

Sentence structure: prepositional phrases in focus

GRAMMAR

LEVEL Advanced | NUMBER C1_3051G_EN | LANGUAGE English

lingoda





Goals

- Can recognise a range of prepositional phrases and explain their uses.
- Can accurately form more advanced sentences, with multiple prepositional phrases while avoiding ambiguity







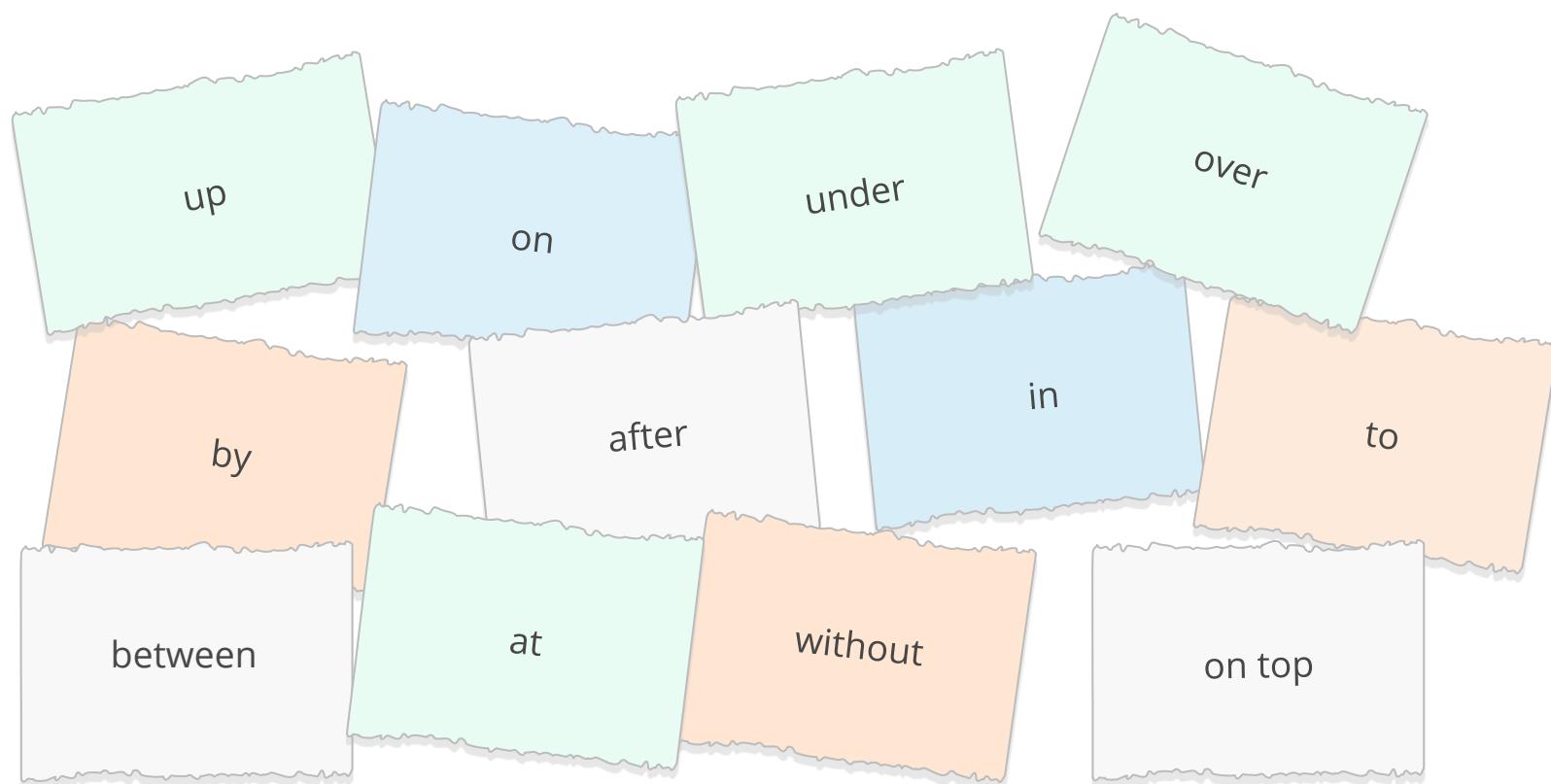
Prepositions

**How many
prepositions can you
think of? Make a list
with your teacher.**



Prepositions

Did you manage to get these ones? Can you think of verbs or phrases they go with? Try to come up with at least 7, e.g. get up.





Preview and warm-up

In this lesson you are going to learn more about **prepositional phrases**. Prepositional phrases always have a **preposition** and an **object** of the preposition.



I did it **by accident!**



Noun phrases review

- A noun phrase includes a **noun** and its **modifiers**.
- The modifiers give **more information** about the noun.
 - They might tell you **where**, **with whom**, **why**, or a multitude of other information.
 - Modifiers can come **before** or **after** the noun.

noun phrases	explanation
I like singing in the shower .	Singing is the noun, and in the shower is the modifier.
He loves his sister's dog .	Dog is the noun, his sister's is the modifier.
The lady with the fur coat is over there.	The lady is the noun, the fur coat is the modifier.
Last night, I went to the restaurant on the corner .	The restaurant is the noun, on the corner is the modifier.

“

More noun phrases

Here are some more examples of **noun phrases**.

The Football World Cup is starting soon.

I have a very old car.

The mighty river made its way to the sea.

The man in the grey shirt is my friend.

Both of my younger sisters are doctors.

The cat with no whiskers is begging for milk.





Noun phrases

Identify the noun phrases in these sentences.

1. Those houses are very expensive.
2. My mum forgot my grandma's birthday.
3. The cat with no whiskers could never judge distances.
4. The planets orbiting the sun form the solar system.
5. I bought a loaf of fresh, white bread.





Complete the sentences

Complete these sentences to make them interesting and add more information using noun phrases, or add information to the noun phrases already given. The first one is completed as an example.

1. My mother's old, chocolate-coloured Labrador is sick at the moment.
2. The man is...
3. I love...
4. I hate...
5. My house is...

“

Prepositional phrases



Some of the **noun phrases** you saw earlier contain **prepositional phrases**. Look at the examples below.

phrase	preposition
The man in the yellow shirt.	in
The lady with the fur coat.	with
The cat with no whiskers.	with
Singing in the shower	in
The restaurant on the corner	on



“

Prepositional phrases

- Here are some more **prepositional phrases** you should already be familiar with.
- Notice the **preposition** and the **modifier**.

- I am **at home**.
- I got here just **in time**.
- I'm sorry **for your loss**.
- **The man by the window** is my father.





Prepositional phrases

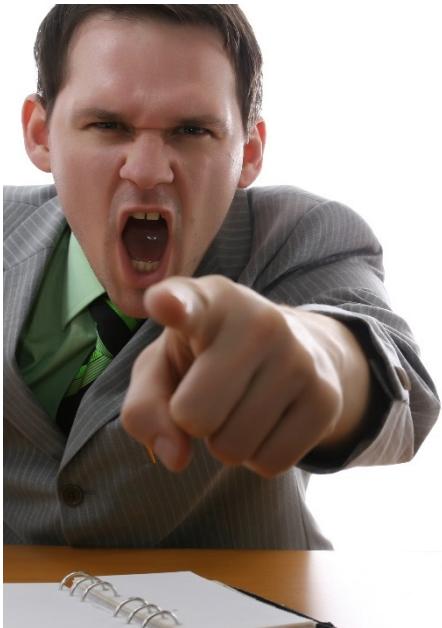
- Here are some more **prepositional phrases** with which you should be familiar from previous lessons.
- Remember that prepositional phrases always **add more information** to the sentence.

time/place	after a verb, noun or adjective	post modifiers (of a noun)
We waited for you all day .	Do these keys belong to you ?	Jane is the woman in the green dress .
I've been standing here for over an hour .	He doesn't approve of her boyfriend .	That's the dog without a tail .
He's feeding ducks in the park .	I feel so sorry for you .	We got a new house with 7 bedrooms .
The citation is at the bottom of the page .	I had an argument with my boyfriend .	I met a man with bright blue eyes .
Let's go away from here .	You should help with the cleaning .	I saw a painting by Gauguin .



Prepositions

Which preposition is missing after these verbs? Fill in the blanks and then answer the questions.



- 1** Is there anything in your house which does not belong _____ you?

- 2** Have you ever dated a person that your parents did not approve _____?

- 3** Who was the last person that you had an argument _____?



Describe each of these pictures to your teacher using post modifiers





Adverbs of place

Describe the picture using adverbs of place.



In the top left corner...

At the bottom below the...



New prepositional phrases

- Below are some **prepositional phrases** which you may not have seen before.
- In the first column, they focus on **time and place**.
- In the second column they focus on **manner**.

time/place	manner
The club simply can't accept any more members at this juncture .	I was only asking out of curiosity .
His new house is on the outskirts of town.	The party got completely out of control .
I want you to return to work without delay .	To my dismay , he started blaming me for his problems.
In the aftermath of the tragedy, many people came forward to help.	I didn't notice anything out of the ordinary on the day of the burglary.
We were far more optimistic at the outset of the project.	The business deal was conducted under the table .

“

New prepositional phrases

Below are some **prepositional phrases** which can be used to **post modify a noun**. Look at the examples, and check with your teacher if you're not sure what they mean.

post modifying phrases

The country is **on the brink of** civil war.

They were deported **on the grounds of** national security.

He was an avid cricket player at college, **to the detriment of** his studies.

You did not complete the work **to my satisfaction**.

The proposal is currently **under consideration**.



“

Common prepositional phrases

Here are some more **prepositional phrases** which are common in English and which may be useful to you.

- The word is **on the tip of** my tongue but I simply can't remember it.
- He was **under great strain** when he made that mistake.
- She booked a plane ticket **on impulse**, simply because it was her birthday.
- I can't help – I'm **in the midst of** writing a report.





Categorise

Look at the following prepositional phrases and sort them into the lists below. Afterwards make a sentence with each.

by all means

in the aftermath

at this juncture

in a temper

out of place

on the grounds
of...

in residence

under
consideration

in the meantime

in the absence of

on second thought

in conjunction with

time/place

manner



Fill in the gaps

Fill in the gaps with the prepositional phrases and then answer the questions with your teacher.

on impulse

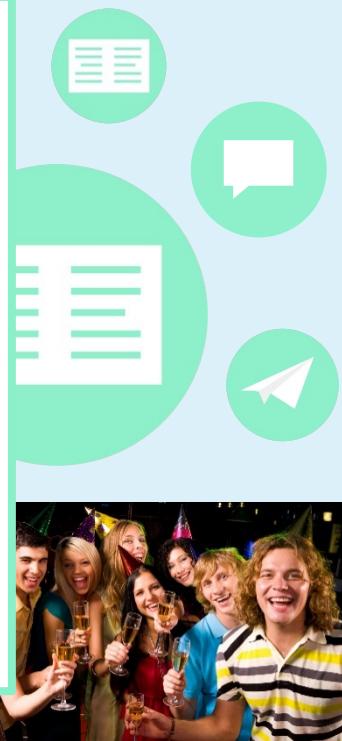
on the tip of your tongue

on the brink of

under strain

out of control

1. Have you ever been _____ doing something and then changed your mind?
2. When was the last time you did something _____?
3. How do you feel when you are _____ great _____?
4. Have you ever been to a party which got completely _____?
5. Do you ever have the feeling that a word is _____ but you can't remember it?





Describe what is happening or what may have happened using the prepositional phrases on the explanation slides





Nouns in prepositional phrases



- You will **never** find a **subject** in a prepositional phrase.
- Why is this important? Because sometimes **nouns within prepositional phrases** look like the subject. This can cause confusion with the **agreement of the verb**.

correct	explanation
Neither of the participants knows the answer	Neither is the subject of the sentence and it is singular . Participants is not the subject.
The analysis of the results reveals a significant difference.	Analysis is the subject and is it singular .
Each of the samples was carefully analysed.	Each is the subject , again it is singular .
James , along with his friends, thinks they will win the match.	James is the subject of the sentence , along with his friends is the prepositional phrase .

“

Ambiguity in prepositional phrases

Depending on the **placement** and phrasing of certain prepositional phrases, the meaning can be **ambiguous**. Look at the examples below.

phrase	ambiguity
This morning I ate an egg in my pyjamas .	Was the egg in your pyjamas or were you?
John ate the salad with a fork .	Did he use a fork to eat or did he eat a fork in the salad?
I saw the man with a telescope .	Did you see through a telescope or did the man have a telescope?



“

Rephrasing ambiguity

- Here is how we might **resolve the problems with ambiguity** on the previous page.
- The best way is usually to **rephrase the sentence**. Simply moving the prepositional phrase does not usually work.

phrase	resolution
This morning I ate an egg in my pyjamas .	One morning I ate an egg while wearing my pyjamas .
John ate the salad with a fork .	John ate the salad using a fork .
I saw the man with a telescope .	I saw the man holding a telescope . Or, I saw the man through a telescope .



Making sentences

Make sentences using these phrases. Remember to use the correct verb agreement.

Neither...

Along with...

Each...

In addition to...



Identifying ambiguity

Identify the ambiguity in these sentences and rephrase them in order to correct them. Remember, there may be two ways to interpret the sentence.

1. One evening I drank a whisky in a top hat.
2. He shouted at the woman on the street.
3. She looked at the dog with one eye.
4. The two brothers were reunited after ten years in the bus queue.
5. The protesters were campaigning against the mistreatment of prisoners in labour camps in China.





Reflect on the lesson

Take a moment to review any new **vocabulary, phrases, language structures** or **grammar points** you have come across for the first time in this lesson.

Review them with your teacher one more time to make sure you don't forget!





Answer key

Accept any good answer from students.

Exercise p. 26

1. on the brink of, 2. on impulse, 3. under strain, 4. out of control, 5. on the tip of

Exercise p. 21

Manner: on the grounds of..., in a temper, in conjunction with, in the absence of, on residence
Time/place: in the aftermath, in the meantime, out of place, at this juncture, in
Second thought, under consideration, by all means, on the grounds of

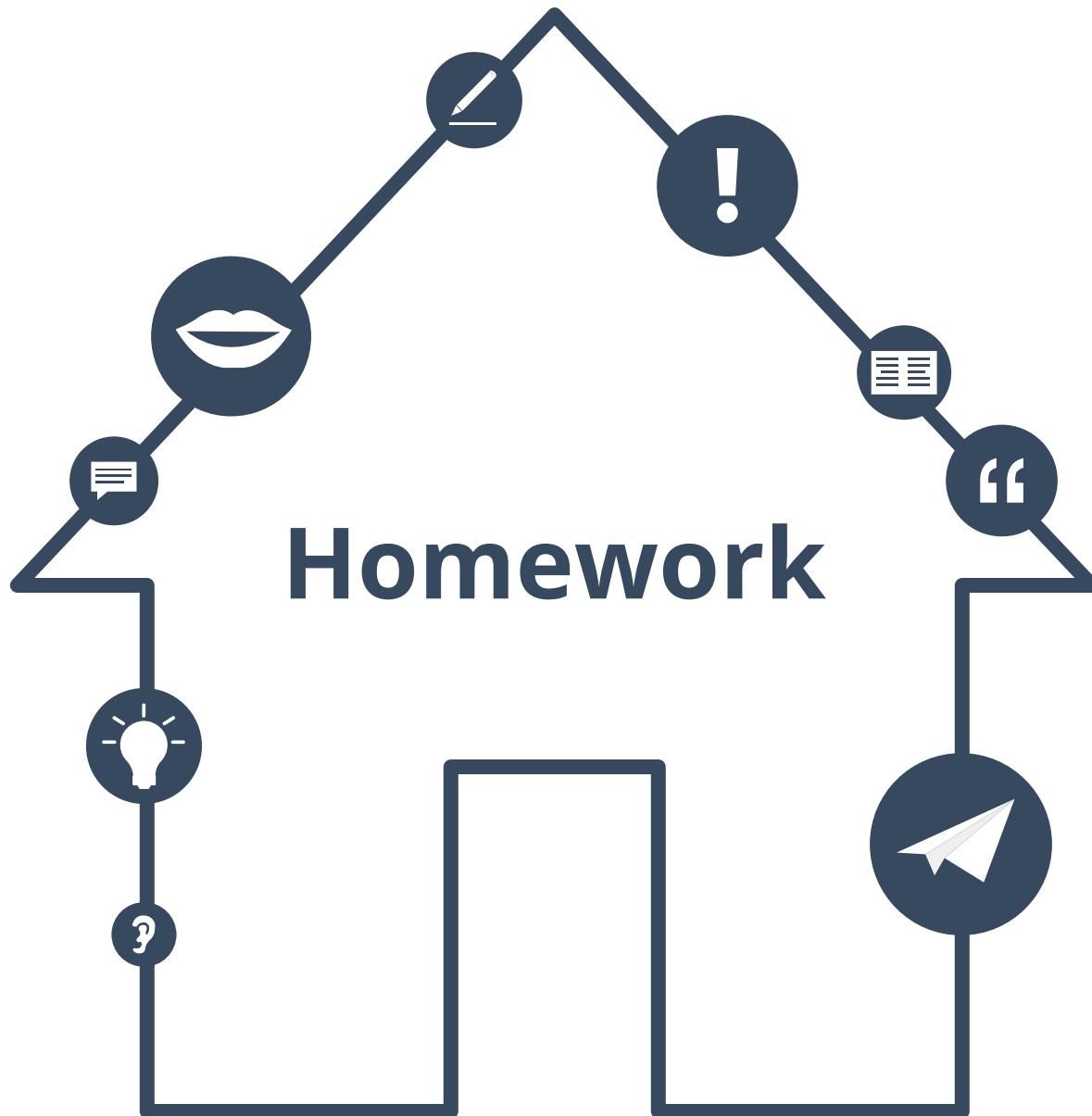
Exercise p. 20

1. to, 2. of, 3 with

Exercise p. 15

1. Those houses, 2. my grandma's birthday, 3. The cat with no whiskers, 4. The planets orbiting the sun, 5. a loaf of fresh, white bread.

Exercise p. 9





Find the ambiguities and correct them

1. Tom gave a bath to his dog wearing a yellow shirt.
2. A woman gives birth every 48 seconds in the UK.
3. I saw the little boy on the hill with my binoculars.
4. Dog for sale: eats anything and is fond of children.





Fill in the gaps

1. I am unable to help you _____ this juncture as I am far too busy.
2. I concentrated too much on my job, _____ the detriment of my personal life.
3. She pretended she was asking _____ of curiosity.
4. Young people often don't want to live _____ the outskirts of town, they prefer the centre.
5. Due to your bad behaviour, your membership of the club is _____ consideration.

under
to
on
at
out



Homework answer key

1. at, 2. to, 3. out, 4. on, 5. under

Exercise p. 31

1. Is Tom or the dog wearing the shirt? 2. Is it the same woman giving birth
(obviously not), or a different woman? 3. Did you see him through your binoculars
or did the boy have your binoculars? 4. Does the dog like eating children, or does he
just like children?

These are the problems with the sentences. As there are many ways to reword
them, check with your teacher next lesson.

Exercise p. 30



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