



Stalking the Wild Preposition

What's a preposition?

- A preposition indicates the relationship of a noun or a pronoun to other parts of a sentence. It is positioned before a noun or pronoun and is thus “pre-positioned.”

What's a prepositional phrase?

- A **prepositional phrase** is a group of words containing a preposition and a noun or pronoun, but it is NEVER the subject of the sentence.

What do these wild prepositions allow a writer to do?

- They help to make sentences more interesting and less choppy sounding. If prepositions are used correctly, they combine ideas to make a sentence more complex.

Jane runs. It's a sentence that's correct but not very interesting. How about telling the reader where Jane runs or how fast she is going?

A preposition gives a reader more information about the **space, type, or time of the subject matter**. Ask **who, what, where, when, and how** about a subject, and you are bound to hunt down the elusive wild preposition.

Let's re-write our simple sentence: **Jane runs.**

Add some information: **Jane runs up the hill for a bucket of water.**

This is a more interesting sentence! Both “up the hill” and “for a bucket of water” tell us more about Jane's trip. They are both prepositional phrases.

Let's look at more examples:

- Example: One **of her classes** is English. [“of her classes” helps defines *what* “one,” the pronoun, is—it's an English class. **Of** is a preposition and indicates the type class the student is taking.]
- Example: She took the job **with the president**. [“with the president” helps describe for

whom she is working. **With** is the preposition and, in this case, indicates the type.]

- Example: ***In the young girl's bedroom***, dolls lined the shelves. [“in the young girl’s bedroom” modifies “dolls”—it defines *where* the dolls are located. **In** is the preposition.]

Although most prepositions are single words, sometimes multiple words comprise prepositions. It helps to remember that nine prepositions are used 90% of the time—*at, by, or, from, in, of, on, to, with*. Below is a list of common prepositions, but there are more than 150 total words in the English language that can be used as prepositions.

above	before	for	off	to
across	beneath	from	on	toward
after	between	in	onto	under
against	by	in addition to	out	until
ahead of	by means of	in case of	out of	up
around	concerning	in front of	outside	up to
as	despite	in spite of	over	upon
at	down	into	past	via
away from	during	like	since	with
because	except	near	through	within
because of	except for	of	till	without