Prepositions

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Quick and Handy Grammar Review

Prepositions have many uses in English. For example, they can express time (in 2012, at 7:00, during the meeting), place (on the chair, at a restaurant, behind the sofa), direction (to the store, from Japan), method (by mail, with a fork), material (of wood, with cotton), etc. Let’s take a look at some common prepositions in English, and then we’ll practise using them.

A. Common Prepositions

The following is a list of common prepositions, some notes on their use, and examples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preposition</th>
<th>Meaning(s)</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| about       | on (the subject of), around (a place) | - I read a book about the war.  
- The speech was about causes of cancer.  
- You can now move freely about the cabin. |
| above       | on top of | - I placed the painting above the table.  
- The blue sky was above us all afternoon. |
| across (from) | on the other side | - The theatre is across from the bank.  
- Columbus travelled across the ocean in 1492. |
| after       | later in time | - After the game, the players went to dinner.  
- After lunch, I studied in the library.  
- The students were very tired after the exam. |
| against     | opposed to, in contact with | - Mr. Jones ran against Ms. Adams for treasurer.  
- The umbrella is leaning against the wall. |
| along       | on the side of | - We strolled along the bank of the river.  
- There are many hotels along the Danube. |
| among       | in the midst of | - There is a cat sitting among the flowers.  
- He was found among the dead after the battle. |
| around      | in a circle, turning a corner | - The teacher walked around the room.  
- Ken lives around the block. |
| at          | clock time, place | - The game starts at 9:00.  
- Leslie works at Apple Computers.  
- I’ll meet you at the restaurant. |
## Quick and Handy Grammar Review cont.

### A. Common Prepositions cont.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preposition</th>
<th>Meaning(s)</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>before</td>
<td>earlier in time</td>
<td>• Before breakfast, I took a walk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• I would like to finish before noon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• The movie ended before 10:00.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>behind</td>
<td>in back of</td>
<td>• I hid the bag behind the couch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Nestor was standing right behind me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>below</td>
<td>under</td>
<td>• The bag is below the desk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• The temperature is 11 degrees below zero.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beneath</td>
<td>under, lower in status</td>
<td>• The dog was sleeping beneath the table.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Do you think that working for that company is beneath you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beside</td>
<td>next to</td>
<td>• I stood beside Mr. Johnson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• The chair is beside the table.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>besides</td>
<td>in addition to</td>
<td>• Besides John, Jane and Alicia are going.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between</td>
<td>in the middle of (two things</td>
<td>• The blue car is between the red and the white ones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or people)</td>
<td>• I was sitting between Toshiko and Nabuko.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beyond</td>
<td>more than, farther than</td>
<td>• Ines became rich beyond her wildest dreams.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Xavier looked beyond the blue horizon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by</td>
<td>near, ownership, method</td>
<td>• Patrick lives by the sea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• That book was written by Harlan Cobin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• I sent the letter by mail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>despite</td>
<td>contrast</td>
<td>• Despite the rain, we still had a picnic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>down</td>
<td>opposite of up</td>
<td>• She ran down the hill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• The cat went down the stairs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>during</td>
<td>in progress</td>
<td>• There was a terrible storm during the night.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• During the movie, Carl ate two bags of popcorn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for</td>
<td>intended recipient, purpose</td>
<td>• This gift is for Helga.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• I’m taking this course for my degree.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### A. Common Prepositions cont.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preposition</th>
<th>Meaning(s)</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| from        | origin, start time or place       | • This package is **from** my brother.  
• This shop is open **from** 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.                                                                                     |
| in          | inside                            | • The check is **in** my pocket.                                                                                                        |
| into        | putting inside                    | • I put the change **into** my wallet.                                                                                                  |
| like        | similarity                        | • Vicki looks just **like** her mother.                                                                                                  |
| near        | close to                          | • Paul lives **near** his school.                                                                                                        |
| of          | possession, materials             | • The wines **of** France are excellent.  
• Diana’s skirt is made **of** silk.                                                                                                    |
| off         | opposite of **on**                | • Keep your books **off** the table.  
• Iris fell **off** her bicycle.                                                                                                          |
| on          | on top of, about                  | • The bag is **on** the table.  
• I read a book **on** the election of 2008.                                                                                             |
| out         | outside                           | • Kris went **out** the door at 6:00.  
• Victor jumped **out** the window and ran away.                                                                                       |
| over        | above                             | • The airplane is flying **over** the house.                                                                                             |
| since       | start time                        | • Wes has worked for Target **since** 1999.                                                                                              |
| through     | from one side to the other, around | • I walked **through** the park.  
• We wandered **through** the city.                                                                                                       |
| throughout  | for the term of                   | • **Throughout** his life, he was always kind and gentle.                                                                                   |
| till        | up to the time                    | • I worked **till** 10:00 last night.                                                                                                    |
| to          | direction, intended recipient     | • Ashley is going **to** California next fall.  
• Ron gave a ring **to** his girlfriend.                                                                                                  |
| toward(s)   | in the direction of               | • The truck was coming directly **toward(s)** us.                                                                                         |
Quick and Handy Grammar Review cont.

A. Common Prepositions cont.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preposition</th>
<th>Meaning(s)</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>under</td>
<td>below</td>
<td>• The cat hid under the couch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Place your bad under your seat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>until</td>
<td>up to the time</td>
<td>• Ziggy worked until midnight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Walter will stay in China until July.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>up</td>
<td>opposite of down</td>
<td>• Kristin hiked up the mountain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• The bathroom is up the stairs to your right.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>upon</td>
<td>when (formal, poetic use)</td>
<td>• Once upon a time, there was a noble queen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with</td>
<td>together</td>
<td>• I had dinner with Arnold yesterday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Are you with me or against me?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>within</td>
<td>inside</td>
<td>• Hal tried to live within his budget.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Within these walls are many treasures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>without</td>
<td>lacking</td>
<td>• People cannot live without water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• I don't want to do this without you.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Prepositional Phrases

One of the most common constructions in the English language is the prepositional phrase. Sometimes there are even two or three prepositional phrases used in the same sentence. (E.g., in 2015, she travelled to Chile.)

A basic prepositional phrase has three words: preposition, article, noun. This is the most common construction. Other words, such as adjectives, may be added. The article is not used in some phrases, and the noun may be replaced by a pronoun. Analyze the following examples:

- preposition + article + noun
  - in the closet
  - over the chair
  - to the bank
  - from an admirer

- preposition + noun
  - to India
  - near New York
  - after lunch

- preposition + pronoun
  - toward me
  - with them
Exercise 1

FILL IN THE BLANKS I

Choose the correct preposition for each blank.

1. Henrietta met her boyfriend _____ the bus from Washington to Miami.
   a) in
   b) at
   c) on
   d) between

2. I have never seen such a gigantic nose _____ my whole life.
   a) in
   b) at
   c) on
   d) between

   a) in
   b) from
   c) on
   d) until

4. We will go dancing _____ midnight.
   a) in
   b) at
   c) on
   d) from

5. Anesha usually goes _____ .
   a) to the summer India
   b) to India in the summer
   c) to India on the summer
   d) over the summer to India

6. Hank made many mistakes _____ the past.
   a) in
   b) at
   c) on
   d) from

7. _____ Joseph, Won Min and Adytya are also going.
   a) Beside
   b) Besides
   c) Addition to
   d) In addition

8. _____ money, life is very difficult.
   a) With
   b) Without
   c) Within
   d) In

9. The whole family goes out to breakfast _____ Sunday mornings.
   a) in
   b) at
   c) on
   d) from

10. I think that Michael's father was arrested _____ the fall.
    a) in
    b) at
    c) on
    d) from
### Exercise 2

**FILL IN THE BLANKS II**

Choose the correct preposition for each blank.

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Little Rosita is afraid _____ dogs.</td>
<td>6. The thief stole the handbag _____ the woman _____ Fifth Avenue.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) in</td>
<td>b) at</td>
<td>c) on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sergio's mother found him hiding _____ the bed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) in</td>
<td>b) at</td>
<td>c) on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Some little children do not like to go _____ school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) to the</td>
<td>b) to</td>
<td>c) at the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. My two brothers really love to go _____ the mall.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) for</td>
<td>b) to</td>
<td>c) at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Daniel's father looked him right _____ and knew he was lying.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) in the eye</td>
<td>b) on the eye</td>
<td>c) from the eye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Silvia travelled _____ the world. She went _____ Asia, South America, and Africa.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) around / on</td>
<td>b) around / to</td>
<td>c) across / to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The rug _____ the coffee table is _____ Iran.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) beneath / from</td>
<td>b) below / to</td>
<td>c) under / to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Nick sat _____ his wife _____ the party.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) besides / at</td>
<td>b) besides / from</td>
<td>c) beside / from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) from</td>
<td>b) at</td>
<td>c) on</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exercise 3

SENTENCE STEMS I

Complete each sentence.

1. After the storm, _____________________________________________.
2. Down by the river, ___________________________________________.
3. Among the survivors, _________________________________________.
4. Near the town of Roxbury, _____________________________________.
5. Before breakfast, _____________________________________________.
6. In my heart, _________________________________________________.
7. Around the corner, ___________________________________________.
8. Between you and me, _________________________________________.
9. For the past three years, _______________________________________.
10. Besides Charlie and Mohammed, _________________________________.

Exercise 4

SENTENCE STEMS II

Complete each sentence.

1. ____________________________________________________________ throughout my life.
2. ____________________________________________________________ toward the exit.
3. ____________________________________________________________ in my dreams.
4. ____________________________________________________________ across the ocean.
5. ____________________________________________________________ under the bed.
6. ____________________________________________________________ in the winter.
7. ____________________________________________________________ far from the one she loves.
8. ____________________________________________________________ at 7:30 pm.
9. ____________________________________________________________ on Thursday afternoon.
10. ___________________________________________________________ with dolls.
Exercise 5

ERROR CORRECTION I

Correct the mistakes in the following sentences. Then rewrite each sentence correctly. Some sentences may have more than one error.

1. I didn't stay up late. I was asleep on midnight.
   
   I didn't stay up late. I was asleep at midnight.

2. She met her best friend on September at Soeul.

3. Anita moved of Rome at 2006.

4. The plane finally arrived on 5:46 pm.

5. Bob met his future wife in a bus, not on a taxi.

6. In this moment, Ushbek is studying from Bunker Hill Community College.

7. Don't pay attention at that fortune-teller. She has no idea about events on the future.

8. My mother and father don't drive on the dark, so they stay home at the night.

9. I think that Tom is in a date with Sally. I think she is separated to her husband.

10. That woman is staring to the man on the other table. He is looking off the window.
Exercise 6

ERROR CORRECTION II

Correct the mistakes in the following sentences. Then rewrite each sentence correctly. Some sentences may have more than one error.

1. On Sunday, Jong goes at church for to pray.

2. At the summer, my family goes to beach to swim.

3. On her living room, there is an end table next the couch.

4. Barbara found her purse under chair on the family room.


6. The bakery is next the diner.

7. The children walked for the park to get home quickly.

8. My mother cannot live with her iPod. She always listens music.

9. I saw the plane moving the airport, but I did not see it land.

Exercise 7

FILL IN THE BLANKS III

Choose the correct preposition for each blank.

1. Can you tell me a little bit _____ your experience?
   a) in
   b) about
   c) on
   d) from

2. I think I left my laptop _____ the couch.
   a) in
   b) at
   c) on
   d) down

3. Some little children are afraid _____ animals.
   a) to the
   b) to
   c) of
   d) of the

4. We had a picnic _____ the tall elm tree.
   a) beneath
   b) on
   c) on top of
   d) next

5. The crowd cheered continuously _____ the game.
   a) beside
   b) near
   c) during
   d) by

6. I am not completely _____ you. I just don't share all your opinions.
   a) for
   b) against
   c) near
   d) beside

7. John’s father was standing right _____ him at the concert.
   a) in front
   b) next
   c) behind
   d) on

8. Don’t forget to turn the television off before you go _____ bed.
   a) at
   b) to
   c) to the
   d) at the

9. _____ the rain, the game was not cancelled.
   a) Despite
   b) In spite
   c) Despite from
   d) Because of

10. _____ the class, the students walked slowly _____ the room.
    a) Before / out to
    b) After / out of
    c) During / in of
    d) After from / out
Exercise 8

FILL IN THE BLANKS IV

Choose the correct preposition for each blank.

1. Can you tell me how to get _____ library?
   a) to
   b) to the
   c) toward the
   d) from the

2. I think you left your book _____ the table over there.
   a) in
   b) at
   c) on
   d) down

3. _____ the walls of the ancient city, there are many secrets.
   a) Without
   b) Within
   c) Above
   d) Through

4. John had a discussion _____ his advisor yesterday.
   a) from
   b) on
   c) with
   d) to

5. I took a walk _____ the river. It was so peaceful.
   a) after
   b) along
   c) during
   d) through

6. Quentin has lived in Texas _____ July.
   a) for
   b) since
   c) from
   d) at

7. John’s father said that he would work _____ 9:00 pm.
   a) until
   b) without
   c) over
   d) for

8. I found your old love letter _____ some papers that I had left in my desk drawer.
   a) around
   b) against
   c) after
   d) among

9. My best friend lives right _____ the street _____ me.
   a) across / to
   b) across / from
   c) across / for
   d) across / on

10. The temperature was eleven degrees _____ zero yesterday.
    a) below
    b) from
    c) to
    d) over
Exercise 9

FILL IN THE BLANKS V

Choose the correct preposition for each blank.

1. The Rodriguez family goes ______ church every Sunday.
   a) to 
   b) to the 
   c) toward the 
   d) from the 

2. I will always stand ______ you, ______ thick and thin.
   a) by / in 
   b) by / through 
   c) on / in 
   d) on / through 

3. ______ the blue skies ______ me, I felt like a new man.
   a) With / below 
   b) With / above 
   c) Without / over 
   d) With / toward 

4. Joshua lives ______ a bakery and a bagel shop.
   a) from 
   b) on 
   c) with 
   d) between 

5. Calculus III is way ______ me. I don’t understand anything in that class.
   a) after 
   b) along 
   c) beyond 
   d) through 

6. Omar always stays ______ his room to relax before a big exam.
   a) on 
   b) for 
   c) in 
   d) under 

7. I will love you ______ I die. I promise.
   a) till 
   b) during 
   c) when 
   d) without 

8. Once ______ a time, an old man was living ______ a bridge.
   a) upon / under 
   b) upon / next 
   c) upon / through 
   d) on / below 

9. When I saw the ball coming ______ me, I didn’t know what to do.
   a) across 
   b) about 
   c) toward 
   d) from 

10. I have always tried to be honest and sincere ______ my life.
    a) until 
    b) across 
    c) to 
    d) throughout
Exercise 10

COMPLETE THE STORY

Write an appropriate preposition in each blank.
Note that you will also need to write “to” for all infinitive verbs.

Hidden in Plain Sight

They say that when you want _______ hide something, one _______ the best places _______ hide it is _______ plain sight. _______ a story written _______ Edgar Allan Poe called The Purloined Letter, a cunning man, known as Mr. X, stole a secret letter _______ an important woman. He threatened to show the letter to everyone if she did not pay him a great deal _______ money. She went _______ the police, and they secretly searched Mr. X’s apartment. They started by looking _______ the rugs and _______ the books _______ the bookshelves. Nothing. Then they looked _______ the bed and _______ all the closets, but they could not find it. They thought that Mr. X was carrying the letter _______ his pocket or _______ his wallet, so they followed him _______ a park, but they were unsuccessful in finding the letter.

The police called the famous detective Auguste Dupin and asked him _______ investigate the case. Dupin, wearing dark sunglasses, went _______ Mr. X’s house. While he was sitting _______ the table drinking a cup _______ tea, he looked _______ the whole room. He looked at the paintings _______ the wall, the books _______ the desk, and even the cat sleeping _______ the rug. Finally, he looked _______ a bowl _______ some letters in it. He noticed that one _______ the letters looked familiar. Dupin knew that this one was the stolen letter. When Mr. X heard a man shout _______ the front window, he ran _______ see what was happening. In the meantime, Dupin took the stolen letter and replaced it _______ a similar one that he had _______ his pocket. He thanked Mr. X _______ the coffee and hurried out. This is how the detective found the stolen letter. It was hidden in plain sight, right _______ the table.