



CCDMD

*Online Tutoring System
For Essay Writing*



UNIT 3 *Prepositional Phrases*

Review

Units 1 and 2 introduced some of the building blocks of sentences, including noun phrases and verb phrases, as well as different types of clauses that can be used to create simple and advanced sentences.

Varying your sentence structure makes for more interesting writing. In the following units, you will learn some new types of phrases that will add variety and meaning to your writing.

Learning Objectives

In this unit, you will learn how prepositional phrases help build sentences and how you can use them in your own writing.

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- recognize the functions of prepositional phrases
- form prepositional phrases
- use prepositional phrases correctly for various functions.



Exercise 1 – Identifying Prepositional Phrases

Highlight or underline the prepositional phrases in this text. You may consult the Answer Key for this unit when you have finished.

Cowboys

Cowboys became a familiar sight out West after the Civil War. When the war ended, Americans in the East had a shortage of beef. Meanwhile, down in southern Texas, millions of beef cattle roamed free. Some businessmen decided to gather wild Texas cattle and sell them back East, but to move the cattle to the market, they faced one big problem: the railway had not reached Texas. The cattle would have to walk to the nearest train depot in Missouri, fifteen hundred miles away from there. Newspapers spread reports about the money to be made in cattle ranching. Soon, many people rushed into the cattle business. Cattle ranches sprang up across the West. The cowboy became a familiar sight on the Western frontier.



Meaning Prepositions

A preposition is a word that expresses the relationship (time, location, quantity, manner, means, purpose, and state or condition) between a noun or pronoun and other words in a sentence.

the day **after** tomorrow

after expresses a *time* relationship between **the day** and **tomorrow**

the book **on** the table

on expresses a *location* relationship between **the book** and **the table**

There are more than 100 prepositions in English. The most common prepositions are:



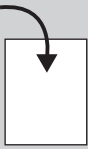



with at by

to in for

from of on

Exercise 2 – Matching prepositions

Here are six prepositions that describe a location, specifically the destination of someone or something. Can you match each preposition with the appropriate pictogram?



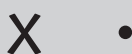

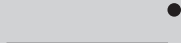

	
	
	

1. The dog got **into** the house.
2. The girl climbed **out of** the box.
3. The cat jumped **on to** the table.
4. A book fell **off** the shelf.
5. The boy was moved away **from** the scene.
6. I walk **to** the office every day.



Exercise 2 – Matching prepositions

Here are six prepositions that describe a location, specifically the position of someone or something. Can you match each preposition with the appropriate pictogram?

1. The horse stayed **in** the barn.
2. She is **at** her desk.
3. He is **out of** the room.
4. She is **off** work today.
5. He is **away from** home.
6. I left the book **on** the table.



Correct use of prepositions can be challenging. Sometimes they can be used interchangeably or combined with verbs.

As these examples show, changing the preposition changes the meaning of the verb and consequently the meaning of the sentence as a whole.

to take	+	in	I take in as much information as I can in class.
		with	She should take the aspirin with milk.
		to	Ali can take you to the concert.
		from	Do not take toys from other children without asking.
		off	Take off! Leave me alone.
		for	Who do you take me for ?

to look	+	around	Look around the room.
		at	The doctor should look at that injury.
		after	A babysitter looks after my children when I am at school.
		behind	Did you look behind the couch for your missing keys?
		past	Let's try to look past our differences and get along.
		like	You look like my mother!

Besides their *literal* meanings, prepositions can have *derived* meanings when used in an abstract context to represent moods or ideas.

the book **on** the table The preposition **on** has a *literal* meaning, expressing the relationship between the positions of the two objects.

to make a decision **on** the matter The preposition **on** has a *derived* meaning when used in an abstract context.

Here are more examples of prepositions with derived meanings:

- to be **under** arrest
- to be **above** the law
- out of** sight, **out of** mind

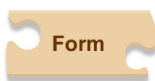
Most of these uses must be learned individually through reading and practice.



Exercise 3

Indicate for each sentence whether the meaning of the preposition is literal or derived.

Sentence	Preposition meaning	
	Literal	Derived
The airplane is flying just above the trees.		
A job under the table involves risks.		
Our chalet is on top of a mountain.		
I am on top of the world.		
Your comments are over his head.		
How did Sonia get on the roof?		
Park your car behind the house.		
He considers this job to be beneath him.		
The light should be positioned right over his head.		
Their group thinks they are above doing chores.		
The idea behind the practice is to save people money.		
Juan is feeding the dog under the table.		
The path disappeared beneath the snow.		
What are your views on the subject?		



Form Forming prepositional phrases

A prepositional phrase is formed with a preposition followed by a noun, noun phrase or noun clause. Here are some examples:

A curtain of beads hung across the open door to where the baby slept.

A curtain **of beads** ...

beads is the object of the preposition **of**

Preposition + noun

...hung **across the open door** ...

the open door is the object of the preposition **across**

Preposition + noun phrase

...**to where the baby slept**.

where the baby slept is the object of the preposition **to**

Preposition + noun clause



Exercise 4

Can you identify the six prepositional phrases hidden in each puzzle below?

READ

HEAD
HEELS

INJURY
+
INSULT

ARREST
YOU ARE

MILLION

ME REPEAT

Use Using prepositional phrases

Prepositional phrases have three uses in sentence development.

Modifiers of nouns

passengers with small children

the prepositional phrase **with small children** modifies the noun **passengers**

Adverbials

I take my lunch at 12 o'clock.

the prepositional phrase **at 12 o'clock** modifies the verb **take**

Subject complements

These people are from Toronto.

the prepositional phrase **from Toronto** completes the sentence

1) *Prepositional phrases as modifiers of nouns*

A prepositional phrase adds information to a sentence by connecting nouns or noun phrases.

There is hot water in the kettle.

noun phrase prep. noun

There is hot water in the kettle.

noun phrase prep. phrase



Just as adjectives modify nouns, so do prepositional phrases, but they provide more complex information. Compare the following examples of adjectives and prepositional phrases.

the **large** book
adj.

the book **on the table**
prep. phrase

the **tall** building
adj.

the building **behind my house**
prep. phrase

anxious passengers
adj.

passengers **with small children**
prep. phrase

2) *Prepositional phrases as adverbials*

Prepositional phrases can also act as adverbials. They can be combined with verbs to specify time, place, manner or condition.

Compare the following examples of adverbials and prepositional phrases.

We started building the museum **immediately**.
adv.

We started building the museum **in June 2005**.
prep. phrase

The book fell **down**.
adv.

The book fell **on the floor**.
prep. phrase

He drove the car **carefully**.
adv.

He drove the car **with great care**.
prep. phrase

They came **late** to the party.
adv.

They came to the party **with an invitation**.
prep. phrase



A prepositional phrase can be placed after the verb it modifies, or at the beginning of the sentence.

We started building the museum **in June 2005**. ←

→ **In June 2005**, we started building the museum.

→ **With great care**, he drove the car.

He drove the car **with great care**. ←

3) *Prepositional phrases as complements*

Prepositional phrases used as complements follow a linking verb. The prepositional phrase, together with the linking verb, completes the sentence.

Compare the following examples of complements and prepositional phrases.

The plates are **white**.

comp.

The plates are **on the table**.

prep. phrase

These people are **anxious**.

comp.

These people are **from Toronto**.

prep. phrase

The cat is **black**.

comp.

The cat is **under the car**.

prep. phrase



Practice 1

Fill in the blanks in the text with the correct preposition.

What Gets You Going in the Morning?

We all have a special morning ritual or a series of them that propels us _____ the day and makes us better _____ our jobs. For some people, the morning begins _____ a double espresso that fires up the brain and nerves; _____ others, it is a yoga class, an early morning run, or a visit _____ the gym. Some people cannot start their day _____ carefully reviewing everything that must be done _____ the coming hours. If you find yourself dragging your body _____ bed in the morning but have no particular rituals that help fire up your engine, learn _____ other people _____ their various rituals that help them start the day.

Choice of prepositions:

without	during	about	to	for
at	with	into	out of	from



Practice 2

Highlight or underline all the words that are part of a prepositional phrase in each sentence. Be careful: there might be more than one prepositional phrase in a sentence.

1. We like our flowerbed in front of the house.
2. I have friends from all over the world.
3. The bus makes 15 stops across town.
4. The transit system offers senior citizens over 65 years old discounted monthly passes.
5. My wife and I attended the meeting about the reconstruction of the local library.
6. The college raised fifty thousand dollars from the students and teachers of the college.
7. The investigators will submit a report about the accident.
8. The fugitive on the bridge jumped onto the boat.
9. Jonathan learned the techniques of Impressionism from an Impressionist artist.
10. Pressure from work can be a cause for depression.



UNIT 3 *Prepositional Phrases*

Exercise 1 – Identifying Prepositional Phrases




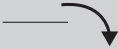
Highlight or underline the prepositional phrases in this text.

Cowboys

Cowboys became a familiar sight out West after the Civil War. When the war ended, Americans in the East had a shortage of beef. Meanwhile, down in southern Texas, millions of beef cattle roamed free. Some businessmen decided to gather wild Texas cattle and sell them back East, but to move the cattle to the market, they faced one big problem: the railway had not reached Texas. The cattle would have to walk to the nearest train depot in Missouri, fifteen hundred miles away from there. Newspapers spread reports about the money to be made in cattle ranching. Soon, many people rushed into the cattle business. Cattle ranches sprang up across the West. The cowboy became a familiar sight on the Western frontier.

Exercise 2 – Matching prepositions

Here are six prepositions that describe a location, specifically the destination of someone or something. Can you match each preposition with the appropriate pictogram?



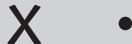

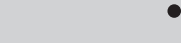

6. to → X	5. from X →
1. into 	2. out of 
3. on to 	4. off 

1. The dog got **into** the house.
2. The girl climbed **out of** the box.
3. The cat jumped **on to** the table.
4. A book fell **off** the shelf.
5. The boy was moved away **from** the scene.
6. I walk **to** the office every day.



Exercise 3 – Matching prepositions

Here are six prepositions that describe a **location**, specifically the **position** of someone or something. Can you match each preposition with the appropriate pictogram?

1. at 	3. on 
2. away from 	5. in 
4. off 	6. out of 

1. She is **at** her desk.
2. He is **away from** home.
3. I left the book **on** the table.
4. She is **off** work today.
5. The horse stayed **in** the barn.
6. He is **out of** the room.



Exercise 3

Indicate for each sentence whether the meaning of the preposition is literal or derived.

Sentence	Preposition meaning	
	Literal	Derived
The airplane is flying just above the trees.	✓	
A job under the table involves risks.		✓
Our chalet is on top of a mountain.	✓	
I am on top of the world.		✓
Your comments are over his head.		✓
How did Sonia get on the roof?	✓	
Park your car behind the house.	✓	
He considers this job to be beneath him.		✓
The light should be positioned right over his head.	✓	
Their group thinks they are above doing chores.		✓
The idea behind the practice is to save people money.		✓
Juan is feeding the dog under the table.	✓	
The path disappeared beneath the snow.	✓	
What are your views on the subject?		✓

Exercise 4

Can you identify the six prepositional phrases hidden in each puzzle below?

1.

_____ READ _____

 2.

HEAD HEELS

 3.

INJURY + INSULT _____

4.

ARREST YOU ARE

 5.

M1LLION

 6.

ME REPEAT

1. Read between the lines 2. Head over heels 3. Add injury to insult
 4. You are under arrest 5. 1 in a million 6. Repeat after me



Practice 1

Fill in the blanks in the text with the correct preposition.

What Gets You Going in the Morning?

We all have a special morning ritual or a series of them that propels us **into** the day and makes us better **at** our jobs. For some people, the morning begins **with** a double espresso that fires up the brain and nerves; **for** others, it is a yoga class, an early morning run, or a visit **to** the gym. Some people cannot start their day **without** carefully reviewing everything that must be done **during** the coming hours. If you find yourself dragging your body **out of** bed in the morning but have no particular rituals that help fire up your engine, learn **from** other people **about** their various rituals that help them start the day.



Practice 2

Highlight or underline all the words that are part of a prepositional phrase in each sentence. Be careful: there might be more than one prepositional phrase in a sentence.

1. We like our flowerbed in front of the house.
2. I have friends from all over the world.
3. The bus makes 15 stops across town.
4. The transit system offers senior citizens over 65 years old discounted monthly passes.
5. My wife and I attended the meeting about the reconstruction of the local library.
6. The college raised fifty thousand dollars from the students and teachers of the college.
7. The investigators will submit a report about the accident.
8. The fugitive on the bridge jumped onto the boat.
9. Jonathan learned the techniques of Impressionism from an Impressionist artist.
10. Pressure from work can be a cause for depression.