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Prepositions: An Introduction

Use this information sheet to complete the activities that follow.

Prepositions are words that indicate direction, position, time, or location. Common prepositions include words like *in, on, to, from, of,* and *with*. See the chart below for other examples.

about	before	despite	like	since	up
above	behind	down	near	through	upon
across	below	during	of	throughout	with
after	beneath	except	off	till	within
against	beside	for	on onto	to	without
along	between	from	out	toward	in front of
among	beyond	in	outside	under	ahead of
around	but	inside	over	underneath	next to
at	by	into	past	until	on top of

Example: Read the sentence below by placing different prepositions from the parentheses in the blank. Any one could fit, depending on the intended meaning.

The book is _____ the table. (on, under, on top of, above, behind, upon)

In the sentence *The book is on the table*, the word *on* is a preposition and the word *table* is called the *object of the preposition*, or the noun that *on* refers to. The phrase *on the table* is called a prepositional phrase, telling where the book is located. Look at the underlined phrases below.

Examples: The cat <u>on the porch</u> belongs <u>to my neighbor</u>, Mrs. Klein, who adopts cats <u>from the animal shelter</u>. She gave one cat <u>to me</u>.

In the underlined phrases, the prepositions are *on, to, from,* and *to*. The objects of the prepositions are *porch, neighbor, animal shelter,* and *me*. Check that a prepositional phrase has a noun or pronoun as the object.

Because prepositions take objects, any pronoun should be an object form. This rule also applies when the preposition has a compound object.
INCORRECT: Alan will go over <u>to the game</u> <u>with Allie and I</u>.
CORRECT: Alan will go over <u>to the game</u> <u>with Allie and me</u>.
To check, ask yourself, "Would I say *with I* or *with me*?" *With me* is correct.

In general, prepositional phrases do not affect subject-verb agreement.
Example: Cara's love <u>of musicals</u> makes others love them too.
Though *musicals* is plural, the subject of the sentence is *love*, which is singular. Therefore the verb *makes* must also be singular. The phrase doesn't change this.

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Preposition Activities

Use the information sheet provided to complete the activities below.

On your own paper, place each sentence below in the center of a separate preposition web and fill in the surrounding bubbles with prepositions that would make sense in the sentence, depending on the intended meaning. Write the prepositional phrases under each web.

1. This large package is _____ Angelo.

2. The horse walked _____ you.

3. How many times will Kylie kick the ball _____ the goalie?

Now write a sentence of your own and place it in the center of a web below. Leave the web blank. Exchange webs with a partner, complete them, and check your work together. Circle each prepositional phrase.

4.

Circle the correct verb form for the sentences below. Underline any prepositional phrases in between the subject and the verb and mentally remove them to check subject-verb agreement.

5. The roses in this vase (are, is) absolutely beautiful.
6. Anita's preparation for the tests (has been, have been) impressive.
7. All classes in the school except art (is, are) open to all students.
8. The student of languages (has, have) an advantage when applying to college.
9. Aside from you and me, Kelly and Pablo from the community center (is, are) volunteering for the fund drive.
10. The leaders from all the nations (has, have) spoken on this issue.

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More Work with Prepositions

Sometimes you might mistake another kind of phrase for a prepositional phrase. For example, do not confuse a prepositional phrase with a subordinate clause.

Example: Before we go, take your coat from the closet.

Even though *before* can be used as a preposition, *before we go* is a subordinate clause. *We* is the subject and *go* is the verb. *Before* is an adverb introducing the clause. Therefore, *from the closet* is the only prepositional phrase in the sentence.

Do not confuse a prepositional phrase with the infinitive form of a verb.

Example: The class likes to perform in musicals that we produce at school.

Even though *to* can be a preposition, *to perform* is the infinitive form of a verb. The prepositional phrases in this sentence are *in musicals* and *at school*. Remember that a preposition takes an object, which must be a noun or pronoun. If the word following *to* is a verb, then *to* is not a preposition.

Use the information above and the guidelines on prepositions to complete the activity. In the sentences below underline each prepositional phrase. When you are finished, ask a partner to check your work. Also discuss any subordinate clauses or infinitive forms of verbs you find in the sentences.
Example: Bart ran <u>into the wall</u> <u>with his bike,</u> but he was okay.

1. Gillian ran quickly down the stairs, and her mother told her to stop before she got hurt.

HINT: There is a subordinate clause in this sentence. Write it below.

_____

HINT: There is also an infinitive in this sentence. Write it here: _____

2. Despite the pain in his knee, Franco ran into the end zone for a touchdown.

3. Many divers love to take underwater pictures of marine life.

4. Juanita used to play the guitar in a band with Celia and me.

5. During the summer, many people like to travel away from home and tour places around the world.