

The Preposition

1f. A **preposition** is a word that shows the relationship of a noun or pronoun to another word.

EXAMPLES An insect **under** the table buzzed. [*Under* shows the relationship of *table* to *insect*.]

An insect flew **near** my head. [*Near* shows the relationship of *head* to *flew*.]

COMMONLY USED PREPOSITIONS

about	before	down	in	of	since
above	behind	during	inside	off	through
across	beside	except	into	onto	toward
after	between	for	like	outside	until
at	by	from	near	over	without

The noun or pronoun that the preposition relates another word to is called the **object of the preposition**.

EXAMPLES An insect behind the **table** buzzed. [*Table* is the noun that the preposition *behind* relates to *insect*. *Table* is the object of the preposition *behind*.]

An insect above **it** buzzed. [*It* is the pronoun that the preposition *above* relates to *insect*. *It* is the object of the preposition *above*.]

Prepositions that are made of two or more words are called **compound prepositions**. Some compound prepositions are *according to*, *aside from*, *because of*, *in addition to*, *in front of*, *in place of*, *next to*, and *on account of*.

EXAMPLES We were late **because of** heavy traffic.
May I borrow the book **next to** your elbow?

EXERCISE A Underline the preposition in each of the following sentences. Then, draw two lines under the object of the preposition. Remember to underline all words in a compound preposition.

Example 1. According to the schedule, we will take a break now. [*Schedule* is the object of the compound preposition *According to*.]

1. Everyone was frightened during the scary movie. [Which word is a preposition? Which noun is the object of the preposition?]
2. Without a hat, Ellen's hair always lightens.
3. Jeff, you can use chicken in place of the beef.
4. The beautiful full moon disappeared behind thick clouds.
5. How can I choose between two good choices?

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The object of a preposition may be compound.

EXAMPLES We talked **about nutrition and exercise**. [Both *nutrition* and *exercise* are objects of the preposition *about*.]

This gift is **from Leon and Betty**. [Both *Leon* and *Betty* are objects of the preposition *from*.]

A *prepositional phrase* consists of the preposition, its object, and any modifiers of the object. The modifiers of the object can come before or after the object.

EXAMPLES Marcos is going **to a new school**. [*School* is the object of the preposition *to*. *School* is modified by *a* and *new*.]

Marcos is going **to the school that just opened**. [*School* is the object of the preposition *to*. *School* is modified by *the* and by the clause *that just opened*.]

NOTE The word *to* can start both a prepositional phrase (*to the park*) and an infinitive phrase (*to run*). If *to* is followed by a verb, then the phrase is infinitive and not prepositional.

EXERCISE B Underline the preposition in each of the following sentences. Then, draw two lines under the object of the preposition. Remember to underline all words in a compound object. Each sentence has more than one prepositional phrase.

Examples 1. In the photograph, I am standing next to him and Pamela. [*Photograph* is the object of the preposition *In*. *Him* and *Pamela* are the objects of the preposition *next to*.]

2. When should we get on the ferry that's taking us over the bay? [*Ferry* is the object of the preposition *on*. *Bay* is the object of the preposition *over*.]

6. Because of the fire, smoke billowed from the windows and doors. [Which word is the object of a compound preposition? Which words are compound objects of a preposition?]
7. Since last Monday, I have been leaving the house before you each morning. [Which words are prepositions? Which words are objects of prepositions?]
8. The story is about a horse that gallops next to bicyclists.
9. Aside from a few loose boards, the bridge across the stream looks safe.
10. Look at the perfect blanket of snow on the streets and lawns.
11. Felicia skipped through the open gate in front of her house.
12. In addition to old newspapers, Toni collects cans during recycling drives.
13. Couldn't we use the tomatoes we grew instead of those from a store?
14. Since he got to sit behind the dugout, Cedric stayed through the final inning.
15. Should we climb aboard the boat beside the dock?