

Prepositions

Prepositions are among our most common words in English. Prepositions can be classified according to form as simple (one word) or phrasal (multiple-word).

Prepositions in a Sentence

1. A preposition links a noun or a pronoun to another word or words in a sentence by expressing a relationship such as a direction, time, or location.

- Prepositions indicating direction: Put your bags under the desk.
Under the desk tells where the bags should be placed.
- Prepositions indicating time: During Christmas break I will visit with my family.
During Christmas break, tells when the visit will take place.
- Prepositions indicating location: I buy my groceries in Moscow, Idaho
In Moscow, Idaho tells where the groceries are bought.

ü In formal writing, avoid putting a preposition at the end of a sentence, if possible.

Informal

This is the argument he disagreed with.

Formal

This is the argument with which he disagreed.

ü Some prepositions, however, can not be rearranged.

He wants to go in.

The mayor was well thought of

The results may be worth worrying about.

Common Simple Prepositions

2. The following list includes some, but not all, of the common prepositions.

About	Beside	Like	Through
Above	Between	Near	Throughout
Across	Beyond	Next	To
After	But	Of	Toward
Against	By	Off	Under
Along	Concerning	On	Underneath
Among	Despite	Onto	Unlike
Around	Down	Out	Until
As	During	Outside	Under
At	Except	Over	Up
Before	For	Past	Upon
Behind	From	Per	With
Below	In	Round	Within
Beneath	Into	Since	Without

Common Phrasal Prepositions

3. Phrasal prepositions consist of a simple preposition preceded by a word from another category, such as an adverb, adjective, or conjunction.

According to	Aside from	Next to
Ahead of	Because of	Out of
Along with	But for	Prior to
Apart from	Contrary to	Thanks to
As for	Except for	Up to
As to	Instead of	

- ü Remembering the right preposition combination is sometimes difficult. If you refer to a dictionary, look up the word with which the preposition is used. The following combinations can be troublesome:

Wrong

apologize about
bored of
capable to
concerned to, on
in search for
independent
interested about
outlook of life
puzzled on
similar with

Revised

apologize for
bored with
capable of
concerned about, over, with
in search of
independent of
interested in, by
outlook on life
puzzled at, by
similar to

Idiomatic Prepositions

4. Prepositions when combined with certain verbs, sometimes have idiomatic meanings in American English. A two-word verb, phrasal verb, often expresses an idiomatic meaning that can not be understood literally.

- We ran across Dr. Magnotto on the way to the bookstore.
- Calvin dropped in on his advisor this morning.
- Ann told me to look her up when I got to Seattle.