

Prepositions

A **preposition** is a word that serves to relate a noun or pronoun to another part of the clause. Prepositions fall into different categories: time, place, movement, or agent/device/instrument. The same word can serve as more than one type of preposition depending on how it functions in a sentence.

Prepositions serve as the first word in prepositional phrases. The suffix “pre” indicates before and therefore, prepositions come before the object of the prepositional phrase. Prepositional phrases serve as adjective phrases if they describe a noun, pronoun, or gerund. Prepositional phrases serve as adverb phrases if they describe a verb, adjective, or adverb.

Prepositions of Time

Prepositions of time offer information about when something occurs. Common prepositions of time include: in, on, by, until, and at. These prepositional phrases serve as adverb phrases.

*I went out with my friends **on** Saturday night.*

*The meeting is **at** 2:30 pm this afternoon.*

*Summer vacation starts **in** May.*

*The essay is due **by** 5 p.m.*

Prepositions of Place

Prepositions of place provide information about where something is located. Common prepositions of place include: in, on, behind, above, across, below, under, between, opposite, near, and far. These prepositions can serve as the beginning of adverb or adjective phrases.

Adverb Phrases

*I live **in** Texas.*

*The book that you are looking for is **on** the third shelf.*

*The cups are located **above** the oven.*

*The library is **across** the courtyard.*

Adjective Phrases

*The house **by** the river is more than a century old.*

*The dog **behind** the fence is friendly to those passing by.*

*The **chandelier** in the dining room is an heirloom.*

Prepositions of Movement

These prepositions offer information about the movement of a noun or pronoun. Common prepositions of movement include: to*, off, through, across, over, down, up, and towards. These prepositions serve as the beginning of adverb phrases.

*We walked **around** the park yesterday.*

*My friends climbed **up** the mountain while the trailhead was still open.*

*I moved **to** Texas at the end of 2015.*

*The family decided to drive their RV **across** the country.*

*There is a hiking trail in Colorado that travels **across** the continental divide.*

Prepositions of Agent/Device/Instrument

Prepositions of agent/device/instrument express a causal relationship between two parts of a clause. Common prepositions in this category include: by, with, and without. These prepositions serve as the beginning of adverb phrases.

*The helpful handouts were created **by** the writing consultants.*

*Her head was filled **with** deadlines, due dates, and project details.*

*You cannot write a strong essay **without** a strong thesis statement.*

Note: A sentence can have more than one prepositional phrase

*You must take the road that winds **through** the mountains to get to Colorado **by** midday.*

*We are going to run **through** the park **on** Sunday morning.*

*The friends are going to meet **at** the restaurant **on** Main Street **at** 5 p.m.*

*The word "to" can start a prepositional phrase or an infinitive phrase. To determine which type of phrase follows "to" look at the word that follows. An infinitive phrase will include a verb after "to" while a prepositional phrase will not include this verb.

Ex.) Infinitive Phrase: *I want **to travel** to Spain this summer.*

Ex.) Prepositional Phrase: *We will travel **to Spain** in June.*