



# Meniffee Valley Campus Writing Center

## Directed Learning Activity: Prepositions and Prepositional Phrases

Mount San Jacinto Community College,  
Meniffee Valley Campus  
Writing Center

It is extremely important for student writers to understand the function of prepositions and prepositional phrases. Once you understand what a prepositional phrase IS, you will know exactly what it ISN'T. A prepositional phrase will NEVER encompass a subject or a verb, and this is especially important to know when you are editing your writing for run-on sentences and fragments. Many English instructors even tell their students to cover up or cross out prepositional phrases in their writing as they are editing and proofreading; this activity helps the students recognize more easily the subjects and verbs in their sentences. Just as important, this activity can also help students recognize if they are missing those necessary elements.

For this activity, you will need to use a computer.

**Go to [writingcenter.unlv.edu/writing/prepositions.html](http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/writing/prepositions.html). This is a page from the University of Nevada's online writing center. Read the section "Prepositions" and then fill in the blanks below.**

A preposition is a word that is positioned (placed) before a \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ and shows the \_\_\_\_\_ between that word and another word in the sentence. The relationship expressed by a preposition is frequently one of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, or \_\_\_\_\_.

Now, copy ten of the most common prepositions below.

**Next, read the section entitled “The Object of the Preposition” and answer these questions:**

- What is the object of a preposition?
- Can a preposition have more than one object?

**Next, read the section “Prepositional Phrases.” Answer the questions and fill in the blanks below.**

Sometimes, there can be other words between the preposition and its object. What are these words?

Give two examples from the list of examples on the website.

A prepositional phrase can act as either an \_\_\_\_\_ or an \_\_\_\_\_. As an \_\_\_\_\_, it modifies (describes or restricts the meaning of) a \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ and follows that word. When a prepositional phrase modifies a noun or pronoun, it answers the question \_\_\_\_\_?

When a prepositional phrase modifies a \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, or \_\_\_\_\_, it acts as an \_\_\_\_\_. As an adverb, a prepositional phrase answers the question \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, or \_\_\_\_\_?

In academic writing, is it acceptable to end a sentence with a preposition?

Once you have finished reading the web page and have completed this activity, on a separate sheet of paper write down as many prepositional phrases that you can. Copy some from the web page to get started, but then try to think of your own. Take your page of prepositional phrases and this activity sheet to a tutor in the writing center. Go over the answers together.

Student's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Tutor's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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