UNIT 14 STRUCTURE WORDS-4 PREPOSITIONS

Structure

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14.0 OBJECTIVES

Our objective in this unit is that after you have made a close study of it you should be able to

- recognise the words functioning as prepositions, distinguish them from the same words functioning as adverbs and conjunctions;
- understand the meanings prepositions have, and use the prepositions correctly according to these meanings.
- understand the rules of usage that govern the use of prepositions and use the prepositions correctly according to these rules, and
- choose the correct preposition to use in certain common expressions involving adjectives, nouns, verbs, etc.

14.1 INTRODUCTION

In the last two units we have studied two types of structure words: articles and auxiliaries. We described articles as a type of noun-determiners and auxiliaries as verb-determiners. We noted that they show all the characteristics of structure words : they occur very frequently, they occur in all styles and varieties of English, they form small and closed classes of words, they function as structural markers, and they are among the words that make the grammatical framework of a sentence. In this unit, we shall take up for study another class of structure words of English called **prepositions**. You must be familiar with this term from your school days. The common definition of a preposition given in school books is that it is a word that shows the relationship between two nouns. In the sentence *The book is on the table*, *on* is said to be a preposition since it shows the relationship between the two nouns *the book* and *the table*. In our discussion, we will rely essentially on this definition.

14.2 RECOGNISING PREPOSITIONS

Words which function as prepositions can be divided into two classes: Class One consists of those words which occur only as prepositions. In other words, wherever a word belonging to this class occurs it can be immediately recognised as a preposition, since it does not occur in any other function. The number of such words is not very large. Some of them are *against, among, at, beside, during, from, into, of, towards,* and *with*. Class Two consists of words which in addition to functioning as prepositions also sometimes function as adverbs or conjunctions. You should be able to recognise when a word of this class is functioning as a preposition, when as an adverb, and so on. We give below some hints on how you can do this.

14.2.1 Prepositions and Adverbs

A preposition always has an object, which is either a noun or a noun-like expression. In the category of noun-like expressions we include pronouns (*me, him, her, it*, etc.), noun phrases (*the boy, the house across the river, an old mango tree, the book which you wanted,* etc.), or a non-interrogative clause beginning with *what, how, whose,* (*what he saw, how he behaved*, etc.). If the word you are checking is followed by an object of this kind it is a preposition. eg.,

The man was standing **behind** me. (Object: *me*)
The book is **on** the table. (Object: *the table*)
He was telling us **about** what he saw last night. (Object: *What he saw last night*)

If the word is not followed by an object, it is most probably an adverb. (An adverb, as you must have learnt at school, is a word or phrase that describes the place, time, manner, instrument, etc. of an action.) The same words occurring in the following sentences are adverbs :

He stayed **behind**. Leave him **behind**.
If you walk **on**, you will come to a railway crossing. (*on* = 'further')
We saw them walking **about**. (*about* = 'here and there')

14.2.2 Prepositions and Conjunctions

Second, some words function both as prepositions and conjunctions. See whether the word is followed by a noun or noun-like expression, or by a clause. If the word is followed by a clause (except of the type mentioned above), it is a conjunction. eg.

They will leave **after** lunch. (*after*: preposition)
They will leave **after** they have eaten. (*after*: conjunction)
I met him the day **before** your arrival. (*before*: preposition)
I met him the day **before** you arrived. (*before*: conjunction)

You thus see that the test for a preposition is whether it is followed by an object. Sometimes you may find that a preposition is at the end of a clause or a sentence, and is not followed by a noun or noun-like expression as object, as in the following sentences :

What is he standing **on**?
The man they were looking **for** has been found.

How, then, do we know that *on* and *for* are functioning as prepositions?

Though the prepositions are not followed by objects in these sentences, we know that they have objects. In the first sentence the object is *what*, since, the question is really as follows :

He is standing on what?

In other words, a preposition is identified by the fact that it always has an object : the object may follow it or it may be elsewhere in the sentence, but so long as an object *can* be identified for the word, it is an indication that the word is a preposition.

Some words belonging to Class Two are: **above, across, after, before, behind, below, down, in, on, over, than, under** and **without.**

14.2.3 Simple and Complex Prepositions

Another point to remember when you are trying to identify prepositions is the distinction between **simple** and **complex** prepositions. Simple prepositions consist of only one word: all the prepositions we have so far mentioned are simple prepositions. Complex prepositions consist of two or three words, eg., **apart from, due to, instead of, out of, in front of, in spite of, in place of, by means of, on account of,** etc. You will see that these complex prepositions, though they are made up of more than one word, behave as single-word prepositions. They are always followed by objects and, what is more, occur only as prepositions. In this sense, they are similar to Class One words cited above.

14.2.4 Passage for Reading

Now that you have learnt how to identify prepositions, read the following passage and try to identify the prepositions. The passage opens Ernest Hemingway's novel **Islands in the Stream.**

From **Islands in the Stream**

Ernest Hemingway

1) The house was built on the highest part of the narrow tongue of land between the harbor and the open sea. It had lasted through three hurricanes and it was built solid as a ship. It was shaded by tall coconut palms that were bent by the trade wind[2] and on the ocean side you could walk out of the door and down the bluff[3] across the white sand and into the Gulf Stream. The water of the Stream was usually a dark blue when you looked out at it when there was no wind. But when you walked out into it there was just the green light of the water over that floury white sand and you could see the shadow of any big fish a long time before he could ever come in close to the beach.

2) It was a safe and fine place to bathe in the day but it was no place to swim at night. At night the sharks came in close to the beach, hunting in the edge of the Stream, and from the upper porch of the house on quiet nights you could hear the splashing of the fish they hunted and if you went down to the beach you could see the phosphorescent wakes[4] they made in the water. At night the sharks had no fear and everything else feared them. But in the day they stayed out away from the clear white sand and if they did come in you could see their shadows a long way away.

3) A man named Thomas Hudson, who was a good painter, lived there in that house and worked there and on the island the greater part of the year. After one has lived in those latitudes long enough the changes of the seasons become as important there as anywhere else and Thomas Hudson, who loved the island, did not want to miss any spring, nor summer, nor any fall or winter.

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[2] *trade wind*: a tropical wind that blows continually towards the equator from the northeast and southeast.
[3] *bluff*: a high cliff
[4] *phosphorescent wake*: a wake is a track left by a body (here a shark) moving through water. *Phosphorescent* means 'giving out light' or 'luminous'.

4) Sometimes the summers were too hot when the wind dropped in August or when the trade winds sometimes failed in June and July. Hurricanes, too, might come in September and October and even in early November and there could be *freak*[5] tropical storms any time from June on. But the true hurricane months have fine weather when there are no storms.

5) Thomas Hudson had studied tropical storms for many years and he could tell from the sky when there was a tropical disturbance long before his barometer showed its presence. He knew how to plot storms and the precautions that should be taken against them. He knew too what it was to live through a hurricane with the other people of the island and the bond that the hurricane made between all people who had been through it. He also knew that hurricanes could be so bad that nothing could live through them. He always thought, though, that if there was ever one that bad he would like to be there for it and go with the house if she went.

14.2.5 Prepositional Phrases

Let us look at the opening sentence of this passage:

The house was built **on** the highest part of the narrow tongue of land **between** the harbour and the open sea.

Let us now introduce the term 'a prepositional phrase'. Any sequence of words consisting of a preposition followed by a noun phrase is called 'a prepositional phrase'. In this sentence there are four prepositional phrases. They are :

i) on the highest part of the narrow tongue of land between the harbour and the open sea
ii) *of* the narrow tongue of land between the harbour and the open sea
iii) *of* land between the harbour and the open sea
iv) between the harbour and the open sea.

As this example shows, a prepositional phrase may be contained within another prepositional phrase.

14.2.6 Identifying Prepositions in the Passage

If you now apply what you have learnt to the passage you will be able to identify the prepositions, both simple and complex, and will also be able to distinguish the words functioning as prepositions from the same words when functioning as adverbs or conjunctions. You will, for example, be able to identify *through* and *as* as simple prepositions in the second sentence; you will be able to identify *out of* as a complex preposition in the third sentence, and the two occurrences of *by*, and the single occurrences of *on, down, across* and *into* as simple prepositions; you will also be able to say with confidence that *out* (in *looked out*) in the fourth sentence is not a preposition (but an adverb), while *of* and *at* are prepositions. You will also be able to say that *before* in the last sentence of the first paragraph is a conjunction and not a preposition.

Check Your Progress 1

1) Identify the prepositions which occur in Paragraphs 2 and 3 of Hemingway's passage. Quote the entire prepositional phrase which the preposition introduces and underline the preposition.

_____

_____

[5] *freak*: unnatural and unusual

2) Return to the passage from Hemingway and answer the following questions. Wherever possible, answer the question with a prepositional phrase only.

Para 1

i) Where was the house built?

ii) Where was the narrow tongue of land located?

iii) How can you say that the house was a strongly built structure?

iv) What was the house shaded by?

v) On which side of the house was the bluff?

vi) How could you reach the Gulf Stream from the house?

vii) What colour did the water of the Stream usually look when there was no wind?

viii) What colour was the water when you walked into the Stream?

Para 2

ix) When was it safe to swim in the Stream?

x) Why wasn't it safe to swim there at night?

xi) What were the sharks doing close to the beach at night?

xii) What and from which part of the house could you hear the splashing of the fish as the sharks hunted them?

xiii) What did you have to do to see the phosphorescent wakes the sharks made in the water?

xiv) Where were the sharks during the day? Why didn't they come close to the beach?

Para 3

xv) Where did Thomas Hudson live?

xvi) Where did he work the greater part of the year?

xvii) Why did Thomas Hudson live and work on the island the greater part of the year?

Para 4

xviii) When did the summers get too hot?

xix) When were the hurricanes likely to come?

xx) When could one expect freak tropical storms?

Para 5

xxi) How could Thomas Hudson tell when there was going to be a tropical disturbance?

xxii) Hudson knew how to plot storms. What other things (relating to storms) did he know'?

xxiii) What effect did the hurricane have on the people who lived through it?

xxiv) How bad could the hurricanes be?

xxv) What did Hudson think he would do if a really bad hurricane hit the islands?

14.3 MEANINGS OF PREPOSITIONS

Prepositions are a type of structure words. As we stated in Unit 21, structure words have meanings of a different kind from content words. We cannot give the meanings of prepositions by pointing to things, or drawing pictures, or by giving synonymous words. The meaning of a preposition comes out only when we take it in association with the meanings of other words in a sentence, usually the meanings of two nouns or noun-like expressions. One of these nouns (or noun-like expressions) is the object; the other occurs somewhere before the preposition. The meaning of the preposition consists in the relationship that it shows between these two nouns. For example, in the sentence 'The book is on the table,' the preposition *on* shows the relationship between the two objects 'the book' and 'the table'. The preposition *on* has its own meaning only to the extent that it shows that the book is lying on the surface of the table, not *under* the table, *near* the table, etc. We can describe the structural meaning of prepositions like *on, under, near* by saying that they describe the **location of an object**. Some other prepositions which denote location are *above, after, around, at, before, behind, below, beneath, between, in, into, off, opposite* and *with*. Each of these prepositions describes the location in its own way. For example, *at* describes location at a point of space (He was standing *at* the bus-stop.), *on* describes location on a surface, *in* describes location in an enclosed area (eg., *in* the box). Some prepositions do not describe location but movement towards a location, which may be a point (eg, *to* in: He's going *to* Delhi), or a surface (*onto*), or an enclosed area (*into*); some prepositions describe movement away from a location (e.g. *away from* a point, *off* a surface, *out of* an enclosed area) and so on; some locational prepositions describe the position of one object in relation to another either in the vertical dimension (eg. *above, below, over, under*), or the horizontal dimension (*in front of, before, after, behind*); either in terms of distance (*near, beside, about*), or in terms of relative position (*between, opposite*), etc.; still other locational prepositions take into account the motion of an object relative to another object, eg., The train went *through* the tunnel (going in at one end and coming out at another; compare: the train went *into* the tunnel); He walked *past* me, etc.

Other prepositions are used for describing the time of an event, action, state, etc. The time may refer either to a point of time, or duration: *He left at six o'clock* (point), *He worked for five hours* (period). The prepositions *since* and *at* occur with points of time, the prepositions *in, for, during* with periods of time. However, the use of time-prepositions is controlled by various rules of usage which we shall deal with below.

The prepositions *because of, from, for* and *through* are used when a **cause, reason,** or **purpose** is to be expressed; eg.

Our progress was slow *because of* the darkness. (Reason)

She suffered *from* heart disease. (Cause)

The game was lost *through* poor teamwork. (Reason)
I did it *for* money. (Purpose)

The prepositions *in, with* and *by* occur in prepositional phrases which express the ideas of **manner, means,** or **instrument** :

She wrote *in* a careless way. (Manner)
He spoke *with* confidence. (Manner)
I went *by* bus. (Means)
He sliced it *with* a knife. (Instrument)

With also expresses **accompaniment** (eg., She went *with* her father).

Some other meanings expressed by specific prepositions are as follows :

Origin: *from*: He comes *from* Tamil Nadu. I received the prize *from* him.

Recipient: *to*: He gave the prize *to* me. The ball went *to* him.

Attachment or **belonging**: *of*: the corners *of* a triangle; ... the day *of* the week

Support : *for, with* : I am *for* a compromise. We are *with* you.

Opposition : *against*: I am *against* this proposal.

Unexpectedness: *in spite of, despite*: *In spite of* his bad health, my father is always cheerful.

Reference: *with regard to, as for*: *As for me*, I am a vegetarian.

Exception: *but, except, apart from*: She couldn't eat anything *but* rice.

Check Your Progress 2

The passage given below describes a car accident. We have removed the prepositions and provided numbered blanks in their places. Taking your clues from the meaning, supply the correct preposition for each blank :

The children were thrown (1) ..... the floor and their mother, clutching the baby, was thrown (2) ..... the door (3) ..... the ground; the old lady was thrown (4) ..... the front seat. The car turned over once and landed right-side-up (5) ..... a ditch (6) ..... the side (7) ..... the road. Bailey remained (8) ..... the driver's seat (9) ..... the cat clinging (10) ..... his neck (11) ..... a caterpillar.

Bailey removed the cat (12) ..... his neck (13) ..... both hands and flung it (14) ..... the window (15) ..... the side (16) ..... a pine tree. Then he got (17) ..... the car and started looking (18) ..... the children's mother. She was

sitting (19) ..... the side (20) ..... the red gutted ditch, holding the screaming baby, but she had only a cut (21) ..... her face and a broken shoulder.

14.4 THE USE OF PREPOSITIONS

14.4.1 The Role of Usage

There are several other meanings which prepositions express and it is not possible to list all of them. One reason for this is that the precise meaning implied in certain uses is very difficult to express in other words. The preposition *of* for example, occurs in several different contexts like the following: a collection *of* papers, at the age *of* five, very kind *of* him, made *of* cotton, the width *of* the road, the size *of* a cricket ball, 17th *of* June, etc. All these uses of *of* cannot be said to have a common 'meaning'; nor is it necessary for us to know the exact shade of meaning in each case. It is enough to see its uses and become familiar with them through reading. The use of prepositions, as of some other structure words, is largely a matter of usage, i.e. of the way they are actually used in English. No fixed rules, or definite meanings, can be stated for them. We can, however, point to some examples which illustrate the importance of usage in the matter of prepositions.

In the second paragraph of Hemingway's passage, the author uses some prepositional phrases denoting time: *in the day, at night, on quiet nights*. Some more time-phrases occur later: *in August, in June and July, through the hurricane, for many years*, etc. We said above that the use of prepositions to refer to time reflects the distinction between a point of time and period of time. For example, *at* is used for a point of time, in for a period of time. Why, then, does Hemingway say *in the day* but *at night*? Doesn't night have duration? Why does he later use *on* with *nights*? Is the use of *in* and *during*, which express duration, with *night* prohibited? What about sentences like

> I woke up several times *in* the night.
> He was called three times *during* the night.

The use of the preposition in these cases is said to be decided by whether we are thinking of the night as a point of time or duration. However, we cannot say *at day* or *at morning* even if we are thinking of these as points of time. It is, in fact, a matter of usage that we say *in the morning, in the evening, in the day*, but *at night*. Though *in the night* and *during the night* are used sometimes to emphasise duration, they can generally be replaced by *at night*. Further, there are certain time-expressions which do not take any preposition: these are phrases beginning with words like *each, every, next, last*, etc. eg., he goes to work *every day*. He went home *last week*. Time expressions like *today, tomorrow, yesterday* also do not take any preposition.

Though usage plays an important role in the use of time prepositions, it is helpful to remember certain general points. For example, *on* is used for referring to days and nights as periods of time, (*on Monday, on quiet nights*); *for, during, over, through, throughout* indicate duration and answer the question *How long*? as in *through the hurricane, for the summer*, etc.; *in* is used for periods longer or shorter than a day (*in the evening, in August, in 1975*); *until, till, up to* and *through* are used with time expressions which represent the end-point of a period; *from* marks the beginning of a time period (eg. *from* March **till/through** September); *before* and *after* indicate relation between two times or events, and so on.

Similarly, prepositions of place also carry some idiomatic meanings in common usage. We stated above that *at* describes location at a point of space while *in* describes location in an enclosed area. But the use of *at* with human subjects often carries the further meaning that the location is temporary, while the use of *in* implies that it is more permanent. For example, when we say *He's at the hospital*, the meaning is that he (perhaps a doctor) is there at the moment of speaking and will

soon be elsewhere, whereas if we say *He's in hospital* we refer to a patient who has been admitted to the hospital for purposes of treatment and will be there for some time. (Note also the use of the definite article in the former sentence and its absence in the latter). Another example of this type is the use of *at* and *to* in the following sentences:

He threw the ball *to* me.
He threw the ball *at* me.

We mentioned earlier that *to* is used when **movement** to a location is to be expressed, *at* when **position** on a location is to be indicated. In the above sentences, however, movement occurs in both sentences. The difference in meaning is therefore not one of movement and position: it lies elsewhere. The first sentence means that he threw the ball to me to catch, the second sentence means that he threw the ball with the intention of hitting me. This difference of meaning is due to usage.

Can you state the difference of meaning in the following pairs of sentences involving some other prepositions?

He shot *at* the President.
He shot the President.

_____

_____

They sat *on* the grass.
They sat *in* the grass.

_____

_____

They all rushed *to* the President.
They all rushed *at* the President.

_____

_____

14.4.2 Choosing Prepositions Correctly

How do you make sure that you use the prepositions correctly?

First, of course, you must make sure that the place where you are about to use a preposition is one where a preposition can be used according to the rules of English grammar. For example, prepositions are not used after transitively used verbs in English. The following are some of the cases where a preposition is often mistakenly used with transitive verbs :

I *answered* his question. (Not 'I answered to ...')
I *asked* him who he was. (Not 'I asked to him ...')
1 *believe* you. (= I accept what you are saying as true)
(Not 'I believe *in* you.')
They *discussed* their plans (Not 'They discussed about ...')
She *married* him. (Not 'She married with/to him.')
I *ordered* him to leave. (Not 'I ordered to him ...')
I *paid* him for his work. (Not 'I paid to him ...')
1 *requested* the Chief Guest to say a few words. (Not 'I requested to ..')

Secondly, you must also make sure that the preposition you are going to use is correct from the viewpoint of meaning. For example, you should not say *I have left some money for you in the box* when you have actually left the money *on* (top of) the box. Similarly, you should not say *The book is in the shelf,* since a *shelf* is not enclosed: it is a surface, or a set of surfaces. On the other hand, it would be right to say *They sat in the grass,* if they sat hiding with tall grass enclosing them on all sides.

Thirdly, you must also make sure that you have followed the rules of usage. For example, you should not say *He shot the President* if the President is still alive (say, *He shot at the President);* similarly say *They all rushed at the President* only if their intention was to attack the president, not if they were seeking his help. Use *rushed to* in the second case.

14.4.3 Idiomatic Uses

But apart from these matters of grammar, meaning, and usage, there are some well-established idiomatic associations between certain content words (adjectives, nouns and verbs) and certain prepositions which we are not free to violate. For example, we say 'congratulate someone *on* (not *for*) something,' be angry *with* (not *at*) somebody, 'to arrive *at* (not *to*) a place,' 'to go *on* (not *in*) a bus, 'proof *of* (not *for*) something,' 'reason for (not *of*) something,' and so on. There are no rules to guide you in this matter but some learner's dictionaries can be of help. These associations between content words and prepositions are of a fixed nature and are not really matters of usage, since usage is generally concerned with meaning. We give below a select list of some common associations of this type:

afraid *of*; agree *with* a person; agree *on* a matter; agree *to* a suggestion; angry *with* a person; angry *about* something; apologize *for* something; apologize *to* someone; ask *for* something; bad *at* some activity (eg. tennis); believe *in* (God, socialism, etc.); care *for* (= like, look after); care *about* (= consider important); clever *at* (an activity); depend/dependence *on* someone or something; die *of* (a disease); discussion *about* (something); discuss *with* (somebody); divide *into* (parts); dream *of* (= imagine); dream *about* (while asleep); effect *on* (someone or something); get *into*, (or *out of*) a car; get *on* (*to*) (or *off*) a bus, train or ship; good *at* (not *in*) languages; ill *with* (not *of*) a disease; kind *to* (not *with*) animals etc.; laugh *at*; listen *to*; look *at*; look *after* (= take care of); look *for* (= try to find); proof *of* (not *for*) something; reason *for* (not *of*) something; remind someone *of* somebody or something; rude *to* (someone); search *for* (= look for); shocked *at* (something); shout *at* (someone); smile *at*; speak *to* or *with*; succeed *in*; success *in*; suffer *from;* surprised *at*; talk *to* someone: think *of* or *about*; tremble *with* (fear); typical *of* (some person or place); write *to* (someone).

In these examples the preposition follows the content words; in the following examples it precedes the content word. Once again, the preposition is fixed. Note also the presence or absence of the definite article:

(He is) *at* the cinema/ a party
go *for* a walk, a run, a swim
written *in* ink, *in* pencil
at the end (of a story, novel, film, etc.)

in the end (= finally)
in time (= not late)
on time (= at the right time)
on the radio/the telephone/the TV

Finally, also among the idiomatic cases are the instances where we expect a preposition but none is actually used. Here are some cases of this type :

i) *At* is dropped in the expression '(At) what time....?'
What time will you come?

ii) The preposition *of* is dropped in expressions (including questions) containing references to age, colour, flavour, height, length, shape, size, volume, etc. eg.,

These curtains are the same *colour* as ours. (Not 'of the same colour')
What *flovour* ice cream do you prefer? (Not 'of ice cream')
My brother is the same *age* as you. (Not 'of (the same age')
He is the same *height* as he was two years ago. (Not 'of the same height')

iii) *In* is often dropped, mainly in spoken English, before the expressions *this way, that way, the same way, another way*, etc.:

He doesn't *speak the way* I do.
Do it *this* way.

iv) *To* is not used before *home*.
I went home late last night (Not '...to home.') !

Check Your Progress 3

1) Insert a preposition in the blanks if *necessary*:

i) I asked(1) ..... him(2) ..... help.
ii) I promised (3) ..... him a share (4) ..... the profits.
iii) He told (5) ..... the children to stay awake (6) ..... 9 o'clock if they wanted to hear the story.
iv) He told lies (7) ..... his friends.
v) You must try to get (8) ..... home (9) ..... time (10) ..... dinner.
vi) The crowd threw stones (11) ..... the police; the police replied (12) ..... firing tear gas shells (13) ..... them.
vii) He was so afraid (14) ..... missing the train that he reached (15) ..... the station three hours (16) ..... the arrival time (17) ..... the train.
viii) This picture reminds (18) ..... me (19) ..... my childhood.
ix) The manager ordered (20) ..... the staff to return (21) ..... work at once.
x) I'm interested (22) ..... cricket but I'm not very good (23) ..... it.
xi) (24) ..... what colour is her hair?
xii) What size (25) ..... paper do you want?

2) Supply the correct preposition at the end of the following sentences, *wherever required* :

i) Who are you so angry .....?
ii) What are you so angry .....?
iii) No one likes being laughed .....
iv) I need something to write .....
v) What are you staring .....?
vi) This is the young man I told you .....
vii) He needs other children to play .....
viii) Which train are you taking .....?
ix) What are you discussing .....?
x) Success is one thing you can never be absolutely sure .....
xi) What did he die .....?
xii) A village is where I was born and a village is where I'd like to go back .....
xiii) Maths is one subject he has no trouble .....
xiv) Where are you thinking of going .....?
xv) That was a match worth going a long way to watch .....

14.5 LET US SUM UP

Let us now summarise the main points made in the present unit:

i) Prepositions are structure words.
ii) Some words function only as prepositions and can be recognised easily.

iii) Some words function as prepositions as well as adverbs. When functioning as prepositions they can be recognised by the presence of an object.

iv) Some words function both as prepositions and conjunctions. The conjunctions are recognised by the presence of a clause after them.

v) Prepositions are simple or complex. Complex prepositions consist of more than one word.

vi) A construction consisting of a preposition + its object is called a prepositional phrase. A prepositional phrase may contain another prepositional phrase within it.

vii) Prepositions convey various types of meanings, eg., position, direction, time, cause, reason, purpose, manner, means, etc. It is important to know the precise meaning in which a preposition is used.

viii) The use of prepositions is not entirely determined by their meanings; usage is also important. Different prepositions may be used to convey the same meaning in different contexts.

ix) In certain common expressions involving adjectives, nouns and verbs, the use of prepositions is idiomatic. These expressions must be learnt as single units.

14.6 KEY WORDS

Preposition: A preposition is a structure word which usually has a noun or a noun-like expression as its object.

Object of a preposition: The object of a preposition is a noun or a noun-like expression which completes the structure begun by the preposition.

Simple preposition: A simple preposition is a preposition consisting of a single word.

Complex preposition: A complex preposition is a preposition consisting of more than one word.

Prepositional phrase: A preposition and its object together form a prepositional phrase.

Locational preposition: A locational preposition is a preposition that describes the location of an object. The location may be location **on** a surface, **at** a point of space, **in** an enclosed area, etc. Some locational prepositions do not exactly describe a location but a movement towards, or away from, a location; others describe the relative position of an object on the vertical or horizontal dimension.

Time preposition: Prepositions which describe the time of an event, action, state, etc. are time prepositions. The time may refer either to a point of time, or duration.

Preposition of cause, reason, manner, means, etc. : Depending on the kind of meaning conveyed by it a preposition may be labelled a preposition of cause, reason, manner, means, etc.

Prepositional usage: Refers to those features of the actual use of prepositions which cannot be predicted from the meanings, etc. generally ascribed to them.

Idiomatic use of prepositions: The use (or non-use) of prepositions in certain common expressions is fixed and is not affected by the rules of grammar or usage. They are instances of the idiomatic use of prepositions.

ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

1) **Prepositions in Para 2** : **in** the day; **at** night; **at** night; **to** the beach; **in** the edge of the Stream; **of** the Stream; **from** the upper porch of the house; **of** the house; **on** quiet nights; **of** the fish they hunted; **to** the beach; **in** the water; **At** night; **in** the day; **away from** the clear white sand (**away from**: complex preposition)

Prepositions in Para 3 : **in** that house; **on** the island; **of** the year; **in** those latitudes; **of** the seasons.

2) **Para I**

i) On the highest part of the narrow tongue of land between the harbour and the open sea.
ii) Between the harbour and the open sea.
iii) It had lasted through three hurricanes.
iv) By tall coconut palms.
v) On the ocean side.
vi) You walked out of the door down the bluff and across the white sand.
vii) It looked dark blue.
viii) Green

Para 2

ix) In the day
x) It wasn't safe because the sharks came in close to the beach.
xi) Hunting fish in the edge of the Stream.
xii) On quiet nights, from the upper porch.
xiii) You had to go down to the beach.
xiv) Out in Stream, away from the clear white sand. They feared the men (bathing on the beach).

Para 3

xv) In that house.
xvi) In that house and on the island.
xvii) He didn't want to miss the changes of the seasons which were important to him.

Para 4

xviii) The summers got too hot when the wind dropped in August or when the trade winds sometimes failed in June or July.
xix) In September and October and even in early November.
xx) Any time from June on.

Para 5

xxi) By looking at the sky.
xxii) He knew what precautions should be taken against the storms; he knew what it was to live through a hurricane with the other people of the island; he knew the bond that the hurricane made between all the people who had been through it; he also knew that the hurricanes could be so bad that nothing could live through them.
xxiii) It made a bond between them (i.e. brought them close together).
xxiv) The hurricanes could be so bad that nothing could live through them.
xxv) He thought he would still be there and go with the house if she went.

Check Your Progress 2

1) to 2) out of 3) onto 4) into 5) in 6) on/by 7) of 8) in 9) with 10) to 11) like 12) from 13) with 14) out of 15) against 16) of 17) out of 18) for 19) against/by 20) of 21) on/ down

Check Your Progress 3

1) 1) No preposition 2) for 3) No preposition 4) of 5) No preposition 6) till 7) to 8) No preposition 9) in 10) for 11) at 12) by 13) at 14) of 15) No preposition 16) before 17) of 18) No preposition 19) of 20) No preposition 21) to 22) in 23) at 24) No preposition 25) No preposition

2) i) with ii) about iii) at iv) on/with/about v) at vi) about vii) with viii) No preposition ix) No preposition x) of xi) of xii) to xiii) with xiv) No preposition xv) No preposition.