



PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY

The Writing Center Presents:

Prepositions



Developed by Keith Evans

What are Prepositions?

- A preposition is a word that links a phrase, usually a noun or a pronoun, to the rest of the the sentence.
- A preposition introduces an object of the sentence and identifies its location.
- A preposition can also be used to denote when something happened.
- An easy way to remember this is to look at the word preposition and realize it has the word “position” in it.

Rules Concerning Prepositions

- A preposition is always used to define the relationship between other words in a sentence.
- The part of a sentence following a preposition is called a prepositional phrase.
- A preposition must be followed by a noun, never a verb.
- Add -ing to the end of a verb to make it a gerund (verb in noun form)
- It is grammatically incorrect to end a sentence with a preposition.

Special Rules

- The word “to” is often used as a preposition. However, unlike normal prepositions, it can be used in front of verbs.
- When this happens, “to” is no longer a preposition, but rather a part of the infinitive of the verb “to go.”
 - I.e. I am going to run.

Forming a Prepositional Phrase

A preposition should always come in front of the prepositional phrase.

Preposition + Optional modifiers (i.e., A, the, etc.) + Object (Noun, pronoun or gerund).

Some prepositions can also act as subordinating conjunctions.

These prepositions will be followed by a subject and a verb.

Common Prepositions

There are over 100 prepositions in the English language.

Because there are so many possible locations, spatial prepositions are among the most numerous.

The most common are:

- At
- On
- Up
- In
- Around
- Before
- Behind
- Under
- Over
- Outside

Temporal Prepositions

- Denoting a specific point in time:
 - On (used with days)
 - At (A time of day)
 - In/within (a duration of time)
 - By (a deadline)
- “For” is used to measure time.
- “Since” denotes a specific date or time in the past.

Other Common Prepositions

- To denote the object of a verb
 - At
 - Of
 - For
- Movement:
 - Towards
 - To
- Not all movement or locations require prepositions:
 - Down/Upstairs
 - Home
 - In/Outside
 - Down/uptown

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