



The Writing Center

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO
DENVER | ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

Prepositions

Prepositions connect nouns and pronouns to other words in a sentence in terms of location, time, or logic. A prepositional phrase begins with a preposition and ends with a noun, which is the object of the preposition. Thus, the preposition links the object of the preposition in space, time, or logic to a previous noun or pronoun.

Locative (location)

The Writing Center is **on** the fourth floor.

In the above example, “on” is the preposition linking “Writing Center” (the noun) to “fourth floor” (object of the preposition) and describes a spatial relationship between “Writing Center” and its location. The prepositional phrase is “on the fourth floor.”

Temporal (time)

My doctor’s appointment is **in** the morning.

In this example, “in” is the preposition linking “appointment” (the noun) to “morning” (object of the preposition) and describes a temporal relationship, or when the appointment will occur. The prepositional phrase is “in the morning.”

Logical (other relationships)

I bought a new car **for** my mom.

Here, “for” is the preposition linking “car” (the noun) to “my mom” (object of the preposition) and describes a logical relationship between “car” and “mom.” The prepositional phrase is “for my mom.”

| Locative Prepositions | Used to indicate... | Example |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| On | Support by an external surface | The fly landed on the wall. The coffee pot is on the counter. |
| | Close proximity | My parents’ cabin is on Lake Tahoe. |
| Onto | Process of reaching a position on a surface | We crawled onto the spacecraft. The mercury spilled onto the floor. |
| In | Being within the inclusion or limits of an object’s interior | I am trapped in the Matrix. I am in South Dakota this weekend. The pens are in the holder. |
| | A function of means, medium, or instrument | Please write your answers in pen. The book is written in Greek. |
| Into | Process of reaching an object’s interior | I flew into the center of the galaxy. I am going into the Louvre to steal the Mona Lisa. |

| | | |
|--------|---|--|
| Within | Enclosure | I am within the city limits. My professional goal is within reach. |
| At | General vicinity or location | I am at the Writing Center. I am studying at CU Denver. |
| | End result of an implied action | He aimed at the target. |
| From | Starting point or source | I came from the grocery store. I received a call from Santa Claus. |
| | Separation, exclusion, or differentiation | I was released from the hospital. |
| To | Movement toward a location | I came from the mall to your house. I am going to the Writing Center. |
| Out | Motion away from an object (used with another preposition) | I went out into the garden. I am going out to eat. |
| By | Proximity | I am by the drinking fountain. |
| | A process occurring via agency | He got an A by studying hard. |
| Over | A position higher than another | I am flying over Denver. |
| | Motion to or position with respect to another position | The book is over there. |
| Under | A position below or beneath an object | My cat is under the table. |
| Beside | Being on the side of or adjacent to something | I am beside my cat's litter box. |

| Temporal Prepositions | Used to indicate... | Example |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| Since | That which is before the present time | Since last year, I finished my degree. |
| After | A later time than another point in time | I will get pizza after work. |
| During | Something occurring throughout the course of an event | We ate lo mein and egg rolls during our shifts. |
| Until | Continuance to a specified time | Your car will not be ready until Noon. |

| Logical Prepositions | Used to indicate... | Example |
|----------------------|--|--|
| For | Purpose or benefit of having a purpose | A pen is used for writing. I got this for you. I acted for the best. |
| With | Combination or accompaniment | I am talking with my friends. I mix soda with ice cream. I am with my mother. |