“Prepositions express a relation in space between two or more entities or a relation in time between two events, or various other abstract relations such as instrument and cause.” (Cambridge Grammar of English, Carter and McCarthy, 2006, p.462).

A preposition refers to the word or phrase which shows the relationship between one thing and another, linking nouns, pronouns and phrases to other words in a sentence.

For example:

(1). A relation in Place and Time:

- We waited at the bus stop for ten minutes.
- There is a telephone booth outside the bank.
- What are you wearing underneath your coat?
- She fell asleep during the lecture.
- The police station is next to the shopping mall.

(2). Feelings:

- Are you worried about your exam?
- I was surprised at your remarks.

(3). Other relationships like Instrument and Cause:

- The girl stabbed the burglar with a knife.
- Without your support, I don’t think I can finish the project so smoothly.

Use of Prepositions

The use of prepositions is, without doubt, one of the most difficult areas of English grammar. There are over 100 prepositions in English, with one word or more than one word.

One-word Prepositions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>aboard</th>
<th>along</th>
<th>at</th>
<th>besides</th>
<th>down</th>
<th>inside</th>
<th>on</th>
<th>round</th>
<th>to</th>
<th>up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>about</td>
<td>amid</td>
<td>before</td>
<td>between</td>
<td>during</td>
<td>into</td>
<td>onto</td>
<td>since</td>
<td>towards/towards</td>
<td>upon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>above</td>
<td>amidst</td>
<td>behind</td>
<td>beyond</td>
<td>except</td>
<td>like</td>
<td>opposite</td>
<td>than</td>
<td>under</td>
<td>via</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>across</td>
<td>among</td>
<td>below</td>
<td>but</td>
<td>for</td>
<td>near</td>
<td>outside</td>
<td>through</td>
<td>underneath</td>
<td>with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after</td>
<td>around</td>
<td>beneath</td>
<td>by</td>
<td>from</td>
<td>of</td>
<td>over</td>
<td>throughout</td>
<td>unlike</td>
<td>within</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>against</td>
<td>as</td>
<td>beside</td>
<td>despite</td>
<td>in</td>
<td>off</td>
<td>past</td>
<td>till</td>
<td>until</td>
<td>without</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Two- and three-word Prepositions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>according to</th>
<th>as well as</th>
<th>due to</th>
<th>in exchange for</th>
<th>inside of</th>
<th>on account of</th>
<th>prior to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ahead of</td>
<td>because of</td>
<td>except for</td>
<td>in favour of</td>
<td>in spite of</td>
<td>on top of</td>
<td>subsequent to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apart from</td>
<td>but for</td>
<td>for lack of</td>
<td>in front/back of</td>
<td>instead of</td>
<td>out of</td>
<td>such as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as for</td>
<td>by means of</td>
<td>in addition to</td>
<td>in line with</td>
<td>near to</td>
<td>outside of</td>
<td>thanks to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as of</td>
<td>by virtue of</td>
<td>in aid of</td>
<td>in place of</td>
<td>next to</td>
<td>owing to</td>
<td>up to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use of Prepositions - Exercise 1a

Exercise 1b

Exercise 1c

Exercise 1d

Learn more

http://www.better-english.com/grammar/prepositions.htm


http://www.englishpage.com/prepositions/prepositions.ht

http://www.eslpdf.com/esl_prepositions.html


http://www.quia.com/tq/126698.html

http://www.quia.com/jg/73573.html
Read the following story and fill in each gap with the most suitable preposition in the box. Sometimes more than one answer is possible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>about</th>
<th>above</th>
<th>underneath</th>
<th>for</th>
<th>on</th>
<th>in</th>
<th>at</th>
<th>toward(s)</th>
<th>from</th>
<th>in front of</th>
<th>instead of</th>
<th>inside</th>
<th>under</th>
<th>under/underneath</th>
<th>according to</th>
<th>thanks to</th>
<th>up</th>
<th>outside</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Christine’s cat was missing and she started looking around the house (1) ________ it. She opened her closet and looked (2) ________ but the cat was not there. She went to the bedroom and crawled (3) ________ the floor to look (4) ________ the bed. She searched the kitchen and bathroom but found nothing. Since her cat could not be seen anywhere inside the house, Christine decided to go (5) ________ to give it a try. Just as she was (6) ________ to open the door, the doorbell rang. It was her neighbour, Mrs. Chan. Mrs. Chan pointed (7) ________ the top of a nearby tree. “Look, Christine! Your cat is (8) ________ the tree!” Mrs. Chan began to describe how she found the cat. (9) ________ her, she was cleaning the windows when she heard a noise coming (10) ________ the tree (11) ________ her house. She looked (12) ________ and saw the cat (13) ________ one of the branches high (14) ________ the ground. (15) ________ ignoring the cat, Mrs. Chan decided to tell Christine. (16) ________ Mrs. Chan’s help, Christine was able to rescue it.

Suggested Answers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1) for</th>
<th>(2) inside</th>
<th>(3) on</th>
<th>(4) under/underneath</th>
<th>(5) outside</th>
<th>(6) about</th>
<th>(7) at/toward/towards</th>
<th>(8) in</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(9) According to</td>
<td>(10) from</td>
<td>(11) in front of</td>
<td>(12) up</td>
<td>(13) on</td>
<td>(14) above</td>
<td>(15) Instead of</td>
<td>(16) Thanks to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Exercise 1b – Use of Prepositions**

Fill in each gap with a suitable preposition in the box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>in</th>
<th>by</th>
<th>for</th>
<th>into</th>
<th>after</th>
<th>at</th>
<th>as</th>
<th>to</th>
<th>from</th>
<th>on</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Inspiration: Being inspired is the key to success as a senior student.**

This is what I concluded (1) **after** completing the ABC programme (2) **at** The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Life (3) **as** a postgraduate student (4) **in** the Department of ABC can be fun, or a nightmare, depending (5) **on** what approach you take. I am more than willing to share my thoughts with you (6) **in** this regard.

Comparing studying (7) **to** travelling, I found many interesting parallels. Studying (8) **in** high school is like joining a group tour. So long (9) **as** you don’t fall asleep (10) **in** the coach, and you listen to what the tour guide tells you, you shouldn’t fail. Studying (11) **for** a Bachelor’s degree is like going for a package tour. Many things have been prepared (12) **for** you but you still have to put extra effort (13) **into** your study. Studying (14) **for** a Master’s degree is like backpacking. You have to plan the trip yourself and take the initiative to explore everything. Sometimes you get help (15) **from** experienced travellers, the lecturers. At the doctorate level, you will explore new ground untouched (16) **by** others.

Some Master’s students may get lost (17) **at** first because they don’t realise that a different approach (18) **from** their earlier study experience is called (19) **for**. They study hard reading the lecture notes (20) **as** they did before. They wonder why so little has been taught while the scope for their assignments is so broad. They have not yet realised that the lecture notes show them the directions, not destinations. However, once you realise this and adopt the attitude (21) **of** a backpacker, life is fun. The libraries here are treasure islands. The internet is your highway. And the professors are black-belt masters. Challenge them. They welcome your questions. They don’t teach you, they inspire. How many chances do you have (22) **in** life to have your work assessed (23) **by** a world class scholar?

*Adapted from and inspired by an original article by Ho Wai Man*
An Open Letter from Prof. Charles and Mrs May Wan Kao

Since the announcement (1) on 6 October 2009 that Charles has been awarded the 2009 Nobel Prize (2) in Physics, we have received messages (3) from friends from all (4) over the world (5) via the Internet, fax, and email. We are overwhelmed (6) by the sea of congratulatory messages from so many people, and the many requests (7) for interviews from the media.

A Nobel Laureate of Chinese ethnicity is a rare event and we understand the outpouring (8) of happiness and pride (9) for our people throughout the world wherever they live. The Nobel Prize is an international prize and has been awarded (10) for work done internationally.

Charles Kao was born (11) in Shanghai, China, did his primary research in 1966 (12) at Standard Telecommunication Laboratories (STL) in Harlow, UK, followed through with work in the USA at ITT, over the following 20 years, to develop fiber optics (13) into a commercial product and finally came to CUHK, Hong Kong (14) in 1987 to pass on his knowledge and expertise to a new generation of students and businessmen. Charles really does belong (15) to the world!

In this open letter, we would like to thank all who have concern (16) for his health. Unfortunately there is no cure at present for Alzheimer's. Charles shares this problem of coping (17) with Alzheimer with other eminent persons, Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, to name a few. Charles keeps fit playing tennis and with other exercises. He does not smoke, and he enjoys eating and drinking (18) in healthy moderation and sleeps well too. The memory loss is getting more severe, but he enjoys life.

He is eminently proud (19) of his past achievements and excited (20) about becoming a Nobel Laureate – an unexpected award. The press and media have interviewed him and he is happy that they have found all the facts they need. So he is more than ready to return (21) to a quiet and undisturbed life now, and he asks that the media respect this.

Our greetings to everyone in Hong Kong, to staff, faculty and students past and present of CUHK, to all our very good friends and especially to our tennis friends. Thank you (22) for all your good wishes and congratulations. Now you know who is responsible (23) for the fiber optical cables that enable all the excessive information, both true and false, good and bad, that circulate (24) on the Internet.

Charles and May Wan Kao
13 October 2009

Source: http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/cpr/charleskao/letter-e.html

Suggested Answers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. on</th>
<th>2. in</th>
<th>3. from</th>
<th>4. over</th>
<th>5. via</th>
<th>6. by</th>
<th>7. for</th>
<th>8. of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. for</td>
<td>10. for</td>
<td>11. in</td>
<td>12. at</td>
<td>13. into</td>
<td>14. in</td>
<td>15. to</td>
<td>16. for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. with</td>
<td>18. in</td>
<td>19. of</td>
<td>20. about/at</td>
<td>21. to</td>
<td>22. for</td>
<td>23. for</td>
<td>24. on</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exercise 1d – Use of Prepositions

Read the text below. Fill in each blank with a suitable preposition. Put an “X” if no preposition is needed.

Attack burns

A five-year-old boy and a number of tourists and others were hurt in an acid attack (1) ______ Eastern District (2) ______ last night - just three hours (3) ______ the police had turned on surveillance cameras in the area.

It is the fifth of this kind of attack (4) ______ last November. It is being viewed (5) ______ a direct threat to the security.

As detectives searched surveillance footage (6) ______ last night, 380 officers swept the area to hunt (7) ______ the attacker or attackers.

The Commissioner of Police Chris Smith promised to track (8) ______ those behind it.

Some of those hurt said the corrosive liquid rained down just before 9.30 pm (9) ______ the junction of North and South streets.

The bottle used was 13-15 centimeters long, contained what was probably acid and was similar (10) ______ those used (11) ______ the previous two attacks.

It was found (12) ______ the road outside 123 North Street still releasing a grayish gas. The area is only 60 meters (13) ______ the first attack in November and less than 100 meters from the second hurt (14) ______ March 23.

Many of those hurt were treated (15) ______ the spot for head, shoulder and hand injuries while others were sent to nearby hospitals.

Nurses poured filtered water (16) ______ burns before they were treated and bandaged.

A victim hit by the bottle said he was not aware it was corrosive until he felt a burning sensation. A nearby shopkeeper helped him wash off the liquid, he said.

Mr Wong, who works (17) ______ an appliance shop, said he saw people hurrying away before he realized it was another acid attack. He had noticed some of them had holes in their clothes (18) ______ a result of acid burns.

The government decided to install surveillance cameras overlooking South Street (19) ______ the earlier attacks which injured nearly 80 people (20) ______ total.

A district councillor Mary Lee, who is in charge (21) ______ a working group for the installation of the "sky eyes," confirmed they had been (22) ______ operation (23) ______ 1.30 pm yesterday.
"This acid throwing is obviously a challenge (24) ______ the police. It is a dreadful crime. The operation of the sky eyes was not supposed to be known (25) ______ outsiders and the district council had planned to announce it after a meeting later this week," she said.

The Island East Headquarters senior superintendent said 15 males and 13 females suffered (26) ______ minor injuries. One was a five-year-old boy.

"Six units of detectives (27) ______ Island East regional crime unit, the anti-triad unit, blue-beret police officers and other frontline officers were dispatched (28) ______ the scene to conduct an exhaustive search. Police will work in liaison (29) ______ the District Council to inspect the surveillance images captured by the "sky eyes" to help the investigation," the superintendent said.

The police have not ruled (30) ______ any motive for the attack.

Suggested Answers:

<p>| | | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>in</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>after</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>since</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>as</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>for</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>at</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>to</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>in</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>from</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>on</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>on</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>for</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>as</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>after</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>of</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>in</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>since</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>by</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>from</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>with</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>out</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What can prepositions tell us?

Drag and drop the answer into the appropriate gap.

- Time
- Position
- Location
- Direction

1. It may tell you the ________ a thing is in relation to something else.
   
   e.g. The students conducted an experiment in the laboratory.

2. It may tell you the ________ something is in relation to another event.
   
   e.g. After dinner, we went for a walk.

3. A preposition may tell you the ________ of something in relation to something else.
   
   e.g. The gentle, brown cat slept beside the fluffy white rabbit.

4. It may also tell you the ________ something is travelling in relation to something else.
   
   e.g. Who is that man walking towards us?


Prepositions at, on, and in

Prepositions of Place and Location: at, on, and in

- In general, we use:
  
  *at for a POINT
  
  *in for an ENCLOSED SPACE
  
  *on for a SURFACE

| at     | • for specific addresses  
|        | E.g. Samantha Tse lives at 55 King’s Road. |
| on     | • to designate names of streets, avenues, roads, etc.  
|        | E.g. Her house is on King’s Road. |
**in**

- for the names of land areas (towns, counties, states, countries, and continents)
  
  E.g. *She lives in Kowloon.*
  
  *Kowloon is in Hong Kong.*
  
  *Hong Kong is in Asia.*

- Notice the use of the prepositions of location *at, in* and *on* in these standard expressions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>at</strong></th>
<th><strong>in</strong></th>
<th><strong>on</strong></th>
<th><strong>No Preposition</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>at home</td>
<td>in a car</td>
<td>on a bus</td>
<td>downstairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at work</td>
<td>in a taxi</td>
<td>on a train</td>
<td>downtown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in a helicopter</td>
<td>on a plane</td>
<td>inside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at university / college</td>
<td>in a boat</td>
<td>on a ship</td>
<td>outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at the office</td>
<td>in a lift (elevator)</td>
<td>on a bicycle/ motorbike</td>
<td>upstairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at the top</td>
<td>in the newspaper</td>
<td>on a horse/ elephant</td>
<td>uptown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at the bottom</td>
<td>in the sky</td>
<td>on the radio/ on television</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at the side</td>
<td>in a row</td>
<td>on the left/ right</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at reception</td>
<td>in West Street (e.g. <em>I live in West Street</em> - British English)</td>
<td>on the way</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>on the floor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>on the ceiling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at school*</td>
<td>in school*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at class*</td>
<td>in (the) class*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at the library*</td>
<td>in the library*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in (the) bed*</td>
<td>on the bed*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* You may sometimes use different prepositions for these locations.

**Prepositions of Time: at, on, and in**

| **at** | to designate specific/precise times
  
  E.g. *The lesson starts at 10:30 a.m.*
  
  Also *at night, at noon, at lunchtime, at the weekend, at Christmas/Easter, at the same time, at present, at sunrise/sunset, at the moment*
|---|---|
| **on** | to designate days and dates
  
  E.g. *My sister is coming on Wednesday.*
  
  E.g. *We will have a meeting on the First of February.*
|---|---|
| **in** | for nonspecific times during a day, a month, a season, or a year
  
  E.g. *He gets up very early in the evening.*
  
  *He will have a long vacation in December.*
  
  *He was born in winter.*
  
  *He started the job in 2009.*
Do not use *at, on* or *in* before *next, last, this, every, all, each, some, any* and *one*.  

E.g. *She will come back next Monday.*

*We went to New York last August.*

*I will call you this evening.*

*They play badminton every weekend.*

Do not use *at, on* or *in* before *tomorrow* and *yesterday*.  

E.g. *Let’s see the movie tomorrow evening.*  

*We had the meeting yesterday afternoon.*

**Prepositions of Time: for and since**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preposition</th>
<th>Note</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **for**     | • when we measure time (seconds, minutes, hours, days, months, years)  
E.g. *We danced for two hours.*  
*He has lived in Hong Kong for eight months.*  
*She has been doing the research for five years.* | |
| **since**   | • with a specific date or time  
E.g. *She has worked here since 1999.*  
*He has been waiting in the conference room since 9:30 a.m.* | |

**Prepositions of Movement: to, into, onto, out of, off, toward(s) and No Preposition**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preposition</th>
<th>Note</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **to, onto, into** | • to express movement towards a place  
E.g. *They always walk to school together.*  
*The cat jumped onto the table.*  
*She fell into the sea.* | |
| **toward, towards** | • variant spellings of the same preposition of movement  
E.g. *They rushed toward me.*  
*Darkness travels towards light, but blindness towards death.* | |
| **out of, off** | • to express movement from a place  
E.g. *He came out of the office.*  
*Take your feet off the seat.* | |
| **No preposition** | • with the words home, downtown, uptown, inside, outside, downstairs, upstairs  
E.g. *The boy went upstairs to look for the cat.*  
*When will you go home?*  
*They all went outside to see the sunset.* | |
Exercises 2 – “at, in, on”

Learn more

- Prepositions for Time, Place, and Introducing Objects  
  http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/594/01/  
  http://www.better-english.com/grammar/timepreps.htm

- Practise on, in, and at in different contexts  

- Prepositions in/at/on (notes and quiz)  
  http://esl.about.com/library/grammar/blgr_prep1.htm

- Prepositions ‘at, in, on’ games  
  http://elc.polyu.edu.hk/CiLL/eap/
Read the following dialogue and complete the sentences using *at*, *in* or *on*.

Peter: The bus is supposed to come (1) _____ 8:20am and it’s already 8:30am.

Jane: I hope it comes soon. I don’t want to be late. What time do you have to be (2) _____ class?

Peter: My first class is (3) _____ 9:00 am, but my professor is never (4) _____ time for class.

Jane: How lucky! My professor gives us penalty for being late. I usually arrive just (5) _____ time, just before my professor starts taking marks off students who are late.

Peter: I understand it is always very hard to wake up (6) _____ the morning, especially (7) _____ Mondays.

Jane: Yes, I know. I tend to study late (8) _____ night and find it very hard to get up the next day. It gets worse (9) _____ the winter.

Peter: Oh! The bus is finally here. Let’s get (10) _____!

Suggested Answers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1) at</th>
<th>(2) in</th>
<th>(3) at</th>
<th>(4) on</th>
<th>(5) in</th>
<th>(6) in</th>
<th>(7) on</th>
<th>(8) at</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(9) in</td>
<td>(10) on</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prepositions and Adjectives, Nouns, and Verbs

After many adjectives, nouns and verbs, we use particular prepositions. Following are some common examples of these combinations:

**Adjective + Preposition**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Preposition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>angry*, annoyed*, excited, furious*, happy*, nervous, worried</td>
<td>about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>angry*, bad, clever, excited, expert, good, hopeless</td>
<td>at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>astonished, amazed, surprised, shocked</td>
<td>at/ by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eligible, famous, responsible, notorious, sorry, well known</td>
<td>for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>afraid, ashamed, aware, capable, conscious, envious, fond, frightened, full, jealous, made, proud, short, suspicious, tired</td>
<td>of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>addicted, engaged, married, similar, sympathetic</td>
<td>to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>angry*, annoyed*, bored, disappointed, furious*, happy*, please</td>
<td>with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>different</td>
<td>from/to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interested, involved</td>
<td>in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>keen</td>
<td>on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disqualified</td>
<td>from</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*angry at/about sth / with sb

*annoyed/ furious/happy about sth / with sb

**Noun + Preposition**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Preposition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>approval, awareness, cause, example, hatred, love, understanding</td>
<td>of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>concern, desire, fondness, hope, grasp, need, reason, request, respect, thirst</td>
<td>for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>belief, increase/decrease, rise/fall, interest, success, participation</td>
<td>in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>answer, invitation, reaction, reply, solution,</td>
<td>to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Verb + Preposition**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Preposition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>account for</td>
<td>depend on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apologize to (sb)/ for (sth/sb)</td>
<td>die of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apply for</td>
<td>differ from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>believe in</td>
<td>dispose of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>belong to</td>
<td>focus on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>benefit from</td>
<td>give up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bring up</td>
<td>grow up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>care about/ for*</td>
<td>insist on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coincide with</td>
<td>laugh at / smile at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comply with</td>
<td>listen to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cope with</td>
<td>look at/ for/ after/ into*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>concentrate on</td>
<td>look forward to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*care about = think sb/sth is important; care for = look after
*look at = use the eyes; look for = try to find; look after = take care of; look into = investigate
*think about = use the mind, e.g. He looks sad. What is he thinking about?
  think of/about = consider, e.g. I’m thinking of/about changing my plan.
  think of = have as an opinion about, e.g. What do you think of Peter? He is very handsome.
  = bring to the mind, e.g. I can’t think of any reason why the accident happened.

Exercise 3 - Nouns, Adjectives, Verbs and Prepositions

Learn more

Prepositions with nouns, adjectives and verbs (sentence construction) http://moodle.citylit.ac.uk/moodle/file.php/1/Study%20skills%20work%20sheets/grammar/intermediate/Microsoft%20Word%20-%204.17%20Prepositions%20with%20nouns,%20adjectives%20and%20verbs.pdf


Preposition with Adjective (rules and exercises) http://www.learn4good.com/languages/evrd_grammar/adjectives_prepos.htm

Nouns + Prepositions (notes) and more preposition exercises http://esl.about.com/library/grammar/blgr_prep5.htm

Adjectives Prepositions Combinations - about /at/by/for/from (quizzes) http://esl.about.com/library/quiz/blgrquiz_prep7.htm
Exercise 3 - Adjectives, Verbs, Nouns and Prepositions

Choose the most suitable preposition.

1. Prof. Charles Kao is one of the most prominent scientists in the world. All his students have great respect (in, on, to, for) _________ him.
2. The belief (of, in, at, for) _________ aliens and UFOs is absurd!
3. Jessica is angry (at, with, about, of) _________ her boyfriend for not showing up for the movie.
4. He apologized (at, for, to, on) _________ her (at, for, to, on) _________ being late by treating her dinner.
5. My parents are worried (at, of, for, about) _________ the family’s financial problems.
6. Do not ask me to fix your laptop. I am not familiar (to, of, with, about) _________ computers.
7. This book belongs (to, of, for, with) _________ my sister.
8. If you give (out, up, of, off) _________ now, you will never finish the project.
9. Please take some time to think (at, on, about, to) _________ what you want to do in the future.
10. Kate and Frank are in the library studying (at, for, with, by) _________ their test next week.
11. The scientists have found the best solution (of, by, for, to) _________ the problem.
12. The police decided to investigate the cause (of, by, for, to) _________ his death.

Suggested Answers:

<p>| | | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) for</td>
<td>(2) in</td>
<td>(3) with</td>
<td>(4) to... for</td>
<td>(5) about</td>
<td>(6) with</td>
<td>(7) to</td>
<td>(8) up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9) about</td>
<td>(10) for</td>
<td>(11) to</td>
<td>(12) of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prepositional Phrases (Prep + NP)

A prepositional phrase is a preposition followed by a noun or noun phrase. For example, in the sentence “The students are having a grammar lesson in the classroom”, the word “in” is a preposition introducing the prepositional phrase “in the classroom”.

A prepositional phrase looks like this: **Preposition + Noun / Pronoun / Gerund**

e.g. I think you should *apologise to your mother* (Prep + Noun).

I must *apologise for disturbing* (Prep + Gerund) you.

Some uses of English prepositional phrases:

1) **As a modifier to a verb**

E.g. *Polar bears usually sleep throughout the winter.*

_They danced in the ballroom for hours._

2) **As a modifier to a noun**

E.g. *The weather in April is very pleasant in Tokyo.*

_My father likes cheeses from Italy with live bacteria._

3) **As the complement of a verb**

E.g. *Peter insisted on seeing her.*

_You should dispose of these old newspapers._

4) **As the complement of a noun**

E.g. *He had a strong thirst for knowledge.*

_They suggested an amendment to the proposal._

5) **As the complement of an adjective or adverb**

E.g. *The government should be attentive to their needs.*

_They stayed separately from their parents._

6) **As the complement of another preposition**
E.g. You can play computer games until after supper.

The cat ran from under the bed.

We can begin a sentence with a prepositional phrase in academic writing.

E.g. With confidence, the determined athletic took up the challenge.

Under the big sofa, the mischievous cats were playing happily.

Inside the palace garden, there are all sorts of beautiful flowers.

Along the wall crawled the large, slimy worm.

We can use a prepositional phrase to express the less important idea in academic writing.

For example:

Peter worked very hard but he failed his exam and everybody felt disappointed.

>> Despite his hard work, Peter failed his exam and everybody felt disappointed.

Labour costs are rising and manufacturers have to relocate their factories to places with cheaper labour costs.

>> Because of rising labour costs, manufacturers have to relocate their factories to places with cheaper labour costs.

Avoid excessive prepositional phrases in academic writing

Prepositional phrases are necessary in writing, but they are often overused in ways that make writing problematic and too tedious.

Example 1:

The decline in the number of businesses owned by locals in the town of Edinburg is a demonstration of the increasing hardship faced in rural communities in the northeast. (Problem: prepositional phrases are used in excess.)

An improved version:

Edinburg’s declining number of locally owned businesses demonstrates the increased hardship faced by northeast rural communities. (It has the same meaning but there are fewer prepositional phrases.)
Example 2:

The major aim of this study was to determine the perceived effects of smoking on the health of patients over a period of 3 years (from 2005 to 2008) in which respondents to the study had been surveyed. (Problem: prepositional phrases are overused.)

An improved version:

This study examined how smoking affected the respondents' health from 2005 to 2008. (The same meaning with fewer prepositional phrases)

Exercise 4 - Use of Prepositional Phrases in Academic Writing

Learn more

Prepositional Phrases (exercises) http://elc.polyu.edu.hk/CiLL/eap/2004/u2/pg34ex3prepositional%20phrases.htm


Features of Academic Writing http://www.uefap.com/writing/feature/complex.htm

Improving Your Writing Style http://www.bestessaytips.com/improve_writing_style.php

Strategies for Reducing Wordiness http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/style/wordiness.html
Exercise 4 – Use of Prepositional Phrases in Academic Writing

Use a prepositional phrase (Prep + NP) to express the less important idea in academic writing.

e.g. Labour costs are rising and manufacturers have to relocate their factories to places with cheaper labour costs. (Because of)

>> Because of rising labour costs, manufacturers have to relocate their factories to places with cheaper labour costs.

1) We have done a study and found that there is a significant relationship between school shootings and playing violent video games. (According to)
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

2) We put a great effort into the project but we still failed to finish it before the deadline. (In spite of)
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

3) We finally obtained the government assistance and we were able to use an up-to-date sampling frame from which to select our sample. (As a result of)
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

4) Many countries around the world are facing economic downturns. However, China’s economy has recorded phenomenal growth for at least five consecutive years. (In contrast to)
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
Suggested Answers:

1. **According to our study**, there is a significant relationship between school shootings and playing violent video games.

2. **In spite of our great effort**, we failed to finish the project before the deadline.

3. **As a result of obtaining the government assistance**, we were able to use an up-to-date sampling frame from which to select our sample.

4. **In contrast to the economic downturns of many countries around the world**, China’s economy has recorded phenomenal growth for at least five consecutive years.

5. **With great care and attention to details**, our key projects proceeded successfully.
Prepositions

References and Resources

For basic information about prepositions, see the following links to EnglishCLUB.com:

Prepositions lists [http://www.englishclub.com/grammar/prepositions-list.htm](http://www.englishclub.com/grammar/prepositions-list.htm)

The following websites contain explanations of the use of prepositions:

[http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/prepositions.htm](http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/prepositions.htm)
[http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/594/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/594/01/)
[http://www.hancockcollege.edu/ow/pdf/Parts%20of%20Speech/How%20to%20use%20prepositions%20effectively.pdf](http://www.hancockcollege.edu/ow/pdf/Parts%20of%20Speech/How%20to%20use%20prepositions%20effectively.pdf)
[http://www.writingcentre.uottawa.ca/hypergrammar/preposit.html](http://www.writingcentre.uottawa.ca/hypergrammar/preposit.html)

The following websites contain quizzes and games on prepositions:

[http://www.englishpage.com/prepositions/prepositions.htm](http://www.englishpage.com/prepositions/prepositions.htm)

Books on Prepositions

- **Test Your Prepositions** by Peter Watcyn-Jones & Jake Allsop
- **Collins Cobuild English Guides 1: Prepositions** by John Sinclair
- **The Preposition Book** (Practice toward mastering English prepositions) by Tom Cole
- **Cambridge Grammar of English** by Ronald Carter & Michael McCarthy, pp. 462-469
- **Collins Cobuild Student’s Grammar** by Dave Willis, pp. 42-43, 56-57, 74-79 and 156-157
- **Cassell’s Students’ English Grammar** by Jake Allsop, pp. 104-123
- **A University Grammar of English** by Randolph Quirk and Sidney Greenbaum, pp. 143-165
- **English Grammar in Use** by Raymond Murphy, pp. 228-260
- **Advanced Grammar in Use** by Martin Hewings, pp. 176-189
- **Understanding and Using English Grammar** by Betty Schrampfer Azar, A-2 and A-24
- **Using English Grammar** by Edward Woods and Nicole McLeod, pp. 210-213 and 283-284
- **Oxford Practice Grammar with answers** by John Eastwood, pp. 284-316
- **Advanced Language Practice with key** by Michael Vince, pp. 131-143