

Prepositions

Prepositions join **nouns** and **pronouns** to **other words** in a sentence.

1) He is anxious **about** his performance.

The preposition **about** joins the noun **performance** to the other words in the sentence.

Prepositions are **placed** at the **beginning of prepositional phrases** to show a relationship between the **object of the preposition** and another word in the sentence.

Sometimes, **prepositions** join **nouns or pronouns** to certain **adjectives** when they occur after **linking verbs**.

2) He is **anxious about** his performance.

The preposition **about** begins the prepositional phrase **about his performance**.

The **preposition** shows the relationship between the **noun performance** (the **object of the preposition**) and the **subject complement anxious**.

Remember not to confuse the object of the preposition with the subject of the sentence.

The **subject** will **never** be found within the **prepositional phrase**.

3) **He** is anxious about his performance. (**He** is the subject of the sentence.)
He is anxious about his **performance**. (**Performance** is the object of the preposition.)

Using Prepositions Efficiently

- Use the preposition **among** when referring to **three or more persons or things**.
Example: The doll was found **among** the other toys.
- Use the preposition **between** when referring to **two persons or things**.
Example: The photographer was stuck **between** two socialites.
- Use the preposition **behind** instead of **in back of**.
Example: You will notice the copy machine is no longer **behind** the desk. (Not **in back of** the desk)

- Use the preposition *in* to indicate a **position or location** and use the preposition *into* to indicate an **interior location**.
Examples: This is the best golf course in Ontario.
The family moved into a different apartment.
- Use the preposition *like* to **introduce a noun or pronoun, not a clause**.
Examples: She looks like my Scottish friend. (*like* introduces a **prepositional phrase**)
She acts as if (not *like*) she wants to travel to Scotland. (*as if* introduces a **clause**)
- Do **not** omit those **prepositions** necessary to **clarify a relationship**.
Examples: I will graduate from Humber College.
These classes are more suitable for children than for adults.
What kind of word-processing program do you use?
- Avoid wordiness by **omitting unnecessary prepositions**, particularly the word *of*.
Examples: The mess was cleaned off the table. (Not '*off of the table*')
Both cameras were stolen from the studio. (Not '*both of the cameras*')
We decided that all the applications should be considered. (Not '*all of the applications*')

It is essential to learn how **various prepositions function in relation to the other parts of speech**. Use the dictionary to verify the meanings of prepositions and to check which prepositions are commonly used with certain nouns, adjectives, and verbs. The section entitled '**Idiomatic Use of Prepositions**' in Canadian Business English by Mary Ellen Guffey and Patricia Burke includes a partial list of **English idioms** that require specific prepositions to complete the meanings of specific words.

A List of Commonly Used Prepositions

about	below	from	on	according to
beside	in	on account of	after	between
in addition to	over	along with	but	in spite of
to	among	by	into	under
around	during	like	until	at
except	of	upon	before	for