

The Preposition

Recognize a *preposition* when you see one.

Prepositions are the words that indicate location. Usually, prepositions show this location in the physical world. Check out the three examples below:



The puppy
is **on** the floor.



The puppy is **in** the
trash can.



The puppy
is **beside** the phone.

On, **in**, and **beside** are all prepositions. They are showing *where* the puppy is. Prepositions can also show location in *time*. Read the next three examples:

At midnight, Jill craved mashed potatoes with grape jelly.

In the spring, I always vow to plant tomatoes but end up buying them at the supermarket.

During the marathon, Iggy's legs complained with sharp pains shooting up his thighs.

At midnight, **in the spring**, and **during the marathon** all show location in time. Because there are so many possible locations, there are quite a few prepositions. Below is the complete list.

about	concerning	onto
above	despite	on top of
according to	down	out
across	during	out of
after	except	outside
against	except for	over
along	excepting	past
along with	for	regarding
among	from	round
apart from	in	since
around	in addition to	through
as	in back of	throughout
as for	in case of	till
at	in front of	to
because of	in place of	toward
before	inside	under
behind	in spite of	underneath

below	instead of	unlike
beneath	into	until
beside	like	up
between	near	upon
beyond	next	up to
but*	of	with
by	off	within
by means of	on	without

* **But** is very seldom a preposition. When it is used as a preposition, **but** means the same as **except**—*Everyone ate frog legs but Jamie*. **But** usually functions as a coordinating conjunction.

Understand how to form a prepositional phrase.

Prepositions generally introduce prepositional phrases. Prepositional phrases look like this:

PREPOSITION + **OPTIONAL MODIFIERS** + **NOUN, PRONOUN, OR GERUND**

Here are some examples:

At school

At = preposition; **school** = noun.

According to us

According to = preposition; **us** = pronoun.

By chewing

By = preposition; **chewing** = gerund.

Under the stove

Under = preposition; **the** = modifier; **stove** = noun.

In the crumb-filled, rumpled sheets

In = preposition; **the**, **crumb-filled**, **rumpled** = modifiers; **sheets** = noun.

Realize that some prepositions also function as subordinate conjunctions.

Some prepositions also function as subordinate conjunctions. These prepositions are **after**, **as**, **before**, **since**, and **until**. A subordinate conjunction will have both a subject and a verb following it, forming a subordinate clause.

Look at these examples:

After Sam and Esmerelda kissed goodnight

After = subordinate conjunction; **Sam, Esmerelda** = subjects; **kissed** = verb.

As Jerome buckled on the parachute

As = subordinate conjunction; **Jerome** = subject; **buckled** = verb.

Before I eat these frog legs

Before = subordinate conjunction; **I** = subject; **eat** = verb.

Since we have enjoyed the squid eyeball stew

Since = subordinate conjunction; **we** = subject; **have enjoyed** = verb.

Until your hiccups stop

Until = subordinate conjunction; **hiccups** = subject; **stop** = verb.

If you find a noun [with or without modifiers] following one of these five prepositions, then all you have is a prepositional phrase. Look at these examples:

After the killer calculus test

After = preposition; **the, killer, calculus** = modifiers; **test** = noun.

As a good parent

As = preposition; **a, good** = modifiers; **parent** = noun.

Before dinner

Before = preposition; **dinner** = noun.

Since the breakup

Since = preposition; **the** = modifier; **breakup** = noun.

Until midnight

Until = preposition; **midnight** = noun.



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