

## What is a Preposition?

A **preposition** links nouns, pronouns and phrases to other words in a sentence. The word or phrase that the preposition introduces is called the object of the preposition. A preposition usually indicates the temporal, spatial or logical relationship of its object to the rest of the sentence as in the following examples:

The book is **on** the table.

The book is **beneath** the table.

The book is leaning **against** the table.

The book is **beside** the table.

She held the book **over** the table.

She read the book **during** class.

In each of the preceding sentences, a preposition locates the noun "book" in space or in time.

A prepositional phrase is made up of the preposition, its object and any associated adjectives or adverbs. A prepositional phrase can function as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb. There are about 150 prepositions in English. Yet this is a very small number when you think of the thousands of other words (nouns, verbs etc). We use individual prepositions more frequently than other individual words. In fact, the prepositions **of**, **to** and **in** are among the ten most frequent words in English. Here is a short list of 74 of the more common one-word prepositions. Many of these prepositions have more than one meaning. Please refer to a dictionary for precise meaning and usage.

aboard	before	down	minus	plus	under
about	behind	during	near	regarding	underneath
above	below	except	of	round	unlike
across	beneath	excepting	off	save	until
after	beside	excluding	on	since	up
against	besides	following	onto	than	upon
along	between	for	opposite	through	versus
amid	beyond	from	out	throughout	via
among	but	in	outside	till	with
anti	by	inside	over	to	within
around	concerning	into	past	toward	without
as	considering	like	per	towards	while
at	despite				

Each of the **highlighted** words in the following sentences is a preposition:

The children climbed the mountain **without** fear.

*In this sentence, the preposition "without" introduces the noun "fear." The prepositional phrase "without fear" functions as an adverb describing how the children climbed.*

There was rejoicing **throughout** the land when the government was defeated.

*Here, the preposition "throughout" introduces the noun phrase "the land." The prepositional phrase acts as an adverb describing the location of the rejoicing.*

The spider crawled slowly **along** the banister.

*The preposition "along" introduces the noun phrase "the banister" and the prepositional phrase "along the banister" acts as an adverb, describing where the spider crawled.*

The dog is hiding **under** the porch because it knows it will be punished **for** chewing up a new pair **of** shoes.

*Here the preposition "under" introduces the prepositional phrase "under the porch," which acts as an adverb modifying the compound verb "is hiding."*

The screenwriter searched **for** the manuscript he was certain was somewhere **in** his office.

*Similarly in this sentence, the preposition "in" introduces a prepositional phrase "in his office," which acts as an adverb describing the location of the missing papers.*