

Name: _____

Grammar Handout 3: PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES

Prepositions are words that begin prepositional phrases.

A **prepositional phrase** is a group of words containing the following things:

(1) a *preposition*, (2) a noun that is the *object of the preposition*, and (3) words that *modify the object*.

Example: The bird flew through the cloud.

"through the cloud" is a prepositional phrase that begins with the preposition "through" and ends with its object, "cloud."

The following words are the most commonly used prepositions:

about	behind	except	off	toward
above	below	for	on	under
across	beneath	from	onto	underneath
after	beside(s)	in	out	until
against	between	in front of	outside	up
along	beyond	inside	over	upon
among	but (<i>only when it means "except"</i>)	in spite of	past	up to
around	by	instead of	regarding	with
at	concerning	into	since	within
away from	despite	like	through	without
because of	down	near	throughout	with regard to
before	during	of	to	with respect to

Here are some prepositional phrases; each one begins with a preposition and ends with its object:

through the cloud

under the green plate

of my friends

from Mike's favorite movie

at school



***A good way of remembering prepositions is to think of a *flying bird* and a *cloud*.

In relation to the cloud, the bird can fly **into** the cloud, **around** the cloud, **toward** the cloud, **away from** the cloud, **past** the cloud, **beyond** the cloud, **up to** the cloud, **within** the cloud, **across** the cloud, etc.

Examples of Prepositional Phrases

Here is a sentence with multiple prepositional phrases. Draw a box around each one.

The flock of tiny swallows flew over the trees near the lake.

Now notice all the prepositional phrases in it, which I have underlined for you:

The flock of tiny swallows flew over the trees near the lake.

The sentence's subject is "flock," and its verb is "flew." Basically, the sentence tells us, "The flock flew." The rest of the sentence is made up of prepositional phrases that describe the flock ("of tiny swallows") and describe where it flew ("over the trees" and "near the lake").

WHY IS THIS INFORMATION IMPORTANT TO KNOW?

People often mistake the object of a preposition for the subject of the sentence.

However, any word inside a prepositional phrase CAN'T be the subject or verb of a clause.

Exercise – Each sentence below contains at least one prepositional phrase. For each sentence, do the following things: (1) Draw a box around each prepositional phrase. (2) Label the subject and verb in the same way they have been labeled in the example below.

Ex. In the beginning of the movie, my bag of salted peanuts broke open and scattered on the floor.

- 2 1. One hundred freshmen from Carmel High School are texting me about their grammar questions
- 2 2. A woman in a motorcycle jacket kicked me with her black boots
- 2 3. The porcupines of Pacific Grove visit me during the winter months.
- 2 4. At night Mike and Mary dream about English class.
- 3 5. Before school, I eat breakfast in the trunk of my car.
- 2 6. Doing my homework in bed underneath my blankets relaxes me.
(Note: The subject of this sentence is a gerund!)
- 3 7. All sophomores with a secret friend are meeting in Room 30 at lunchtime.