

19

Prepositions

prepositions after verbs, adjectives and nouns;
prepositional phrases

A Context listening

1 A student is being interviewed for a teacher training course. Which of the following do you think she says she's worried about?

finding accommodation
lots of hard work
controlling the class
pupils being rude to her

transport
finding maths difficult
having the right clothes
being unprepared to teach

2 19a Listen and see if you were right.

3 19a Listen again and complete the interviewer's notes below.



Notes

Reasons for applying for this course:

- has always been 1 teaching
- wants to gain a teaching qualification

Reasons for choosing our college specifically:

- can 2 accommodation 3 her brother
- was 4 the description of the course in the prospectus
- is keen on 5 teaching before doing it

Expectations of the course:

- a friend 6 her 7 the hard work

Concerns about the course:

- feels she is not very 8 maths
- has no 9 teaching
- 10 not being able to control the class
- unsure what to do if pupils 11 her

4 Look at your answers to Exercise 3. Find at least one example of each of the following:

1 verb + *about*

5 adjective + *in*

2 adjective + *about*

6 noun + *of*

3 adjective + *at*

7 verb + *with*

4 verb + *at*

8 adjective + *by*

B Grammar

The choice of preposition in a clause often depends on the adjective, verb or noun which comes before it.

1 Verb + preposition

| Verb | Preposition |
|--|----------------|
| <i>care, complain, hear, know, learn, say something, talk, think, warn, wonder, worry, write</i> | <i>about</i> |
| <i>aim, fire, laugh, look, point, shout, yell</i> | <i>at</i> |
| <i>choose, decide, differentiate, distinguish</i> | <i>between</i> |
| <i>aim, apologise, apply, forgive, hope, long, prepare, search, wait, watch, wish</i> | <i>for</i> |
| <i>learn, prevent, stop</i> | <i>from</i> |
| <i>assure, convince</i> | <i>of</i> |
| <i>concentrate, count, depend, insist, rely</i> | <i>on</i> |
| <i>apologise, explain, present, speak, talk, write</i> | <i>to</i> |
| <i>be, deal, go out, play, stay</i> | <i>with</i> |

▲ We do not use a preposition with *marry*:

She married him last year. (not She married with him)

Verbs of saying or thinking (e.g. *complain, know, learn, say something, talk, think, warn somebody, wonder, write*) are often followed by *about* when we want to indicate the topic:
That way you can learn about teaching before being asked to do it.

▲ Some other verbs of saying or thinking (e.g. *discuss, debate, consider, mention*) do not need a preposition:

We need to discuss the problem. (not discuss about)

Some verbs of saying (e.g. *apologise, explain, present, speak, talk, write*) are often followed by *to* + person to show who the speech is directed at:

Have you talked to anyone who has done this course?

We use *at* + person/thing after some verbs (e.g. *aim, fire, laugh, look, point, shout, yell*) to show who or what is the focus of the verb:

If they shout at me in class, I'm not sure what I'll do.

We often use *for* after verbs that show desire (e.g. *aim, hope, long, wish*) to introduce the thing we want:

I'm aiming for a good mark in my next assignment.

▲ We use *to* after *aim, hope* and *long* if they are followed by a verb:

I'm hoping to get a better mark than last year.

2 Adjective + preposition

| Adjective | Preposition |
|--|--------------|
| <i>anxious, annoyed, concerned, depressed, excited, upset, worried</i> | <i>about</i> |
| <i>amazed, annoyed, astonished, awful, bad, clever, excited, good, skilled, surprised, terrible, useless</i> | <i>at</i> |
| <i>amazed, annoyed, astonished, concerned, disturbed, excited, impressed, inspired, shocked, surprised</i> | <i>by</i> |
| <i>bad, concerned, good, responsible</i> | <i>for</i> |
| <i>disappointed, interested</i> | <i>in</i> |
| <i>frightened, scared, terrified</i> | <i>of</i> |
| <i>aware, clever, cruel, generous, good, kind, mean, nasty, nice, polite, rude, selfish, true, typical, unkind</i> | <i>of</i> |
| <i>cruel, good, kind, mean, nasty, nice, polite, rude, unkind</i> | <i>to</i> |
| <i>annoyed, bored, concerned, disappointed, fed up, impressed, obsessed, pleased, satisfied, wrong</i> | <i>with</i> |

Adjectives talking about ability (e.g. *awful, bad, clever, good, skilled, terrible, useless*) are often followed by *at*:

I'm not very good at maths.

Some adjectives describing fear (e.g. *frightened, scared, terrified*) can be followed by *of*:

There are some aspects of the course that I am a bit scared of.

Most people are frightened of being in front of a class for the first time.

Adjectives describing behaviour (e.g. *clever, generous, good, kind, nice, selfish*) in a clause starting with *it, that* or *this* are often followed by *of*:

Would you like a cup of tea of coffee? That's very kind of you.

Adjectives describing behaviour directed towards others (e.g. *cruel, good, kind, mean, nasty, nice, polite, rude, unkind*) are often followed by *to*:

I'm worried about the pupils being rude to me.

3 Noun + preposition

| Noun | Preposition |
|---|--------------|
| <i>anything, information, nothing, something</i> | <i>about</i> |
| <i>excuse, explanation, ideas, in return, need, reasons, reputation, responsibility</i> | <i>for</i> |
| <i>change, decrease, drop, experience, fall, increase, rise</i> | <i>in</i> |
| <i>experience, knowledge, understanding</i> | <i>of</i> |
| <i>effect, impact, influence</i> | <i>on</i> |
| <i>in association, experience</i> | <i>with</i> |

4 Prepositional phrases: *by, in, at, on, of*

We use *by*

- ◆ to talk about who in a passive clause:

*But you will be taught how to deal with those things **by the tutors** on the course.*

- ◆ to explain how something is done:

*You can remove any dirty marks **by wiping** it with a wet cloth.*

- ◆ to talk about transport and communications e.g. *by plane, by email*:

*We'll be in touch **by email** soon if that's okay.*

- ◆ to talk about chance (e.g. *by chance, by accident, by mistake*):

*I saw the advertisement for the job **by chance** and decided to apply for it.*

We use *in* for the following expressions: *in love, in pain, in private, in touch, in debt, in danger, in a rush, in fashion, in luck, in the end.*

*Don't forget to keep **in touch** while you're away!*

We use *at* for the following expressions

- ◆ *at first, at large, at peace:*

At first I was impressed by the reputation of the university but I also like the course you offer.

- ◆ *at work, at home, at school, at the airport, at university:*

*I've just finished my first degree **at Stamford University**.*

We use *on* to say why you are somewhere (e.g. *on holiday, on business, on duty*).

We use *of* with expressions of quantity (e.g. *all, any, both, either, neither*).

Grammar extra: Prepositions

We can use nouns, pronouns, or *-ing* after a preposition:

*I was really impressed **with the description** of the course in your prospectus.*

*If they shout **at me** in class, I'm not sure what I'll do.*

*Well, I've always been interested **in teaching**.*

In negatives *not* comes between the preposition and *-ing*:

*I'm worried **about not** being able to control a class.*

C Grammar exercises

1 Choose the correct word (A, B or C) to complete each sentence.

1 I still haven't forgiven her her behaviour in front of my boss.
A for B of C from

2 I'm going to to your parents about your exam results.
A talk B discuss C ask

3 I'm scared making a fool of myself when I give the presentation.
A for B to C of

4 I'm very in you. You've made a real mess of things.
A concerned B astonished C disappointed

5 The new drug prevents the bacteria growing.
A to B from C in

6 There are many things with our society today.
A bad B wrong C disturbing

7 It was very generous you to offer to help me.
A of B about C for

8 The president first became in politics as a student.
A aware B involved C enthusiastic

2 In nine of these sentences there is a wrong preposition. Underline each mistake and write the correction.

- 1 There has been a rise in the number of people buying their own homes.
- 2 It is not difficult to distinguish amongst the emotional response to this crime and the law's response.
- 3 There is no need about a new school in this area.
- 4 We want the government to promise to make a change in the law.
- 5 I hate the way she always laughs to people.
- 6 I've decided to apply to that job in the newspaper.
- 7 Professor Ho has a good knowledge about his subject.
- 8 I'm afraid I broke this glass in accident.
- 9 My husband's staying at my cousin while he is on business in America.
- 10 I gave him one of my paintings in return for his help when I moved house.
- 11 Why do governments always insist in doing things that are unpopular?
- 12 When I was in school I did much more sport than I do these days.

3 Fill in the gaps in the conversation with a word from the box and a preposition.

anxious bad choose depend effect obsessed rely true worried

Teacher: Do you think that money can solve all problems?

Student: No, not really. Of course, I would be 1 ... *anxious* ... *about* ... money if I didn't have very much, but I believe that too much money can be 2 you.

Teacher: So you think it is possible to have too much money?

Student: Well, there are lots of stories in the media about people who have won lots of money in the lottery and realised that they are not happier as a result. I think that large amounts of money can have a negative 3 people.

Teacher: Do you think that people 4 modern technology like computers too much and that people are 5 having the latest high tech equipment?

Student: Well, yes, in some countries. But this isn't 6 many people in the world who are only 7 their next meal. In rich countries people always want a new gadget to make life easier but I'm not sure these machines do actually do that. When we go shopping we have to 8 hundreds of different brands of the same thing, and when these things go wrong we don't know what to do. I would prefer it if life were simpler and we didn't 9 expensive technologies so much.



4 Fill in the gaps in the letter with a preposition.

FIVE STAR HOTELS



Dear Mr Rees,

Thank you for your letter of 21 June. I was very disturbed 1 by your account of what happened in our hotel last week, and I am writing to apologise 2 this. I can understand that you were shocked 3 the way the employee spoke to you. There can be no excuse 4 such behaviour and I fully understand why you felt the need to complain 5 the situation. I can provide no explanation 6 the way the receptionist behaved.

Our hotel group has a reputation 7 being good 8 looking after our customers, and I am very sorry that your experience 9 our service did not confirm this. I intend to deal 10 the staff member appropriately and I will ensure that she does not repeat this behaviour 11 sending her on a retraining course next week. I would like to assure you that the behaviour you encountered is not typical 12 our staff.

As the manager, I am responsible 13 all of our employees so please accept my apologies again and this voucher worth £50 to spend in any 14 our hotels.

Yours sincerely,

Clive Martin
Hotel Manager

D Test practice

Listening Section 2

Questions 1 and 2

Choose the correct letter **A**, **B** or **C**.

1 How far away is the nearest big town to Greenville?

- A** 10 kilometres
- B** 25 kilometres
- C** 500 kilometres

2 Which service came to the town recently?

- A** fire service
- B** medical service
- C** weather station

Questions 3–10

Complete the notes below.

Write **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER** for each answer.

Volunteer storm spotters

Duties:

- Need to **3** the weather station as soon as the storm has passed
- Fill in a **4**
- Attach extracts from **5**

What to report:

- Hall which measures **6** across or larger
- Wind damage e.g. **7** that have been brought down
- Flooding caused by heavy rainfall

How do I become a volunteer?

- There will be a **8** day next month
- Contact local **9** if you want to attend
- Important to sign up before 31st **10**

Grammar focus task

These are some extracts from the recording. Without listening to the text again, fill in the gaps with the correct prepositions.

- 1 Today we're going to be talking what we as a community can do to help each other in severe weather.
- 2 The National Weather Bureau can provide a lot of helpful information and even warn us severe storms.
- 3 You don't have to be particularly skilled anything.
- 4 They'd also like to hear very heavy rainfall.
- 5 What should you do if you care our community and you want to help?
- 6 This will only take up a day so don't worry too much it.
- 7 You'll need to talk the police.