



PART A Working with Prepositional Phrases

PART B Prepositions in Common Expressions

PART A

Working with Prepositional Phrases

Prepositions are words like *about*, *at*, *behind*, *into*, *of*, *on*, and *with*.^{*} They are followed by a noun or a pronoun, which is called the **object** of the preposition. The preposition and its object are called a **prepositional phrase**.

1. Ms. Fairworth hurried *to the computer lab*.
2. Students *with a 3.5 grade average* will receive a special award.
3. Traffic *at this corner* is dangerously heavy.

- In sentence 1, the prepositional phrase *to the computer lab* explains where Ms. Fairworth hurried.
- In sentence 2, the prepositional phrase *with a 3.5 grade average* describes which students will receive a special award.
- Which is the prepositional phrase in sentence 3 and what word does it describe?

^{*} For more work on prepositions, see Chapter 24, "The Simple Sentence," Part B.

In/On for Time

Two prepositions often confused are *in* and *on*. Use *in* before months not followed by a specific date, before seasons, and before years that do not include specific dates.

1. *In March*, the skating rink will finally open for business.
2. Rona expects to pay off her car *in 2008*.

Use *on* before days of the week, before holidays, and before months if a date follows.

3. *On Sunday*, the Kingston family spent the day at the beach.
4. *On January 6*, Bernard left for a month of mountain climbing.

In/On for Place

In means *inside* a place.

1. Tonia put her DVD player *in the bedroom*.
2. Many country groups got their start *in Nashville*.

On means *on top of or at a particular place*.

3. That mess *on your desk* needs to be cleared off.
4. Pizza Palace will be opening a new parlor *on Highland Avenue*.

PRACTICE 1

Fill in the correct prepositions in the following sentences. Be especially careful of *in* and *on*.

1. _____ a little town _____ the coast of the Dominican Republic, baseball is a way of life.
2. Once known for cattle and sugar, San Pedro de Macoris has been exporting world-class baseball players _____ the major leagues _____ fifty years.

3. Hall-of-Famer Juan Marichal and homerun hitter Sammy Sosa are just two Dominicans who have made names _____ themselves _____ the majors.
4. Other stars born in or _____ San Pedro de Macoris are Pedro Martinez, Felipe Alou, Rico Carty, and Manny Ramirez.
5. Baseball was first introduced _____ the island _____ American mill and plantation owners, who encouraged their workers to learn the game.
6. Because equipment was expensive, boys from poor families often batted _____ a tree branch, using a rolled-up sock _____ place _____ a ball.
7. Each young man dreamed that he would be discovered _____ the baseball scouts and sent to play _____ *las ligas mayores*.
8. Amazing numbers of these players succeeded, and many Dominican athletes later returned to invest _____ the local economy.
9. For example, Sammy Sosa owns office buildings _____ San Pedro, and Jose Rijo is building a baseball academy _____ youngsters.
10. Major league teams, including the Dodgers, Giants, and Expos, now operate year-round training camps _____ the island, hoping to cultivate the athletes _____ tomorrow.

PART B

Prepositions in Common Expressions

Prepositions are often combined with other words to form fixed expressions. Determining the correct preposition in these expressions can sometimes be confusing. Following is a list of some troublesome expressions with prepositions. Consult a dictionary if you need help with others.

Expressions with Prepositions

Expression	Example
according to	<i>According to</i> the directions, this flap fits here.
acquainted with	Tom became <i>acquainted with</i> his classmates.
addicted to	He is <i>addicted to</i> soap operas.
afraid of	Tanya is <i>afraid of</i> flying.
agree on (a plan)	Can we <i>agree on</i> our next step?
agree to (something or another's proposal)	Roberta <i>agreed to</i> her secretary's request for a raise.
angry about or at (a thing)	Jake seemed <i>angry about</i> his meager bonus.
angry with (a person)	Sonia couldn't stay <i>angry with</i> Felipe.
apply for (a position)	By accident, the twins <i>applied for</i> the same job.
approve of	Do you <i>approve of</i> bilingual education?
argue about (an issue)	I hate <i>arguing about</i> money.
argue with (a person)	Edna <i>argues with</i> everyone about everything.
capable of	Mario is <i>capable of</i> accomplishing anything he attempts.
complain about (a situation)	Patients <i>complained about</i> the long wait to see the dentist.
complain to (a person)	Knee-deep in snow, Jed vowed to <i>complain to</i> a maintenance person.
comply with	Each contestant must <i>comply with</i> contest regulations.
consist of	This article <i>consists of</i> nothing but false accusations and half-truths.
contrast with	The light blue shirt <i>contrasts sharply with</i> the dark brown tie.
correspond with (write)	We <i>corresponded with</i> her for two months before we met.
deal with	Ron <i>deals well with</i> temporary setbacks.
depend on	Miriam can be <i>depended on</i> to say the embarrassing thing.
differ from (something)	A DVD player <i>differs from</i> a VCR in many ways.
differ with (a person)	Kathleen <i>differs with</i> you on the gun control issue.
different from	Children are often <i>different from</i> their parents.
displeased with	Ms. Withers was <i>displeased with</i> her doctor's advice to eat less fat.
fond of	Ed is <i>fond of</i> his pet tarantula.

(continued)

Expressions with Prepositions

(continued)

Expression	Example
grateful for	Be <i>grateful for</i> having so many good friends.
grateful to (someone)	The team was <i>grateful to</i> the coach for his inspiration and confidence.
identical with	Scott's ideas are often <i>identical with</i> mine.
inferior to	Saturday's performance was <i>inferior to</i> the one I saw last week.
in search of	I hate to go <i>in search of</i> change at the last moment before the toll.
interested in	Willa is <i>interested in</i> results, not excuses.
interfere with	That dripping faucet <i>interferes with</i> my concentration.
object to	Martin <i>objected to</i> the judge's comment.
protect against	This heavy wool scarf will <i>protect</i> your throat <i>against</i> the cold.
reason with	It's hard to <i>reason with</i> an angry person.
rely on	If Toni made that promise, you can <i>rely on</i> it.
reply to	He wrote twice, but the president did not <i>reply to</i> his letters.
responsible for	Kit is <i>responsible for</i> making two copies of each document.
sensitive to	Professor Godfried is <i>sensitive to</i> his students' concerns.
shocked at	We were <i>shocked at</i> the graphic violence in that PG-rated film.
similar to	Some poisonous mushrooms appear quite <i>similar to</i> the harmless kind.
speak with (someone)	Geraldine will <i>speak with</i> her supervisor about a raise.
specialize in	This disc jockey <i>specializes in</i> jazz of the 1920s and the 1930s.
succeed in	Oscar <i>succeeded in</i> painting the roof in less than five hours.
superior to	It's clear that the remake is <i>superior to</i> the original.
take advantage of	Celia <i>took advantage of</i> the snow day to visit the science museum.
worry about	Never <i>worry about</i> more than one problem at a time.

PRACTICE 2 Fill in the preposition that correctly completes each of the following expressions.

1. The number one goal of 76 percent of college freshmen today is making a lot of money, according _____ the annual American Freshman survey.
2. Every year since 1966, the Higher Education Research Institute has been responsible _____ this survey of hundreds of thousands of college students.
3. The fascinating results show what students each year hope for, worry _____, complain _____, depend _____, and hold dear.
4. In sharp contrast _____ today's freshmen, freshmen surveyed in the 1970s cared most about finding "a meaningful philosophy of life."
5. The majority of today's freshmen are more interested _____ politics, activism, and volunteer work than students in recent years, but they are less interested _____ religion.
6. Students of different races are more sensitive _____ the problem of racism and more likely to be closely acquainted _____ someone of a different race.
7. Just 30 percent of students today call themselves "liberal," but their more liberal opinions on certain social issues contrast _____ those of students in the past.
8. For example, students who object _____ the death penalty have increased to 32.2 percent in the last 20 years, and 57.9 percent believe that same-sex couples should have the right to marry.
9. Dealing _____ many pressures, college students report that their physical and emotional health is at a record low.
10. Experts expect students to rely even more _____ finding sources of strength—people and beliefs _____ which they can depend.

PRACTICE 3 REVIEW

Proofread this essay for preposition errors. Cross out the errors and write corrections above the lines.

Dr. Daniel Hale Williams, Pioneer Surgeon

(1) On a lifetime of many successes, Dr. Daniel Hale Williams's greatest achievement was to pioneer open-heart surgery.

(2) Young Williams, an African American who grew up in the mid-1800s, knew poverty. (3) He relied to his wits to get by, becoming in turn a shoemaker, musician, and barber. (4) At the age of twenty-two, he met Dr. Henry Palmer, who soon saw he was capable on becoming a physician. (5) Williams's medical education, the usual one at the time, consisted in a two-year apprenticeship with Dr. Palmer, followed by three years at the Chicago Medical College, where he specialized on surgery.

(6) It was an exciting time in medicine, for surgeons had just started using antiseptics to protect patients for infection. (7) "Dr. Dan," as he was now called, became an expert on the new surgical techniques and a leader in Chicago's medical and African-American communities. (8) In 1891, he succeeded with opening Provident Hospital, the first interracial hospital in the United States. (9) There, African Americans were assured first-rate medical care; moreover, black interns and nurses received thorough professional training.

(10) It was to Provident Hospital that frightened friends brought James Cornish in July 9, 1893. (11) Near death, the young man had received a deep knife gash near his heart during a fight. (12) Sensitive to the dangerous situation, Dr. Williams decided to operate immediately. (13) According with eyewitnesses, he first made a six-inch incision and removed Cornish's fifth rib. (14) Then he repaired a torn artery and stitched up the punctured sac surrounding the heart. (15) Fifty-one days later, Cornish left the hospital, recovered and deeply grateful for Dr. Williams to his life. (16) The age of open-heart surgery had begun.

(17) Much lay ahead for Dr. Williams. (18) He was responsible to reorganizing the Freedmen's Hospital at Howard University from 1894 to 1898; on 1913, he accepted an invitation from the American College of Surgeons and succeeded on becoming its only African-American charter member. (19) The high point of his life, however, remained that night in 1893.



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http://webster.commnet.edu/grammar/quizzes/preposition_quiz1.htm

Graded preposition quiz.

<http://www.pacificnet.net/~sperling/quiz/prep4.html>

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