<th>Preposition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>aboard</td>
<td>beyond</td>
<td>of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about</td>
<td>but (except)</td>
<td>off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>above</td>
<td>by</td>
<td>on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>according to</td>
<td>by means of</td>
<td>on account of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>across</td>
<td>despite</td>
<td>on board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after</td>
<td>down</td>
<td>out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>against</td>
<td>due to</td>
<td>out of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ahead of</td>
<td>during</td>
<td>over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>along</td>
<td>except</td>
<td>past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alongside</td>
<td>for</td>
<td>since</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amid</td>
<td>from</td>
<td>subsequent to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amidst</td>
<td>in</td>
<td>through</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>among</td>
<td>in addition to</td>
<td>throughout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apart from</td>
<td>in back of</td>
<td>to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apropos</td>
<td>in front of</td>
<td>together with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>around</td>
<td>in lieu of</td>
<td>toward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as far as</td>
<td>in light of</td>
<td>towards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as to</td>
<td>in place of</td>
<td>under</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at</td>
<td>in regard to</td>
<td>underneath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>because of</td>
<td>in spite of</td>
<td>until</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before</td>
<td>inside</td>
<td>unto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>behind</td>
<td>in spite of</td>
<td>up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>below</td>
<td>instead of</td>
<td>upon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beneath</td>
<td>into</td>
<td>with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beside</td>
<td>in view of</td>
<td>within</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>besides</td>
<td>like</td>
<td>without</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between</td>
<td>near</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES

A preposition begins a prepositional phrase.

prepositional phrase = preposition + modifiers + object
(optional) (noun/pronoun)

EXAMPLES:
for me: for = preposition; me = object (pronoun) Note that because the pronoun is an object, you must use the objective case of the pronoun.
in light industry: in = preposition; light = modifier (adjective); industry = object (noun)
toward a democratic bipartisan government: toward = preposition; a democratic bipartisan = modifiers (adjectives); government = object (noun)

Prepositional phrases are fragments, not complete sentences, if written alone.

EXAMPLES:
sentence: He felt under the weather.
fragment: Under the weather?

A prepositional phrase is never the subject of a sentence.

EXAMPLES:
subject verb
One (of the basketball players) was recognized.
Since “players” is part of the prepositional phrase "of the basketball players," it cannot be the subject. "One" is the subject; the prepositional phrase works as an adjective to describe "one." Mistaking the object of the preposition for the subject of a sentence can lead to faulty subject-verb agreement.

Prepositional phrases function as adjectives or adverbs.

EXAMPLES:
The girl (in the yellow shorts) played (on the beach.)
"in the yellow shorts" tells us which girl—works as an adjective describing the noun "girl"
"on the beach" tells us where she played—works as an adverb describing the verb "played"

Some prepositions can function as other parts of speech.

EXAMPLES:
adverb: She fell down.
preposition: She fell down the stairs.
adjective: Do you believe there is an after life?
adverb: Susan came after.
conjunction: After I find the right major, I'll be able to really study.
preposition: The penguins slid down the hill after each other.
Watch out for the infinitive form of a verb (to + verb root) and the preposition "to."

EXAMPLES:
preposition: I am going (to town.)
infinitive: My goal is to succeed.
preposition: Please give the message (to all the committee members).
infinitive: The crowd felt his desire to jump higher as the record-breaking leap seemed apparent.

Special usage difficulties:

beside/besides
beside—"by the side of." We stood beside the old Civil War cannon.
besides—"in addition to, moreover, except." Besides playing tennis, James was an outstanding student.

between/among
between—refers to two persons or things. The ambassador strove to bring accord between the two nations.
among—refers to three or more persons or things. The awards were divided among the contest participants.

different from
Use from after the adjective different. Different than is considered incorrect in standard English.

except/accept
except—a preposition meaning "excluding." Everyone came except Susie and me.
accept—a verb, never a preposition. Susie will accept the award.

Prepositions sometimes are used in an interlocking series and are not separated by commas.

In the woods near the stream by the mossy rock under the fallen log crept the cottontail.
[In the woods][near the stream][by the mossy rock][under the fallen log] crept the cottontail.

PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE EXERCISES

I. DIRECTIONS: Place parentheses around the prepositional phrases in each sentence.

1. One of the boys is looking for his dog.
2. The abandoned barn in the mountains was made of hand-hewn timbers.
3. The child in red chased pink balloons across the lawn.
4. Under the bed near you is the package for Jean.
5. If you go to the inn on the creek, take me with you.
6. On the mantel above the fireplace is the letter with the state seal on it.
7. Many of the soldiers tramping through the village had never been in this part of the world.
8. According to the press, after a bitter fight against inequities in the law, the old man ceased his efforts because of the infirmities of age.

9. All of the men by Jim ran ahead of the buggy past the dun mare standing quietly in the traces despite the sound of gunfire in the distance.

10. By noon the wagons had left in a cloud of dust, heading toward the setting sun.

11. Before them lay endless miles of prairie; beyond the horizon were unseen peaks covered with snow.

12. In the forest near the abandoned mine shaft by the pile of rotting timbers under a clump of mullein behind an old cask huddled the lost child, whimpering with fear like a frightened puppy.

ANSWERS:

1. One (of the boys) is looking (for his dog.)
2. The abandoned barn (in the mountains) was made (of hand-hewn timbers.)
3. The child (in red) chased pink balloons (across the lawn.)
4. (Under the bed) (near you) is the package (for Jean.)
5. If you go (to the inn) (on the creek,) take me (with you.)
6. (On the mantel) (above the fireplace) is the letter (with the state seal) (on it.)
7. Many (of the soldiers) tramping (through the village) had never been (in this part) (of the world.)
8. (According to the press,) (after a bitter fight) (against inequities) (in the law,) the old man ceased his efforts (because of the infirmities) (of age.)
9. All (of the men) (by Jim) ran (ahead of the buggy) (past the dun mare) standing quietly (in the traces) (despite the sound) (of gunfire) (in the distance.)
10. (By noon) the wagons had left (in a cloud) (of dust,) heading (toward the setting sun.)
11. (Before them) lay endless miles (of prairie); (beyond the horizon) were unseen peaks covered (with snow.)
12. (In the forest) (near the abandoned mine shaft) (by the pile) (of rotting timbers) (under a clump) (of mullein) (behind an old cask) huddled the lost child, whimpering (with fear) (like a frightened puppy).

SOURCE: Austin Community College, Riverside

II. DIRECTIONS: In the following excerpt from Eudora Welty's "A Visit of Charity," place parentheses around twenty-five prepositional phrases. (There are more twenty-five.)

It was midmorning—a very cold, bright day. Holding a potted plant before her, a girl of fourteen jumped off the bus in front of the Old Ladies' Home, on the outskirts of town. She wore a red coat, and her straight yellow hair was hanging down loose from the pointed white cap all the little girls were wearing that year. She stopped for a moment beside one of the prickly dark shrubs with which the city had beautified the Home, and then proceeded slowly toward the building, which was of whitewashed brick and reflected the winter sunlight like a block of ice. As she walked vaguely up the steps, she shifted the small pot from hand to hand; then she had to set it down and remove her mittens before she could open the heavy door.

"I'm a Campfire Girl...I have to pay a visit to some old lady," she told the nurse at the desk. This was a woman in a white uniform who looked as if she were cold; she had close-cut hair which stood up on the very top of her head exactly like a sea wave. Marian, the little girl, did not tell her that this visit would give her a minimum of only three points in her score.

"Acquainted with any of our residents?" asked the nurse. She lifted one eyebrow and spoke like a man.

"With any old ladies?" No—but—that is, any of them will do," Marian stammered. With her free hand she pushed her hair behind her ears, as she did when it was time to study Science.

ANSWERS:

It was midmorning—a very cold, bright day. Holding a potted plant (before her), a girl (of fourteen) jumped (off the bus) (in front) (of the Old Ladies' Home), (on the outskirts) (of town). She wore a red coat, and her straight yellow hair was hanging down
loose (from the pointed white cap) all the little girls were wearing that year. She stopped (for a moment) (beside one) (of the prickly dark shrubs) (with which) the city had beautified the Home, and then proceeded slowly (toward the building), which was (of whitewashed brick) and reflected the winter sunlight (like a block) (of ice). As she walked vaguely (up the steps), she shifted the small pot (from hand) (to hand); then she had to set it down and remove her mittens before she could open the heavy door.

"I'm a Campfire Girl . . . I have to pay a visit (to some old lady)," she told the nurse (at the desk). This was a woman (in a white uniform) who looked as if she were cold; she had close-cut hair which stood up (on the very top) (of her head) exactly (like a sea wave). Marian, the little girl, did not tell her that this visit would give her a minimum (of only three points) (in her score).

"Acquainted with any (of our residents)?" asked the nurse. She lifted one eyebrow and spoke (like a man).

"(With any old ladies)?" No—but—that is, any (of them) will do," Marian stammered. (With her free hand) she pushed her hair (behind her ears), as she did when it was time to study Science.

Revised: Spring 2004
STUDENT LEARNING ASSISTANCE CENTER (SLAC)
Texas State University-San Marcos