PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES

A prepositional phrase is a group of words with a preposition at the beginning and a noun, a pronoun, or a word group serving as a noun at the end.

The noun, the pronoun, or a word group serving as a noun at the end of the phrase is called the object of the preposition.

Note that many prepositions show time or place or direction. Some word groups are considered a single preposition. Note also that to plus the simple present (base) form of a verb is an infinitive rather than a prepositional phrase. For example, to walk and to run are infinitives.

Some Commonly Used Prepositions

- about
- away from
- because of
- in addition to
- past
- since
- above
- before
- because of
- in spite of
- through
- accompanied by
- behind
- including
- throughout
- according to
- below
- inside
- instead of
- to
- across
- beneath
- into
- together with
- behind
- between
- like
- toward
- below
- beyond
- near
- under
- among
- by
- off
- underneath
- around
- down
- on
- until
- as
- during
- onto
- up
- with
- as long as
- except
- out
- upon
- as much as
- for
- out of
- with
- as well as
- from
- outside
- within
- at
- in
- over
- without
**Purposes of Prepositional Phrases**

To tell *when*: before dawn, during the day, in the Medieval period  
To tell *where*: beneath the table, under the rug  
To tell *why*: for joy, because of his allergy, for discovering the truth  
To tell *how* or *in what way*: by bending the edges, by machine, in attitude, with strength  
To tell *which one*: the man in the blue suit  
To tell *what kind or type*: a city with a small population

**Examples**

In the sentences below, the prepositional phrases are enclosed in brackets.

1. Harold McGruber lived [in Mrs. Smith’s house].  
2. [After dark] the cat [in the alley] prowls [throughout the neighborhood].  
3. [For many years], we lived [in a small but cozy apartment] [near the river].  
4. [During lunch] Mr. Smith quit his job [because of an argument] that he had [with his boss].  
5. [Until morning] the vampires who reside [in my garden] remain silent; however, [at dawn] they moan and beg [for me] to remove the garlic [from the row].  
6. I want to buy that brown dog [with the very long ears].  
7. I like a dress [with a short hem].