Prepositional Phrases

A sentence can include a subject, a verb, and an object, and still not make sense.

Consider the sentence: **Maria drives her son**.

Maria is the subject. *Drives* is the verb. *Her son* is the object. What's missing?

If the sentence had been **Maria drives a Toyota** then it would be complete. However, in the sentence **Maria drives her son**, we need more information to know where or how she drives her son.

For example: **Maria drives her son crazy**.

Or **Maria drives her son *to school***.

In the second example above, the phrase *to school* tells us where the action is taking place. It is called a **prepositional phrase**.

A prepositional phrase answers the question *what*, *when*, or *where*. A prepositional phrase must contain two parts:

1. a preposition
2. an object noun (known as the object of the preposition and not to be confused with the object of the sentence).

In the above sentence, **Maria drives her son to school**, *to* is the preposition and *school* is the object of the preposition.

Common Prepositions [1]

about	**before**	**by**	**inside**	**over**
above	**behind**	**during**	**into**	**through**
across	**below**	**except**	**of**	**to**
among	**beneath**	**for**	**off**	**toward**
around	**beside**	**from**	**on**	**under**
at	**between**	**in**	**onto**	**with**

The object of the preposition refers to the word that directly follows the preposition. Several prepositional phrases can be lined up in one sentence. In the sentences below, circle all the prepositions and underline the objects of the prepositions.

Maria drives her son to school in Watsonville. She then goes to work at Macy's in Capitola Mall. After work, she picks up her son from school, and they go for a walk on the beach or they hang out at the Boardwalk in Santa Cruz.

[1] Taken from Langan, John. *Sentence Skills*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997.