

Exercises on
English
Prepositions
& Adverbs
J. G. Bruton



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Nelson

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Complete English Practice Book

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Foreword

This book of exercise material deals with one of the major problems that English presents to the foreign learner. The behaviour of English prepositions and adverbs is often not capable of helpful analysis and the teacher more often than not, when asked for guidance, is obliged to say 'It is so because it is so.' This book offers some very general guide lines.

The book also offers many easily accessible exercises which can be used with a class whenever particular difficulties with prepositions and adverbs arise. These exercises offer controlled practice which is the only real way greater mastery can be achieved.

The book is intended for students who have a fair command of English, but find difficulties with this area of it.

Contents

Part 1

Simple uses of Prepositions and Adverbs 1

Part 2

Idiomatic Expressions beginning with Prepositions 23

Part 3

Expressions Ending in a Preposition or an Adverb

Section 1 Exercises listed by preposition or adverb 49

Section 2 General revision and practice 98

Section 3 A list of nouns, verbs and adjectives
occurring in such expressions 109

Key to the Exercises 130

Part 1

Exercises 1–57

Simple uses of prepositions and adverbs

This first section deals with the normal uncomplicated uses of prepositions and adverbs.

The exercises are of two types:

(a) Matching Parts

Where the first example of an exercise is marked †, match each part in the first column with one from the second column.

e.g. In Exercise 1, No 7 in Column 1, 'I see him' is completed by No 2 in Column 2, 'about once a week'.

(b) Completing Sentences

When the mark is ‡, the sentences should be completed by selecting one of the words listed above.

e.g. Exercise 5, No 1, 'The train is about to *leave*.'

The prepositions and adverbs dealt with in this section are presented in alphabetical order.

Exercise 1

ABOUT (adv.) used with expressions of size, quantity, etc.

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 He gets up† | 1 about £10 a week. |
| 2 She earns | 2 about once a week. |
| 3 You must be | 3 about 100 people present. |
| 4 There were | 4 about a mile from here. |
| 5 We live | 5 about 8 o'clock. |
| 6 It weighs | 6 about the same as coffee. |
| 7 I see him | 7 about 40 years old. |
| 8 The pool is | 8 about 20 floors. |
| 9 Tea costs | 9 about 4 lbs. |
| 10 The building has | 10 about 3 metres deep. |

Exercise 2

ABOUT (prep.) used with expressions like 'tell me about' and 'a story about'.

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 Tell me† | 1 about our plans. |
| 2 They always quarrel | 2 about her experiences. |
| 3 We had an argument | 3 about my expedition. |
| 4 He has written a book | 4 about the fire? |
| 5 She gave us a talk | 5 about his adventures. |
| 6 I'm preparing a lecture | 6 about life in other countries. |
| 7 Have you heard | 7 all about it! |
| 8 Have you a book | 8 about yourself. |
| 9 I love films | 9 about their expenses. |
| 10 Read | 10 about Japan? |

Exercise 3

ABOUT (adv.) meaning 'approximately'.

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 That building is† | 1 about built. |
| 2 Are they | 2 about finished. |
| 3 His answer was | 3 about the worst I've read. |
| 4 The train is due | 4 about cooked. |
| 5 This battery is | 5 about right. |
| 6 The dinner is | 6 about the tallest I've seen. |
| 7 The house is | 7 about full. |
| 8 The water is | 8 about now. |
| 9 My bag is | 9 about ready? |
| 10 That novel is | 10 about boiling. |

Exercise 4

ABOUT (adv.) meaning 'here and there'.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 Children like to† | 1 moving about? |
| 2 Don't leave your clothes | 2 roam about. |
| 3 Gypsies are people who | 3 spread about? |
| 4 Why are you | 4 run about. |
| 5 She got up and | 5 wandering about. |
| 6 He's so lazy he just | 6 lying about. |
| 7 I wonder how this rumour has | 7 walked about. |
| 8 The child was found | 8 sits about doing nothing. |

Exercise 5

ABOUT TO (adv.) indicating the future, i.e. 'be shortly going to'.

start, rise, be published, sit, leave, be signed, write, pay, strike, get married.

- 1 The train is about to†
- 2 I was about to to you when I got your letter.
- 3 His book is about to
- 4 We are about to the bill.
- 5 The clock is about to
- 6 The concert is about to
- 7 They haven't long been engaged, but they are about to
- 8 The curtain is about to
- 9 We were just about to down to dinner.
- 10 An agreement is about to

Exercise 6

ABOVE (prep.) meaning 'in a higher position'.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 Bogota is about 9,000 feet† | 1 above the clouds. |
| 2 Their flat is | 2 above me. |
| 3 We saw the mountain peak | 3 above a sergeant. |
| 4 Hold your hands | 4 above its nest. |
| 5 A captain is | 5 above the door. |
| 6 I was third: there were two | 6 above ours. |
| 7 Hang this sign | 7 above the heads of the crowd. |
| 8 The bird hovered | 8 above reproach. |
| 9 His conduct was | 9 above sea level. |
| 10 The police fired | 10 above your head. |

Exercise 7

ABOVE (prep.) meaning 'in a higher position'.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 His voice could be heard† | 1 above my head. |
| 2 His honesty is | 2 above 30 million. |
| 3 Her salary must be | 3 above him. |
| 4 Sales this year are | 4 above this point. |
| 5 The lecture was | 5 above the noise. |
| 6 The selling price is always | 6 above 18. |
| 7 The population is | 7 above last year's. |
| 8 He married | 8 above suspicion. |
| 9 They admit only people | 9 above the buying price. |
| 10 The pressure must not go | 10 above £1,000. |

Exercise 8

ACCORDING TO (prep.) meaning 'in keeping with' or 'on the evidence of'.

forecast, police, you, rules, facts, wife, regulations, custom, plan, tradition.

- 1 Games must be played according to the†
- 2 According to the, the weather is going to be bad.
- 3 The arrangements went according to
- 4 The situation must be judged according to the
- 5 According to the, the accident was Brown's fault.
- 6 According to his, he is a poor father.
- 7 According to, you have been badly treated.
- 8 According to, this door must be kept closed.
- 9 According to, King Alfred burnt the cakes.
- 10 According to, the President's health must be drunk first.

Exercise 9

ON ACCOUNT OF (prep.) meaning 'because of'.

accent, fog, breakdown, noise, difficulties, rain, strike, ill-health, storm, snow.

- 1 The tennis match was abandoned on account of †
- 2 He can't be understood on account of his
- 3 I can't hear him on account of the
- 4 Shipping is delayed on account of a
- 5 Traffic over the mountains in winter is often delayed on account of

- 6 The factory has been closed on account of a
- 7 Planes could not land at London Airport on account of
- 8 He has stopped trying on account of the
- 9 The manager has resigned on account of
- 10 There is no electricity on account of a

Exercise 10

ACROSS (prep.) indicating 'from one side to the other'.

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Don't run† | 1 across the Atlantic. |
| 2 They swam | 2 across the wall. |
| 3 He kicked the ball | 3 across the river. |
| 4 Is there a pass | 4 across the stamp. |
| 5 We flew | 5 across the mountains? |
| 6 There's a crack | 6 across that ditch. |
| 7 Sign | 7 across the road. |
| 8 I can't jump | 8 across the page. |
| 9 Draw a line | 9 across the North Pole. |
| 10 You can fly to Japan | 10 across the goal. |

Exercise 11

AFTER (prep.) indicating 'later in time'.

rest, dark, while, all, dinner, meal, lunch, hours, lecture, banquet.

- 1 I like coffee after†
- 2 After, it was your idea.
- 3 You shouldn't swim for an hour after a
- 4 Drinks cannot be sold after
- 5 You'll feel better after a
- 6 He likes to sleep after
- 7 It's dangerous to walk through those streets after
- 8 He grew tired of his new toy after a
- 9 There will be speeches after the
- 10 After the, the speaker was surrounded by questioners.

Exercise 12

AGAINST (prep.) indicating opposition.

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 He leant his bicycle† | 1 against the invaders. |
| 2 Don't try to swim | 2 against bigamy. |
| 3 Aeroplanes take off | 3 against the champion. |
| 4 Smuggling is | 4 against the current. |
| 5 The committee voted | 5 against the shore. |
| 6 The army fought | 6 against the wall. |
| 7 He has to play | 7 against the wind. |
| 8 There is a law | 8 against the proposal. |
| 9 The waves beat | 9 against my will. |
| 10 It was done | 10 against the law. |

Exercise 13

ALONG (prep.) indicating movement or position in a line.

coast, route, street, river, car, frontier, margin, line, edge, middle.

- 1 Pass along the† please.
- 2 There were people fishing all along the
- 3 Sign along this
- 4 There are no shops along this
- 5 There are magnificent beaches all along the
- 6 There's a white line along the of the road.
- 7 There were cheering people all along the of the procession.
- 8 They have placed guards all along the
- 9 They stretched in never-ending line along the of a bay.
- 10 Cut along the of the picture.

Exercise 14

AMONG (prep.) indicating position 'in the middle of' or 'surrounded by'.

trees, presents, successes, crowd, mess, nations, papers, films, children, thieves.

- 1 It's among the best† I have seen.
- 2 I can't find anything among all this
- 3 He caught sight of George among the
- 4 Divided these sweets among the
- 5 There is honour among
- 6 Among the she received was a gold watch.
- 7 There's a photograph among these

- 8 What is one failure among so many
- 9 The house is hidden among the
- 10 An agreement has been signed among the interested.

Exercise 15

AROUND (prep.) indicating circular motion.

waist, speaker, wall, neck, moon.

- 1 Wrap this scarf around your†
- 2 A crowd of people gathered around the
- 3 He put his arm around her
- 4 There's a ring around the
- 5 Arrange these chairs around the

Exercise 16

AROUND (prep.) indicating 'approximately'.

mile, people, nightfall, here, age.

- 1 It began to rain around†
- 2 Around fifty attended the meeting.
- 3 He lives somewhere around
- 4 It must be around a long.
- 5 Your brother must be around my

Exercise 17

AROUND (prep.) indicating 'here and there'.

lake, field, you, hall, city.

- 1 Just look around†
- 2 We drove around the looking for him.
- 3 The speaker glanced quickly around the
- 4 All around the boats were sailing.
- 5 The players stood around the waiting for the match to begin.

Exercise 18

AT (prep.) used with time expressions.

night, dawn, end, Christmas, age, sunset, beginning, time, birth, nightfall.

- 1 Begin at the†
- 2 We always have a party at

- 3 Cats can see at
- 4 He was exhausted at the of the race.
- 5 We all arrived at the same
- 6 He died at the of 60.
- 7 Birds leave their nests at
- 8 He was blind at
- 9 The gates are closed at
- 10 Car lights must be switched on at

Exercise 19

AT (prep.) used with expressions indicating position.

lights, Oxford, station, frontier, home, bottom, entrance, school, top, head.

- 1 He never goes out at night; he prefers to stay at
- 2 I studied French at
- 3 Don't go in: wait for me at the
- 4 He took his degree at
- 5 The train arrives at 10 a.m. and there will be a lot of people at the
- 6 He stood at the, looking down.
- 7 There's a river at the of the valley.
- 8 Stop at the
- 9 Only those at the of the line will be admitted.
- 10 You will have to show your passport at the

Exercise 20

BACK (adv.) indicating movement in reverse.

call, threw, pay, send, give, look, turn, driven, come, wrote.

- 1 Don't† back; we're being followed.
- 2 Will you please back the empty box?
- 3 The enemy has been back.
- 4 When will you back what you owe me?
- 5 I'll go by bus and back by taxi.
- 6 He back to say he couldn't come.
- 7 back to page 12.
- 8 Can you back in an hour's time?
- 9 If it isn't yours you must it back to its owner.
- 10 I picked up the ball and it back.

Exercise 21

BEFORE (prep.) meaning 'preceding in time/place'.

storm, publication, birthday, Christ, judge, examination, lunch, concert, meal, dark.

- 1 B.C. means Before†
- 2 Don't study too hard just before the
- 3 The accused man will appear before a to-morrow.
- 4 3,000 copies of the book were sold before
- 5 You should always wash your hands before a
- 6 Don't open this present before your
- 7 They must be home before
- 8 Musicians often lie down and rest before a
- 9 It's always quiet before a
- 10 Let's have a drink before

Exercise 22

BEHIND (prep.) indicating position 'at the back of'.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 They've built a swimming-pool† | 1 behind the bookcase. |
| 2 He never looks | 2 behind ships. |
| 3 Seagulls often fly | 3 behind the chairman. |
| 4 The sun disappeared | 4 behind the mountains. |
| 5 The picture has fallen | 5 behind the procession. |
| 6 Put your hands | 6 behind that curtain? |
| 7 What's | 7 behind a cloud. |
| 8 The children ran | 8 behind your back. |
| 9 The moon rose | 9 behind him. |
| 10 The committee stood | 10 behind their house. |

Exercise 23

BENEATH (prep.) indicating a lower position.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 There's a lovely valley† | 1 beneath the building. |
| 2 Our friends live in the flat | 2 beneath several bridges. |
| 3 There's a large cellar | 3 beneath his pillow. |
| 4 The river passes | 4 beneath ours. |
| 5 Some insects live | 5 beneath the mountains. |
| 6 There's nothing new | 6 beneath ground. |
| 7 He sleeps with a revolver | 7 beneath trees. |
| 8 Rabbits live | 8 beneath a pile of rubbish. |
| 9 Grass won't grow | 9 beneath stones. |
| 10 I discovered the picture | 10 beneath the sun. |

Exercise 24

BESIDE (prep.) meaning 'at the side of'.

master, church, me, pool, lorry, river, entrance, station, chairman, bed.

- 1 I parked my car beside a†
- 2 The dog walked beside his
- 3 We sunbathed beside the
- 4 I like a reading-lamp beside my
- 5 There's a doorkeeper standing beside the
- 6 The chief speaker always sits beside the
- 7 The churchyard is beside the
- 8 Come and sit beside
- 9 There's a hotel beside the
- 10 The railway runs beside the

Exercise 25

BETWEEN (prep.) meaning 'situated in the middle'.

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 There were† | 1 between the station and the centre. |
| 2 He must be | 2 between the two children. |
| 3 The English Channel is | 3 between two fires. |
| 4 I leave work | 4 between high mountains. |
| 5 The river runs | 5 between 200 and 300 people present. |
| 6 Buses run | 6 between the two speakers. |
| 7 Divide these sweets | 7 between 6 and 6.30 p.m. |
| 8 The chairman sat | 8 between the pages of a book. |
| 9 He was caught | 9 between 40 and 50 years old. |
| 10 She put the photograph | 10 between England and France. |

Exercise 26

BEYOND (prep.) meaning 'on the other side of', 'more than', 'exceeding'.

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 Such stupidity is† | 1 beyond his ability. |
| 2 No smoking allowed | 2 beyond breaking-point. |
| 3 The work is | 3 beyond the horizon. |
| 4 You shouldn't live | 4 beyond my understanding. |
| 5 Don't stretch it | 5 beyond reason. |
| 6 Modern painting is | 6 beyond belief. |

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 7 The ship disappeared | 7 beyond 50. |
| 8 There must be a river | 8 beyond your means. |
| 9 Their demands are | 9 beyond this point. |
| 10 He must be | 10 beyond those mountains. |

Exercise 27

BY (prep.) indicating the person or means by which an action is done.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Their house was designed† | 1 by floods. |
| 2 He was examined | 2 by plane. |
| 3 The village was destroyed | 3 by an expensive tailor. |
| 4 His clothes are made | 4 by a specialist. |
| 5 The goods must be sent | 5 by a famous architect. |

Exercise 28

BY (prep.) indicating nearness.

side, door, bed, window, roadside.

- 1 I like a reading-lamp by my†
- 2 The 63 bus passes by our
- 3 Come and stand by my
- 4 We stopped by the to picnic.
- 5 She stood by the, looking out.

Exercise 29

BY (prep.) indicating manner.

heart, design, chance, accident, far.

- 1 This is by† the most interesting.
- 2 You'll have to learn these instructions by
- 3 He dropped it by
- 4 We met by in the street.
- 5 It wasn't an accident; it was done by

Exercise 30

BY (prep.) meaning 'alone'.

myself, yourself, himself, herself, themselves.

- 1 She lives by†
- 2 He went by
- 3 Why did you go by?
- 4 I hate eating by
- 5 They can't manage by

Exercise 31

BY (prep.) indicating 'by means of'.

electricity, expression, miracle, argument, plane.

- 1 You'll get there quicker by†
- 2 Radios work by
- 3 I could see by his that he wasn't pleased.
- 4 You'll never convince him by
- 5 We succeeded by a

Exercise 32

DOWN (prep.) indicating movement from a higher to a lower position.

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 The ship sailed† | 1 down the well. |
| 2 I have a pain | 2 down the hill. |
| 3 The dog has fallen | 3 down the wall. |
| 4 Don't run | 4 down my leg. |
| 5 There's a huge crack | 5 down the river. |

Exercise 33

FOR (prep.) indicating purpose or exchange.

thank, waiting, call, studying, works, pay, change, gone, send, vote.

- 1 What did you† for your ticket?
- 2 I'd like to this tie for another.
- 3 They have for a walk.
- 4 Are all those people for the bus?
- 5 Will you for the doctor?
- 6 I want to you for being so patient.
- 7 Which candidate did you for?
- 8 Be ready at 6 and I'll for you.
- 9 He's for an examination.
- 10 She for a firm of exporters.

Exercise 34

FOR (prep.) indicating purpose or exchange.

cure, refill, substitute, use, reason, receipt, toys, classes, time, excuse.

- 1 † are for children.
- 2 Have you a for a ballpoint pen?
- 3 Are there any for beginners?