



Use of Preposition

-By Rohit Lodha (2015A7PS040P)



Index

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Rules.....	3
3. Preposition Choice.....	5
4. Examining Prepositions in Sentence	
Structure.....	5
5. Usage of Preposition.....	7
6. Exhaustive Examples.....	11
7. Bibliography.....	18

Preposition

Introduction:

A preposition is a word that explains the **time, space or logical relationship** between the other parts of the sentence. In other words, it links all the other words together, so the reader can understand how the pieces of the sentence fit.

The pencil is **ON** the desk.

The pencil is **BENEATH** the desk.

The pencil is leaning **AGAINST** the desk.

The pencil is on the floor **BESIDE** the desk.

He held the pencil **OVER** the desk.

He wrote with the pencil **DURING** class.

You may have noticed that in each of the preceding sentences, the preposition located the noun "pencil" in space or in time.

There are hundreds of prepositions in the English language. One easy way to remember some prepositions is that they are words that tell you everywhere a bunny can run; for example, a bunny can run

Up, down, near, far, by, at, around, close, always

Rules:

There are several important rules when using prepositions in the context of a sentence. These rules relate to how prepositions can be used, which prepositions can be used when, and where prepositions have to go in the sentence.

Rule 1. A preposition generally, but not always, goes before its noun or pronoun. It is never followed by a verb.

The food is **on** the table.

She lives **in** India.

One of the undying myths of English grammar is that you may not end a sentence with a preposition. But look at the first example that follows.

Incorrect: That is something with which I cannot agree. (Just do not use extra prepositions when the meaning is clear without them.)

Correct: That is something I cannot agree **with**.

Incorrect: Where did you get this **at**?

Correct: Where did you get this?

Correct: Where did he go?

Incorrect: Where did he go **to**?

Rule 2a. The preposition 'like' means "similar to" or "similarly to." It should be followed by an object of the preposition (noun, pronoun, noun phrase), not by a subject and verb. Rule of thumb: Avoid like when a verb is involved.

Incorrect: You look like your mother does. (Avoid like with noun + verb.)

Correct: You look like your mother. (Mother is the object of the preposition like.)

Rule 2b. Instead of like, use as, as if, as though, or the way when following a comparison with a subject and verb.

Incorrect: Do like I ask. (No one would say Do similarly to I ask.)

Correct: You look **the way** your mother does.

Incorrect: You look like you're angry.

Correct: You look **as if** you're angry. (**OR as though**)

Incorrect: They are considered as any other English words.

Correct: They are considered as any other English words would be.

Correct: They are considered to be like any other English words.

Incorrect: I, as most people, try to use good grammar.

Correct: I, **like** most people, try to use good grammar.

Correct: I, **as** most people **do**, try to use good grammar.

Rule 3. The preposition 'of' should never be used in place of the helping verb have.

Incorrect: I should of done it.

Correct: I should have done it.

Rule 4. It is a good practice to follow different with the preposition 'from'. Most traditionalists avoid different than.

Incorrect: You're different than I am.

Correct: You're different from me.

Rule 5. Use into rather than in to express motion toward something. Use in to tell the location.

Correct: I swam in the pool.

Correct: I walked into the house.

Correct: I looked into the matter.

Incorrect: I dived in the water.

Correct: I dived into the water.

Incorrect: Throw it in the trash.

Correct: Throw it into the trash.

Many other rules are discussed in “Exhaustive Examples”.

Preposition Choice:

Determining the correct preposition to use can be tricky. This can be especially difficult when dealing with idioms- expressions in the English language that require the use of a certain word, simply because that is the word we have chosen to use. Idiomatic expressions are expressions you just have to memorize, and when errors are made, they are almost always preposition errors.

Here are some examples of idioms, along with the correct prepositions:

- Able **to**

- Capable **of**
- Preoccupied **with**
- Concerned **by**
- Prohibited **from**
- Afraid **of**
- Love **of**
- Concern **for**
- Study **for**
- Worry **about**, etc.

Each of the italicized words are the only acceptable prepositions to follow these words. It would not be grammatically correct to say "able with" or "capable to".

PREPOSITIONS LIST

Aboard	Behind	Under
About	Below	Underneath
Above	Beneath	Since
Across	Beside	Up
Against	Between	Like
Along	Before	Near
Around	Beyond	Past
		Throughout
Amid	By	Through
Among	In	
After	From	With
At	Off	Within
Except	On	Without
For	Over	Instead
During	Of	Toward
Down	Unto	Inside
	Until	Into
	Upon	To

Examining Prepositions in Sentence Structure

Given the list of prepositions above, it's clear that many sentences can be ended with a preposition and yet sound completely fine and also be grammatically correct. Take a moment to examine the below sentence and then the sentence broken down into a verb/preposition/noun structure.

- “Mary walked along the road.”

Here's the verb/preposition/noun breakdown of the same sentence:

- "Mary walked (verb) along (preposition) the road (noun)."

The word "along" in the sentence above is a preposition that illustrates the relationship of the verb "walked" to the noun "road." Mary is walking along a road. Mary isn't walking on sunshine or on thin air.

Here's an example of a preposition used in a sentence having an adjective/preposition/pronoun structure:

- "She's angry with us."

Here's the adjective/preposition/pronoun breakdown of the same sentence:

- "She's angry (adjective) with (preposition) us (pronoun)."

Again, one can see that the preposition in the sentence above, "with," is a preposition illustrating a relationship between the adjective "angry" and the pronoun "us." She, whoever she is, is angry WITH us. She's not angry with something else that may have been implied in a prior sentence and she's not angry with the weather or something else the writer has possibly already written about. The preposition in this case serves to focus attention on the source of her (the adjectival word "she's") anger, and that's at US.

Prepositions In the Context of Sentences

Prepositions **must always be followed by a noun or pronoun**. That noun is called the object of the preposition. A verb can't be the object of a preposition. Thus, preposition **are not followed by verb**.

- The bone was **for** the dog.

This rule may seem confusing at first, because you may have seen words that look like verbs following the preposition to in sentences; for example:

- I like **to** ski. (Ski is not a verb, it acts as part of the infinitive)

Using Prepositions at the Start of Sentences

This is a "rule" that has been questioned for many years. Many writers actually do start sentences with prepositions and many college professors have no problems with it. The reason for the "rule" was that **a preposition usually indicates the temporal, spatial or logical relationship of its object to the rest of the sentence**. Therefore if you start a sentence with a preposition it can appear that you are in the middle of a sentence or thought. If you are careful however, you can

start a sentence with a preposition. The problem is that most people are not careful. Here is an example of a sentence that starts with a preposition that works:

- **Before** going to the store, I always check my list. (Correct)

Using Prepositions at the End of Sentences

Because prepositions must be followed by a noun and have an object, they usually shouldn't be used at the end of a sentence.

For example, it is not correct to say:

- The table is where I put my books **on**. (Incorrect)

Although ending a sentence with a preposition is considered incorrect, these constructions are used everyday. As Winston Churchill said, "This is the kind of thing up with which I will not put!". There are certain circumstances where it is acceptable to end a sentence with a preposition. **These exceptions exist where the preposition is not extraneous.** In other words, the preposition needs to be there, and if it wasn't, the meaning of the sentence would change.

It's perfectly fine in some sentences to strand a preposition at the end. Here are a couple examples of prepositions stranded at the end of sentences:

- Correct: Mary has much to be angry about.
- Incorrect: Mary has much about which to be angry.

- Incorrect: She wondered **from** where he had come
- Correct : She wondered where he had come **from**.

- I turned the TV on. (correct)

If you removed the "on" from the end of the last sentence, it would change the meaning. Instead of switching on the set, you would be saying that you turned the TV itself.

Usage of Preposition:

The following table contains rules for some of the most frequently used prepositions in English:

Prepositions – Time

English	Usage	Example
• on	• days of the week	• on Monday
• in	• months / seasons • time of day • year • after a certain period of time (when?)	• in August / in winter • in the morning • in 2006 • in an hour
• at	• for night • for weekend • a certain point of time (when?)	• at night • at the weekend • at half past nine
• since	• from a certain point of time (past till now)	• since 1980
• for	• over a certain period of time (past till now)	• for 2 years
• ago	• a certain time in the past	• 2 years ago
• before	• earlier than a certain point of time	• before 2004
• to	• telling the time	• ten to six (5:50)
• past	• telling the time	• ten past six (6:10)
• to / till / until	• marking the beginning and end of a period of time	• from Monday to/till Friday
• till / until	• in the sense of how long something is going to last	• He is on holiday until Friday.
• by	• in the sense of at the latest • up to a certain time	• I will be back by 6 o'clock. • By 11 o'clock, I had read five pages.

Prepositions – Place (Position and Direction)

English	Usage	Example
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> room, building, street, town, country book, paper etc. car, taxi picture, world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> in the kitchen, in London in the book in the car, in a taxi in the picture, in the world
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> at 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> meaning next to, by an object for table for events place where you are to do something typical (watch a film, study, work) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> at the door, at the station at the table at a concert, at the party at the cinema, at school, at work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attached for a place with a river being on a surface for a certain side (left, right) for a floor in a house for public transport for television, radio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the picture on the wall London lies on the Thames. on the table on the left on the first floor on the bus, on a plane on TV, on the radio
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> by, next to, beside 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> left or right of somebody or something 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jane is standing by / next to / beside the car.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> under 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> on the ground, lower than (or covered by) something else 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the bag is under the table
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> below 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> lower than something else but above ground 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the fish are below the surface
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> over 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> covered by something else meaning more than getting to the other side (also across) overcoming an obstacle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> put a jacket over your shirt over 16 years of age walk over the bridge climb over the wall

English	Usage	Example
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> above 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> higher than something else, but not directly over it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a path above the lake
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> across 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> getting to the other side (also over) getting to the other side 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> walk across the bridge swim across the lake
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> through 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> something with limits on top, bottom and the sides 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> drive through the tunnel
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> movement to person or building movement to a place or country for bed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> go to the cinema go to London / Ireland go to bed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> into 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> enter a room / a building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> go into the kitchen / the house
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> towards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> movement in the direction of something (but not directly to it) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> go 5 steps towards the house
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> onto 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> movement to the top of something 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> jump onto the table
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> from 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> in the sense of where from 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a flower from the garden

Other important Prepositions

English	Usage	Example
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> from 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> who gave it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a present from Jane
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> who/what does it belong to what does it show 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a page of the book the picture of a palace
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> by 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> who made it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a book by Mark Twain
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> walking or riding on horseback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> on foot, on horseback

English	Usage	Example
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> entering a public transport vehicle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> get on the bus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> entering a car / Taxi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> get in the car
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> off 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> leaving a public transport vehicle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> get off the train
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> out of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> leaving a car / Taxi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> get out of the taxi
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> by 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> rise or fall of something travelling (other than walking or horseriding) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> prices have risen by 10 percent by car, by bus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> at 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> for age 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> she learned Russian at 45
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> about 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> for topics, meaning what about 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> we were talking about you

Exhaustive Examples :

Examples of prepositions at the beginning of a sentence:

Despite the rain, we still went jogging.

Barring any setbacks, the quarterback will play in the next game.

In spite of all the harm it causes, people still smoke cigarettes.

Beware of the phrase “in terms of” and do not use it.

This phrase is a sloppy use of prepositions that should be avoided.

Incorrect: The job was unattractive **in terms of** salary.

Correct: The salary made the job unattractive.

Where not to use preposition:

Verbs such as **enter, resemble, lack, discuss, marry, reach, order and approach** are normally followed by direct objects without prepositions.

Incorrect: He loves **with** me.

Correct: He loves me.

Incorrect: We discussed **about** the matter.

Correct: We discussed the matter.

Incorrect: We reached **at** the airport at 9 pm.

Correct: We reached the airport at 9 pm.

Incorrect: I have ordered **for** his dismissal.

Correct: I have ordered his dismissal.

Incorrect: He married **with** his friend's sister.

Correct: He married his friend's sister.

Incorrect: She entered **into** the room.

Correct: She entered the room.

Incorrect: The child resembles **to** its mother.

Correct: The child resembles its mother.

Incorrect: He is intelligent, but he lacks **of** experience.

Correct: He is intelligent but he lacks experience

We write by train/car/bike/boat/plane/land/sea/air etc. But note that by is not used if there is an article. For example, we write in the car, on a bus, and not by the car or by a bus.

Incorrect: What is the time **in** your watch?

Correct: What is the time **by** your watch?

Incorrect: We traveled **in** train.

Correct: We traveled **by** train.

We use with in a number of expressions which say how people express their feelings and sensations. Common examples are: white with fear/rage, red with anger/embarrassment, green with envy, blue with cold etc.

Incorrect: He is angry **upon** me.

Correct: He is angry **with** me.

Incorrect: I am pleased **at** you.

Correct: I am pleased **with** you.

Incorrect: He was trembling **in** rage.

Correct: He was trembling **with** rage.

The correct expressions are on the radio, on TV, on the phone etc.

Incorrect: Who is **in** the phone? It is John.

Correct: Who is **on** the phone? It is John.

Incorrect: There was an interesting show **at** TV.

Correct: There was an interesting show **on** TV.

We use with to talk about instruments with which something is done.

Incorrect: She washed her face **in** water.

Correct: She washed her face **with** water.

Incorrect: The snake was killed **by** a stone.

Correct: The snake was killed **with** a stone.

When reckoning from a particular date we use 'since'. Examples are since last Friday, since May, since morning, since July 8th. But note that we always use 'for' for a period. Examples are: for a week, for a long time, for two hours etc.

Incorrect: He is ill **since** last week.

Correct: He has been ill **since last week**.

Incorrect: He has been working **since** two hours.

Correct: He has been working **for two hours**.

Incorrect: I have not played cricket **since** a long time.

Correct: I have not played cricket **for a long time**.

The comparatives senior, junior, superior, inferior etc., are followed by to, and not than.

Incorrect: This paper is inferior **than** that.

Correct: This paper is **inferior to** that.

Incorrect: He is junior **than** me.

Correct: He is **junior to** me.

Incorrect: He is superior **than** you in strength.

Correct: He is **superior to** you in strength.

Use 'on' when the meaning is clearly 'on top of'. For example, on a horse, on a bicycle, on a table, on the roof etc. Use in when 'on top of' is not appropriate. For example, in a car, in an airplane etc.

Incorrect: He rides **in** a cycle.

Correct: He rides **on a cycle**.

Incorrect: He rides **on** a car.

Correct: He rides **in a car**.

Incorrect: He sat **in** a table.

Correct: He sat **on a table**.

Incorrect: The cat is **in** the roof.

Correct: The cat is **on the roof**.

Between is followed by and, not to or against.

Incorrect: There was a match **between** team A against team B.

Correct: There was a match **between** team A **and** team B.

Incorrect: The meeting will be held **between** 4 pm to 6 pm.

Correct: The meeting will be held **between** 4 pm **and** 6 pm.

Two events or people should be mentioned if you want to use between.

Incorrect: The First World War was fought **during** 1914 – 18.

Correct: The First World War was fought **between 1914 and 1918**.

Incorrect: There was a fight **with** John and Peter.

Correct: There was a fight **between John and Peter**.

Incorrect: England grew prosperous **between** Queen Victoria's reign.

Correct: England grew prosperous **during Queen Victoria's reign**.

The prepositions in and on are used to show position. To say where things are going, we use into and onto.

- Incorrect: The ball rolled slowly **in** the goal.
- Correct: The ball rolled slowly **into** the goal.
- Incorrect: She ran **in** the room crying.
- Correct: She ran **into** the room crying.

We use in to say how soon something will happen. Within means 'inside' or 'not beyond'.

- Incorrect: The train will arrive **within** five minutes.
- Correct: The train will arrive **in** five minutes.

Through is used for movement in a three dimensional space.

- Incorrect: If you don't live **by** your income, you will incur huge debts.
- Correct: If you don't live **within** your income, you will incur huge debts.
- Incorrect: The ball went **to** the window and fell on the ground.
- Correct: The ball went **through** the window and fell on the ground.

The expressions in a week's / month's time is used to say how something will happen. It is not used to say how long something takes.

- Incorrect: He wrote the book **in a month's time**.
- Correct: He wrote the book **in a month**.

Care for means 'like' or 'be fond of'. If you care about something, you feel that it is important or interesting.

- Incorrect: I don't **care for** your opinion.
- Correct: I don't **care about** your opinion.

Prepositions are not used before a number of common time expressions beginning next, last, this, one etc.

Incorrect: See you **on** next Friday.

Correct: See you next Friday.

Incorrect: I will never forget meeting her **on** that afternoon.

Correct: I will never forget meeting her that afternoon.

Expressions containing words like height, weight, length, size, color, age etc., are usually connected to the subject by the verb be without a preposition.

Incorrect: **Of** what color are her eyes?

Correct: What color are her eyes?

Incorrect: He is **of** just the right height to be a good soldier.

Correct: He is just the right height to be a good soldier.

The structures where ...to? , what...like? and what...for? have a fixed word order. It is not possible to move the preposition to the beginning of the clause. The preposition to is used to introduce the indirect direct.

Incorrect: **To** where shall I send it?

Correct: Where shall I send it **to**?

When the indirect object comes after the direct object, it takes the preposition to or for.

Incorrect: I shall explain them this.

Correct: I shall explain this **to** them.

Incorrect: He suggested me this.

Correct: He suggested this **to** me.

Missing Prepositions:

Whenever an infinitive is used, a helping verb is required.

Incorrect: I would like visit Washington D.C.

Correct: I would like to visit Washington D.C.

Unnecessary Additions

Some constructions don't need additional prepositions. For example:

Off of/off

Meet up with/meet

Where are they at?/Where are they?

Go home (Not Go **To** Home)

Inside/outside

Upstairs/downstairs

Uptown/downtown

Complex Constructions-

When making comparisons, the second preposition can be omitted if it's the same as the first. However, it must be included if the second phrase requires a different preposition.

Correct: The climate **in** the United States is much different than Norway.

Incorrect: The climate **in** the United States is much different than **in** Norway.

Correct: We drove **to** the beach and swam **in** the ocean.

Ending with a Preposition-

Prepositions and 'Ask'-

Use 'ask' with 'for' to ask somebody to give something.

Use 'ask' without 'for' to ask somebody to say something.

- Mistake: He **asked** a coffee. ('Coffee' is not a person)
- Correct: He **asked** for a coffee. (He wanted a coffee)

Prepositions and 'Prevent'-

Prevent cannot be followed by 'to'. It should be followed by 'from' and a verb '-ing' form.

- Mistake: He was prevented **to** come.
- Correct: He was prevented **from** coming.
- Correct: The loud noise prevented me **from** sleeping.

Prepositions and 'Meet'-

Meet normally means 'come face to face with somebody or something'. If it is used in this way, it cannot be used with the preposition 'with'.

- Mistake: I met **with** your friend.
- Correct: I met your friend.

Meet with - meaning 'to experience'.

- Mistake: He met misfortune.
- Correct: He met **with** misfortune.

Prepositions and 'Insist'

Insist cannot be followed by to. It is followed by on + -ing form.

- Mistake: She insisted **to** pay.
- Correct: She insisted **on** paying.

Prepositions and 'Go'-

Go is often used with a verb '-ing' form when we are talking about sporting and leisure activities. No preposition is used in this structure.

- Mistake: Let's go **for** riding.
- Correct: Let's go riding.

The structure 'go for a / come for a' is used in a number of fixed expressions referring to sporting and leisure activities.

- Mistake: We went a walk.
- Correct: We went **for** a walk.

Prepositions and time-

To talk about time starting from a specified time in the past and continuing until the present, we use 'since'.

To talk about a period of time, in particular when we are describing the duration of a period of time, we use 'For'.

- Mistake: This is the first time I have seen a movie **since** a long time.
- Correct: I haven't seen a movie **for** a long time.
- Correct: I haven't seen a movie **in** a long time. (American English)
- Mistake: I am ill **since** two weeks.
- Correct: I have been ill **for** two weeks.
- Correct: I have been ill **since** January.
- Mistake: It was the worst storm **since** ten years.
- Correct: It was the worst storm **in** ten years.
- Correct: It was the worst storm **for** ten years.

(In American English, 'In' can be used to talk about duration after negatives and superlative adjectives.)

Prepositions and movement-

The prepositions 'at', 'on' and 'in' are used for position; the preposition 'to' is used for movement or direction. No preposition is used with verbs of movement and the noun 'home'.

- Mistake: Send this letter **on** my new address.
- Correct: Send this letter **to** my new address.
- Mistake: He goes **in** the school.
- Correct: He goes **to** the school.
- Mistake: He goes **on** his work.
- Correct: He goes **to** his work.
- Mistake: I am going **to** home. (I'm going at home.)
- Correct: I am going home.

Miscellaneous Example:

Correct: We ran **up** the hill.

Incorrect: **Up** the hill we ran.

Correct: The rabbit jumped **over** the log.

incorrect: **Over** the log the rabbit jumped.

Correct: We got **aboard** the train to ride down to San Diego.

Incorrect: **Aboard** the train we got to ride down to San Diego.

Incorrect: I go to school **by** foot.

Correct: I go to school **on** foot.

Incorrect: I congratulated her **for** her success.

Correct: I congratulated her **on** her success.

Bibliography:

- <http://www.englishpractice.com/>
- <http://www.grammarbook.com/>