

Name: _____ Date: _____

Punctuating Prepositional Phrases

A *preposition* is a word that indicates location, time, or direction.
Here's a list of some of the most common prepositions:

| | | | | | | | |
|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|
| <i>about</i> | <i>around</i> | <i>beside(s)</i> | <i>down</i> | <i>in front of</i> | <i>off</i> | <i>regarding</i> | <i>until</i> |
| <i>above</i> | <i>at</i> | <i>between</i> | <i>during</i> | <i>inside</i> | <i>on</i> | <i>since</i> | <i>up</i> |
| <i>across</i> | <i>because of</i> | <i>beyond</i> | <i>except</i> | <i>instead of</i> | <i>onto</i> | <i>through</i> | <i>upon</i> |
| <i>after</i> | <i>before</i> | <i>but</i> | <i>excepting</i> | <i>into</i> | <i>out</i> | <i>throughout</i> | <i>up to</i> |
| <i>against</i> | <i>behind</i> | <i>by</i> | <i>for</i> | <i>like</i> | <i>outside</i> | <i>to</i> | <i>with</i> |
| <i>along</i> | <i>below</i> | <i>concerning</i> | <i>from</i> | <i>near</i> | <i>over</i> | <i>toward</i> | <i>within</i> |
| <i>among</i> | <i>beneath</i> | <i>despite</i> | <i>in</i> | <i>of</i> | <i>past</i> | <i>under</i> | <i>without</i> |

Prepositions followed by a noun, pronoun, gerund, or clause form *prepositional phrases*. The word (or words) that follows the preposition in a prepositional phrase is called the *object of the preposition*. Prepositional phrases usually follow one of two formulas:

1 Preposition + object of preposition (noun, pronoun, gerund, or clause)

Example: *I left my backpack at home today.*

In this phrase, *at* is the preposition, and *home* is the object.

2 Preposition + modifier (a word that adds description) + object of preposition (noun, pronoun, gerund, or clause)

Example: *My sister received a very large present from my grandmother.*

In this phrase, *from* is the preposition, *my* is the modifier, and *grandmother* is the object of the preposition.

So, what do prepositional phrases do? Prepositional phrases can act as *adjectives* or *adverbs* and modify nouns, pronouns, and clauses.

As an ADJECTIVE, prepositional phrases answer the question: *Which one?*

Example:

The book on the table is Sarah's.

Which book is Sarah's? The one on the table.
The prepositional phrase *on the table* is acting as an adjective and modifying the noun *book*.

As an ADVERB, prepositional phrases answer the questions: *How? When? Where? Why?*

Example:

Before school, Josh begged his mom to take him to the bakery.

When did Josh beg his mom to take him to the bakery? Before school. The prepositional phrase *Before school* is acting as an adverb, modifying the verb *begged*.

Here is a rule to remember when punctuating prepositional phrases: **A comma should never be placed after the preposition, or in other words, between the preposition and its object. If the object has a modifier, there shouldn't be a comma before the modifier either!**

Incorrect: *Liz went to, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, for the Summer Olympics.*

To is the preposition and *Rio de Janeiro, Brazil* is the object. So there should NOT be a comma between *to* and *Rio de Janeiro*.

Incorrect: *The spinach in, my soup tastes bitter.*

In is the preposition and *soup* is the object. So there should NOT be a comma between *in* and *my*.

Correct: *I felt the soft sand under my feet as we walked along the beach.*

Under my feet and *along the beach* are both prepositional phrases, which do not require any commas.

Directions: In each sentence below, underline the prepositional phrase and circle the word or words the phrase is modifying. On the line, write ADJ if the prepositional phrase is acting as an adjective, and ADV if the phrase is acting as an adverb. We did the first one for you.

1. Liz is going (to stay) at my house this weekend. ADV

2. The fresh bagels on the counter smell delicious. _____

3. I ran around the track five times today. _____

4. Mackenzie is going to meet us at the restaurant. _____

Directions: Cross out the commas that do not belong in the sentences below. If the sentence is punctuated correctly, write C next to it.

5. The clothes in, the hamper have been there for, three weeks.

6. My sister Isabel went to, the park yesterday.

7. I am traveling to London in a few weeks for a gymnastics tournament.

8. Jared's friends from, his old school will be at the party.

9. According to Marcus, the best time to go running is in, the morning.

10. The shop on Maple Street that you wanted to visit is closed today, but it's open tomorrow.

11. Zane lives in the house across, the street from the soccer field.