



Prepositional Phrases

Important notice:



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

Prepositional phrases with *on*

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

Prepositional phrases with *at*

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

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](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/es/gramatica/gramatica-britanica/prepositional-phrases)

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[Traffis, K. \(2020\). Grammarly, https://www.grammarly.com/blog/prepositional-phrase/?gclid=CjwKCAjw_sn8BRBrEiwAnUGJDn2nMiG9JnHKG4c5CdLpBbplmQOPq9rhUenCRIVUvxgss8Ms2J4EChoCdpoQAvD_BwE&gclidsrc=aw.ds](https://www.grammarly.com/blog/prepositional-phrase/?gclid=CjwKCAjw_sn8BRBrEiwAnUGJDn2nMiG9JnHKG4c5CdLpBbplmQOPq9rhUenCRIVUvxgss8Ms2J4EChoCdpoQAvD_BwE&gclidsrc=aw.ds)

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<https://forms.office.com/r/AfkDkmtvnV>

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