



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.

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|------------|-------------|----------------|---------|---------|
| 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 |