

Prepositions

Prepositions answer the question "which one?", "what kind?", "how much?", or "how many?" about a noun. A preposition is a helper word for nouns, explaining which noun is being written about in a sentence.

Common prepositions include:

- on
- in
- from
- to
- at

For example, in these sentences, the prepositions are *emphasized*:

Each Linux user is mapped *to* an SELinux user *by* an SELinux policy.

After configuring the guest NUMA node topology, specify the huge page size and the guest NUMA nodeset *in* the <memoryBacking> element *in* the guest XML.

A prepositional phrase contains the object that relates to the noun being helped by the preposition. In the following examples, the prepositional phrases are in brackets ([and]):

Each Linux user is mapped [*to* an SELinux user] [*by* an SELinux policy].

After configuring the guest NUMA node topology, specify the huge page size and the guest NUMA nodeset [*in* the <memoryBacking> element] [*in* the guest XML].

Identifying prepositional phrases

To find a prepositional phrase, locate the preposition and then ask "what?". For example:

Each Linux user is mapped *to* what?

Each Linux user is mapped *to* an SELinux user *by* what?

Each Linux user is mapped *to* an SELinux user *by* an SELinux policy.

Choosing the correct preposition

In English, each preposition has a specific meaning. Using the wrong preposition confuses a reader, or even changes the meaning of a sentence. Choosing the right

one to lead your prepositional phrase is important.

- on** Literally, "on top of", as when a cat sits on a mat. In tech writing, "on" is used to express an action performed at a computer you have logged in to, and some GUI actions. For example:

Click the icon on the desktop.

Run the setup script on the workstation virtual machine.

- in** Literally, "inside", as when a cat sits inside of a box, or when a number is found in a mathematical set. In tech writing, "in" is used to express an action performed to a non-binary file, or to show membership to a group or system or network or framework. For example:

Click the icon in the upper-right corner of the desktop.

Log in to the workstation virtual machine.

The user managing the foo service must be in the wheel group.

- to** Literally, "toward", as when a cat walks to its food. The word "to" implies that you are moving in the direction of something not yet reached. For example:

Drag the file to the trash icon.

Upload the file to the server.

- from** Literally, "away", as when a cat comes indoors from the garden. The word "from" implies that you have been in one place, and are now leaving that place behind. For example:

If you do not want to delete the file, move the file icon from the trash.

Download the file from the server so you can edit it.

Exercise

Identify the prepositions and prepositional phrases, if they exist, in each sentence:

1. The configuration file is installed in the `/etc` directory.
2. Set the required parameters in the fields under the Performance options panel.
3. The `foo` command instructs the kernel to pipe the core dump to the `abrt-hook-ccpp` program.
4. In Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7, the `systemctl` utility replaces a number of power management commands used in previous versions of the Red Hat Enterprise Linux system.

5. Log in to the workstation virtual machine.