

15. PREPOSITIONS

Read the groups of words (phrases) listed below and answer the questions in the spaces provided.

A. *with the blue high-top sneakers*

1. What is the first word in the phrase? _____
2. What is the last word in the phrase? _____
3. What part of speech is the last word? _____
4. Write a sentence in which you use the phrase.

B. *after the campfire*

1. What is the first word in the phrase? _____
2. What is the last word in the phrase? _____
3. What part of speech is the last word? _____
4. Write a sentence in which you use the phrase.

C. *like a chipmunk*

1. What is the first word in the phrase? _____
2. What is the last word in the phrase? _____
3. What part of speech is the last word? _____
4. Write a sentence in which you use the phrase.

What do the words *chipmunk*, *campfire*, and *sneakers* have in common? They're all nouns. The first words in the phrase (*like*, *after*, and *with*) also have something in common. They're all **prepositions**.

Definition

A **preposition** is a word that shows a relationship between a noun or pronoun and some other word in the sentence.

Look at the sentences you wrote. In each case, the preposition connects the noun following it with another word that you included in the sentence. For example:

The basketball player with the blue high-top sneakers played defense.

In the above sentence the preposition *with* connects *sneakers* to *player*. Now look again at the sentences you wrote. What two words do the prepositions in each of these sentences connect? List these words in the appropriate space below:

- A. _____
B. _____
C. _____

Definition

A **prepositional phrase** always begins with a preposition and ends with a noun or a pronoun. Like any phrase, it is a group of related words that does *not* contain a subject and verb and does *not* express a complete thought.

In the next grammar book in this series, you will learn more about the prepositional phrase.

Listed below are the most commonly used prepositions. In order to recognize a preposition in a sentence, it would probably help to memorize this list. The list is in four alphabetized, evenly divided columns to make them easier to memorize.

about	below	from	throughout
above	beneath	in	to
across	beside	into	toward
after	besides	like	under
against	between	near	underneath
along	beyond	of	until
amid	but (meaning except)	off	unto
among	by	on	up
around	down	over	upon
at	during	past	with
before	except	since	within
behind	for	through	without

Sometimes a preposition may be a group of words:

on account of	in spite of
because of	instead of
according to	out of

Many prepositions can also function as adverbs:

The balloon went *up*.

In this sentence the word *up* answers the question *went, where* and, thus, functions as an adverb. If *up* were a preposition, it would be followed by a noun or pronoun:

The balloon went *up* the *tree*.

HINT

A preposition is always found at the *beginning* of a *phrase*, with a *noun* or *pronoun* at the *end* of the phrase:

The ants live *beside* the soap *dish*.

PREPOSITION EXERCISES

A. *Directions:* Underline the prepositions in the following sentences. There can be more than one preposition in each sentence.

EXAMPLE: Around the rock the rascal with the purple patches ran.

1. Underneath the porch the black spiders make huge webs.
2. The small child toddled toward the cookie.
3. The car travelled past the diner.
4. Everyone but Henry carried an instrument.
5. "On the signal, get ready to go," yelled the stern referee. "If you move off your mark, you will be disqualified."
6. Among the trees in the garden, I found the rose with the crimson petals.
7. Many of the hockey players skated without helmets.
8. Over the river and through the woods to grandmother's house we go.
9. There are several warty toads between the rocks near the pond.
10. Will you come to work before school or after classes?

B. *Directions:* Underline the prepositions in the following sentences. There can be more than one preposition in each sentence.

EXAMPLE: The ball rolled into the street.

1. Without helium the balloon will not go above the trees and into the sky.

2. At dawn the weary student finally finished his essay about the life cycle of the common cheese whizzie.
3. Fifteen students will stay in the library until Tuesday to break the All-School Library Sitting Record.
4. Who would want to sit amid all those books, away from pizza and cheeseburgers?
5. No one except those with a dedication beyond my comprehension.
6. At midnight we should go into the library and see these devoted students.
7. Like sentries at their posts, these students always remain awake and alert.
8. Throughout history their fame will spread.
9. "By Jove," Mrs. Fezziwig said. "During the dance you were behind me the entire time, Mr. Fezziwig. Now stay beside me."
10. "Upon my word," replied Mr. Fezziwig. "I will, my dear. This is the best party since the last one."

C. *Directions:* Underline the prepositions in the following sentences. There can be more than one preposition in each sentence.

EXAMPLE: The students stayed for the movie.

TICKET TO FREEDOM

1. Before the Civil War a group of blacks and whites in the North established the Underground Railroad.
2. They used the railroad term *station* for a hiding place and the term *conductor* for men and women helpers.
3. One of the most famous conductors of the Underground Railroad was Harriet Tubman, a former slave.
4. She made nineteen trips into the South during the 1850s and helped more than 300 slaves escape.
5. Most of the people who operated the Underground Railroad were free blacks from the North.
6. Some individual whites provided runaways with food, clothing, directions, and places to hide.
7. Most slaves escaped by themselves without anyone's help.
8. More than 75,000 slaves received help from the Underground Railroad before 1863.
9. This figure was only a small fraction of the total number of blacks in captivity.
10. Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation set the majority of blacks free during the Civil War.

D. *Directions:* Use the following combinations of prepositions and prepositional phrases in sentences.

EXAMPLE: to without her mother

Myra went to the train station without her mother.

1. since without a computer

2. like beside the railroad tracks

3. among into the dark closet

4. below about the strange bubbles

5. across near the tattooed lady

6. under around the race track

7. down beneath the icy pond

E. *Directions:* Put parentheses around each prepositional phrase. Underline the preposition in each phrase.

EXAMPLE: Myra went (to the train station) (without her mother.)

1. Sneezzy, Grumpy, and Doc went below into the mines and returned with jewels.

2. I wanted to go to the game, but my friends wanted to stay at home.

3. Jake stayed at the club until dinner time.

4. Before class meet me behind the lockers.

5. For the past week Sarah has come to class without her book.