



# Prepositional Phrases

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# Important notice:



At the end of this presentation there is a link to a Google Forms quiz. You must score an 80% or higher to pass the quiz.

Please take your time viewing and studying this material before you proceed with the quiz.

# Objectives

- Define the concept of a prepositional phrase
- Explain the usage of prepositional phrases
- Understand where to properly place a prepositional phrase in a sentence
- Strengthen the use of prepositional phrases in sentences

# General Terms to Understand: Phrase

- A phrase is a group of two or more words functioning as a meaningful **unit** within a sentence or clause.
- There are five types of phrases:
  - Noun phrases: “The dog is running.”
  - Verb phrases: “The cat was climbing the tree.”
  - Adjective phrases: “These flowers are beautiful.”
  - Adverb phrases: “We walked carefully across the floor.”
  - **Prepositional phrases: “They first met at a party.”**

# General Terms to Understand: Prepositions

- Prepositions draw a relationship between a noun or pronoun and another word in a sentence.
- They show place, position, time or method.
- The most common prepositions are the following:

aboard, about, above, across, after, against, along, amid, among, around, as, at, before, behind, below, beneath, beside, between, beyond, but, by, despite, down, during, except, for, from, in, inside, into, like, minus, near, of, off, on, onto, opposite, outside, over, past, per, through, to, toward, under, until, up, upon, versus, via, with.

# What are prepositional phrases?

- Prepositional phrases are group of words that modify a noun or a verb.
- They cannot stand on their own as a complete thought.
- They give us information about:
  - where something happened:

“They always saw each other **at the park.**”

- when it happened

“We need to finish our homework **by noon.**”

- help define a specific person or thing

“Mary is looking for a cat **with white fur and blue eyes.**”

# Why are they important?

- Prepositional phrases provide important details about the words they modify in order to increase comprehension and clarity.
- They also answer the following questions:
  - Which one?
  - What kind?
  - How?
  - Where?
  - When?
  - To what extent?

# Basic structure of a prepositional phrase

**preposition** + object/person

- Prepositional phrases start with a **preposition** such as: *about, after, at, before, behind, by, during, for, from, in, of, over, on, past, to, under, up, and with.*

“All the seniors graduated with flying colors.”

- The most used prepositions in English are *in, on, at.*



# Prepositional phrases with *in*

Time	Places	Modes of transportation
<p><b>Parts of the day:</b> <u>In the mornings</u>, my mother goes to the supermarket.</p>	<p><b>A city, a country or a neighborhood:</b> Most people my age live <u>in San Juan</u>.</p>	<p><b>Cars, trucks, van, helicopters, submarines, taxis:</b> She always waits <u>in the car</u> when I go to a doctor's appointment.</p>
<p><b>Months, weeks, years, decades and centuries:</b> My brother was born <u>in the late 90s</u>.</p>	<p><b>A complete or partial enclosure (enclosed space):</b> The most important files are <u>in those boxes</u>.</p>	
<p><b>Seasons:</b> <u>In the winter</u>, there are no more leafy trees.</p>		

# Prepositional phrases with *on*

Time	Places	Modes of transportation
<b>Dates and days of the week:</b> <u>On Monday</u> , we all have a big test.	<b>Streets and avenues:</b> My grandfather has always lived <u>on this street</u> .	<b>Trains, boats, animals, planes, skateboards, buses:</b> I was five years old the first time I got <u>on a plane</u> .
<b>Holidays:</b> My aunt arrives every year <u>on Christmas Eve</u> .	<b>A surface:</b> It is prohibited to walk <u>on the freshly cut lawn</u> .	

# Prepositional phrases with *at*

Time	Places
<p><b>A specific time of day:</b> We have a meeting <u>at 1 o'clock</u>, don't be late.</p>	<p><b>A complete address:</b> The University of Puerto Rico Río Piedras campus is located <u>at 14 Ave. Universidad Ste. 1401</u>.</p>
<p><b>Night:</b> <u>At night</u>, I can see so many stars.</p>	<p><b>Showing a specific point or location:</b> Hurry! Look <u>at those shooting stars</u>. You should meet her <u>at Plaza las Américas</u>.</p>
	<p><b>A general area:</b> He is <u>at the amusement park</u>.</p>

# Exceptions for *in*, *on*, *at*

These prepositions can be used in situations where their meaning is not literal.

In the following sentences, the preposition **in** describes a state of being instead of a literal time, place or mode of transportation.

- My mother and father vowed to love each other **in** sickness and in health.
- The child is **in** a lot of pain.

In the following sentences, the preposition **on** describes something that is placed on a surface; however, its usage is metaphorical.

- Carla has a lot **on** her shoulders/mind.

For more information, see the module “In, On, At: The Use of Prepositions” on our page.

# Sentences with More than One Preposition

A sentence can have more than one prepositional phrase.

- They can be separated:

Example: **During Valentine's day**, we went **to the amusement park**.

- or followed by another prepositional phrase:

Example: Mary Shelley started to write *Frankenstein* as part **of a challenge with her husband and friends**.

# Basic structure of a prepositional phrase

preposition + **object/person**

- In a prepositional phrase, the preposition is followed by an **object or person** which can be a noun (N) or a pronoun (PN).

“My mom always buys milk from the convenience store on **Cruz Street** (N).”

“I am convinced that she is going to the party with **him** (PN).”

**Where do they go in a  
sentence?**

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# After the Main Clause

Prepositional phrases are often placed after the main clause (MC).

- The main clause is the part of a sentence that can “form a complete sentence standing alone having a subject and a predicate” (Oxford Languages).
- Examples:

*Madam Bovary* is a well-known novel (MC) **by the French writer Gustave Flaubert.**

“All we have to decide is what to do (MC) **with the time that is given us.**” (J.R.R. Tolkien)



# At the Beginning

A prepositional phrase can be **at the beginning of a sentence** which serves as an introductory clause. In this case, it must be followed by a comma to separate it from the main clause:

- Examples:

**By the time Maria arrived**, John was already there doing the dishes.

**Over the past few years**, information has become easily accessible.

**After riding his bike around the neighborhood all day**, George was sweating profusely.

# Between the Subject and its Verb

A prepositional phrase can also be **between the subject (S) and its verb (V)** to help define the specific person or thing:

The boy (S) **with him** is (V) his son.

*Which boy is his son? The one that is with him.*

The store (S) **at the corner** sells (V) sandwiches.

*Which store sells sandwiches? The one at the corner.*

“The sky (S), **at sunset**, looked (V) like a carnivorous flower.”

(Roberto Bolaño, 2666)

*When did the sky look like a carnivorous flower? At sunset.*

# References

*Cambridge Dictionary*, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/es/gramatica/gramatica-britanica/prepositional-phrases>

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Para finalizar, haga clic sobre el enlace para tomar la prueba y enviar el informe a su profesor(a):

<https://forms.gle/DibQFMZ5g3L7RK8s6>

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