

Prepositional Phrases

Introduction

A **phrase** is a group of words without a subject and predicate. It functions as a single part of speech. A **prepositional phrase** consists of a preposition, a noun or pronoun that is its object, and any modifiers of the noun or pronoun.

Examples: Jon ate *at home*. Jon ate *at the luxurious convalescent home*.

Prepositional phrases function as adjectives (to modify nouns and pronouns) and as adverbs (to modify verbs, adjectives, and adverbs).

(a) **Adjectival prepositional phrases** tell us more about or describe a noun or pronoun. They should be placed close to the noun or pronoun they modify.

Example: The girl *with long hair* is coming to the party.

(b) **Adverbial prepositional phrases** do the work of an adverb. They tell us more about verbs, adjectives, or adverbs. They tell how, when, or where an action occurs.

Examples: The boy kicked the ball *with a lot of skill*. (modifies verb “kicked”)

Sally was rich *as a queen*. (modifies adjective “rich”)

I run early *in the morning*. (modifies adverb “early”)

Teaching Strategies

Add a preposition

Have children add a suitable preposition to begin a phrase.

The cow jumped _____ the moon.

The cow jumped over the moon.

Classroom phrases

Have children indicate the positions of certain objects in the classroom. Tell them that they must answer with a prepositional phrase.

Teacher: Tom, where is the television?

Tom: near the table

Circle the phrases

As children become more confident, have them search through sentences you have prepared, or through a photocopy of a familiar story, to find and circle the prepositional phrases.

Prepositional Phrases *(cont.)*

Suggest a phrase

Have children suggest prepositional phrases used as adjectives (to describe nouns or pronouns) or adverbs (to describe verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs) to complete sentences.

The bell rings *at nine o'clock*. (adverbial phrase modifies the verb rings)

I saw the girl *with red hair*. (adjectival phrase modifies the noun girl)

Complete the sentence

Provide plenty of short exercises for which children must select the more suitable phrase to complete a sentence.

The boy swam *in the pool.*

on the roof.

Make a sentence

Have children make up sentences that include given prepositional phrases.

before dawn *We left before dawn.*

across the sky *A jet roared across the sky.*

Opposite match

Have children match prepositional phrases with opposite meanings.

at dawn *at sunset*

down the steps *up the stairs*

Add a phrase

Have children add prepositional phrases of their own to make sentences more interesting.

We left the house. *We left the house before noon.*

The girl fed the puppy. *The girl with red hair fed the puppy.*

Where should the phrase go?

Make up a number of sentences with the prepositional phrases incorrectly placed. Have children rewrite the sentences correctly.

The jet plane was piloted by a lady with four engines.

The jet plane with four engines was piloted by a lady.

How, when, or where?

Provide children with a number of sentences with adverbial prepositional phrases. Have them identify whether each tells how, when or where.

with a friendly smile (how)

in the box (where)

before nine o'clock (when)

Prepositional Phrases

Name _____

Grammar BLM

69

A phrase is made up of several words but does not contain a subject-verb combination. The most common type of phrase is the prepositional phrase. It can function in a sentence as an adjective or an adverb.

1. For each prepositional phrase choose from the box a word that has a similar meaning.

carefully

quickly

blind

hilly

bald

now

a. without sight _____

b. without hair _____

c. at this moment _____

d. at a great rate _____

e. with great care _____

f. with plenty of hills _____

2. Draw lines to link the prepositional phrases that have opposite meanings.

a. inside the house

in a rude manner

b. in the front

up the stairs

c. in the morning

at night

d. down the steps

at the back

e. in a polite way

outside the house

f. above the ground

beneath the soil

Prepositional Phrases

Name _____

Grammar BLM

70

A phrase is made up of several words but does not contain a subject-verb combination. The most common type of phrase is the prepositional phrase. It can function in a sentence as an adjective or an adverb.

1. Choose the best prepositional phrase from the box to complete each sentence.

at the supermarket
into the pool

before dinner
across the sky

in the cage
with long, black hair

- Sally put the bird back _____.
- The young girl _____ is my cousin.
- I washed my hands _____.
- The large jet roared _____.
- We bought some milk _____.
- Max dived from the board _____.

2. Underline the prepositional phrases in these sentences.

- The rabbit dived into its burrow.
- The monkey climbed up the tree.
- We left camp before sunrise.
- The car sped along the road.
- There are many mushrooms under the tree.
- The man with sunglasses is a film star.



Prepositional Phrases

Name _____

Grammar BLM

71

A phrase is a group of words without a subject or verb. Some prepositional phrases do the work of an adverb. They may tell *how, when, or where* an action happens.

1. Look at each underlined phrase. Write *how* if it tells how an action happens, *when* if it tells when an action happens, or *where* if it tells where an action happens.

a. We will leave before dark. _____

b. We walked through the long grass. _____

c. The teacher spoke with great care. _____

d. I can jump over that fence. _____

e. I play baseball during the week. _____

f. Sally put the box on the table. _____

2. Write a sentence of your own using each prepositional phrase as an adverb.

a. just before sunset

b. near the school

c. on his front lawn

d. until ten o'clock

Answer Key *(cont.)*

page 95 *(cont.)*

- e. Our teacher read us a book about dinosaurs.
 - f. The kitten was spinning around and trying to catch his tail.
2. (Answers will vary.)

page 96

- 1.
- a. A pencil is used to write with.
 - b. A car has four wheels.
 - c. Hot weather makes us thirsty.
 - d. A dentist looks at our teeth.
 - e. A lion is a type of large cat.
 - f. A tree has roots and branches.
 - g. A giant is very large.
 - h. A rose is a beautiful flower.
2. (Answers will vary.)

page 97

(Answers will vary.)

page 98

- a. simple
- b. compound
- c. complex
- d. complex
- e. simple
- f. compound
- g. simple
- h. simple

page 99

1., 2., 3., 4. (Answers will vary.)

page 100

- a. "I love cats," said Tom.
- b. "We are playing football today," yelled Mike.
- c. "Be careful. The teacher might catch you," whispered Joe.
- d. "What time will Sam arrive?" asked Tom.
- e. "What a good idea!" said the teacher.
- f. "Go!" shouted the starter.
- g. Fred yelled, "Look out for the wild dog!"
- h. The girl in the red dress said, "I will help you lift that."
- i. My best friend Tom said, "Can you stay at my house for the weekend?"

- j. My mother said, "I've told you before that you are not going to the party."
- k. The man at the shop said, "It costs five dollars."
- l. "I know it's hot," said the teacher, "but please try to concentrate."

page 101

(Answers will vary.)

page 104

- 1.
- a. blind
 - b. bald
 - c. now
 - d. quickly
 - e. carefully
 - f. hilly
- 2.
- a. inside the house/outside the house
 - b. in the front/at the back
 - c. in the morning/at night
 - d. down the steps/up the stairs
 - e. in a polite way/in a rude manner
 - f. above the ground/beneath the soil

page 105

- 1.
- a. in the cage
 - b. with long, black hair
 - c. before dinner
 - d. across the sky
 - e. at the supermarket
 - f. into the pool
- 2.
- a. into its burrow
 - b. up the tree
 - c. before sunrise
 - d. along the road
 - e. under the tree
 - f. with sunglasses

page 106

- 1.
- a. when
 - b. where
 - c. how
 - d. where
 - e. when
 - f. where
2. (Answers will vary.)

page 107

- 1.
- a. before school
 - b. at summer camp
 - c. with both hands
 - d. during the afternoon
 - e. in the cage
 - f. after the movie
2. (Answers will vary.)

page 108

- a. adverb
- b. adjective
- c. adjective
- d. adverb
- e. adverb
- f. adjective
- g. adjective
- h. adjective

page 111

- 1.
- a. that grew under the trees.
 - b. who crashed his car.
 - c. because it began to rain.
 - d. where he had come from.
 - e. when leaves change color.
 - f. after he washed his hands.
 - g. if she has time.
 - h. which was my stop.
2. (Answers will vary.)

page 112

1. *word/main clause*
- a. until, We must wait here
 - b. because, Tom did not play
 - c. who, I met the boy