

The Preposition

1f. A *preposition* is a word that shows the relationship of a noun or a pronoun to another word.

By changing the prepositions in the following examples, you can change the relationship of *Saint Bernard* to *bed* and *Everything* to *beach*.

The Saint Bernard slept near my bed.	Everything about the beach was wonderful.
The Saint Bernard slept under my bed.	Everything except the beach was wonderful.
The Saint Bernard slept on my bed.	Everything from the beach was wonderful.
The Saint Bernard slept beside by bed.	Everything on the beach was wonderful.

The noun or pronoun that a preposition relates another word to is called the *object of the preposition*. In the examples above, *bed* and *beach* are the objects of the prepositions.

Commonly Used Prepositions

aboard	below	from	since
about	beneath	in	through
above	beside	inside	throughout
across	besides	into	till
after	between	like	to
against	beyond	near	toward
along	but (meaning <i>except</i>)	of	under
amid		off	underneath
among	by	on	until
around	concerning	onto	up
as	down	out	upon
at	during	outside	with
before	except	over	within
behind	for	past	without

SKILLS FOCUS

Identify and use prepositions.

NOTE Many words in the preceding list can also be used as adverbs. To be sure that a word is used as a preposition, ask whether the word relates a noun or a pronoun to another word. Compare the following sentences:

Welcome **aboard**. [adverb]

Welcome **aboard** our boat. [preposition]

The runner fell **behind**. [adverb]

The paper fell **behind** the cabinet. [preposition]

Prepositions that consist of two or more words are called *compound prepositions*.

Compound Prepositions

according to	in place of
as of	in spite of
aside from	instead of
because of	next to
by means of	on account of
in addition to	out of
in front of	prior to

NOTE As a rule, the object of the preposition follows the preposition.

EXAMPLE Add a teaspoon of freshly ground **cinnamon**.
[*Cinnamon is the object of the preposition of.*]

Sometimes, however, the object of the preposition comes before the preposition.

EXAMPLE He is a singer **whom** I've never heard of before.
[*Whom is the object of the preposition of.*]

Objects of prepositions may be compound.

EXAMPLES Kyoko called **to Nancy** and **me**.
[Both *Nancy* and *me* are objects of the preposition *to*.]

The marbles were scattered **under** the **table** and **chairs**.
[Both *table* and *chairs* are objects of the preposition *under*.]

Think as a Reader/Writer

In casual speech and informal writing, people often end sentences with prepositions. However, in formal speech and writing, it is best to avoid doing so.

Reference Note

For more information about **prepositional phrases**, see page 116.

Reference Note

For more information about **infinitives**, see page 131.

HELP

Sentences in Exercise 23 may have a compound object of a preposition.

SKILLS FOCUS

Identify and use prepositional phrases correctly.

The preposition, its object, and any modifiers of the object together form a **prepositional phrase**. Notice in the following examples that modifiers of the object of the preposition can come before or after the object.

EXAMPLES Joe went **to the nearest store**. [The noun *store* is the object of the preposition *to*. The adjectives *the* and *nearest* modify the noun *store*.]

Is she one **of those trailing behind**? [The pronoun *those* is the object of the preposition *of*. *Those* is modified by the participial phrase *trailing behind*.]

The kitten hopped **into the big paper bag that Anita brought**. [The noun *bag* is the object of the preposition *into*. *Bag* is modified by the adjectives *the*, *big*, and *paper* and by the subordinate clause *that Anita brought*.]

NOTE Be careful not to confuse a prepositional phrase that begins with *to* (*to town*, *to her club*) with an infinitive that begins with *to* (*to run*, *to be seen*). Remember: A prepositional phrase always has a noun or a pronoun as an object.

Exercise 23 Identifying Prepositions and Their Objects

Identify each preposition and its object in the following sentences.

EXAMPLE 1. I've been studying Spanish in school for three years.
1. *in—school; for—years*

- Last week, my Spanish class went on a field trip to Monterrey, Mexico, 140 miles southwest of Laredo, Texas, where we live.
- Señora Ayala, our teacher, wanted us to practice speaking and reading Spanish outside the classroom.
- Everyone was supposed to speak only Spanish during the trip.
- We first went to the *Museo de la Historia Mexicana* and saw colorful displays of art and crafts and many other cultural exhibits.
- J. D., Leo, Yolanda, and I looked around the museum and read the information about each exhibit.
- Besides the museum, we visited the *Barrio Antiguo*, a beautiful district that dates from the seventeenth century.
- Later, we decided to go to a restaurant near the *Gran Plaza*, the big square.
- As Señora Ayala walked among our tables, she listened to us order our tacos, enchiladas, and frijoles in Spanish.

9. We walked around the *Gran Plaza* and then went into the cathedral, which was completed in the eighteenth century.
10. As we got ready to leave, we chatted in Spanish about all of the interesting things we had seen.

Exercise 24 Using Appropriate Prepositions

Use appropriate prepositions to fill the blanks in the following sentences.

- EXAMPLE** 1. Tasty, fresh lobster is a treat, _____ many diners.
1. *Tasty, fresh lobster is a treat, according to many diners.*
1. Lobsters are large, green or gray, bottom-dwelling shellfish that live _____ the sea.
 2. The people who fish _____ these creatures are hardy and very determined folk.
 3. Using small, specially built boats and a number _____ cratelike traps made _____ wood, they go to work.
 4. Lobster fishing _____ the United States has been practiced only _____ the last century; before that time people thought lobster was not good to eat.
 5. For centuries, farmers used the plentiful lobsters as fertilizer _____ their gardens.
 6. To catch lobsters, the fishers first lower traps _____ chunks _____ bait _____ the sea.
 7. Then the fishers mark the location _____ colorful floats that identify the owners.
 8. If the fishers are lucky, the lobster enters the trap _____ the part called the *kitchen*, tries to escape _____ another opening called the *shark's mouth*, and then is trapped _____ the section called the *parlor*.
 9. Fishers call a lobster _____ only one claw a *cull*; one _____ any claws is called a *pistol* or a *buffalo*.
 10. By law, undersized lobsters must be returned _____ the sea.

The Conjunction

1g. A *conjunction* is a word that joins words or word groups.

A *coordinating conjunction* joins words or word groups that are used in the same way.

SKILLS FOCUS

Identify and use conjunctions. Identify and use coordinating conjunctions.