

初中學生文庫

英文介系詞用法

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# PREPOSITIONS: HOW TO USE THEM

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## CHAPTER I

### THE PREPOSITION

#### (1) Definition

A Preposition is a word used to show the relation between a noun or noun-equivalent and some other word in the sentence.

The Noun or Noun-equivalent is the Object.

Example:—

We live in China.

In this sentence the word "in" is a preposition and shows the relation between the verb "live" and the noun "China", "China" is the object of the preposition "in".

A preposition usually shows the relation between a noun or noun-equivalent and

(1) A NOUN: Is there any difference between "on" and "upon"?

(2) AN ADJECTIVE: The air we breathe out is different *from* the air we breathe in.

(3) A VERB: Copper differs *from* brass in colour.

(4) AN ADVERB: The meet this year is to be run differently *from* previous meets.

## (2) Classification

Prepositions may be divided into four classes:— (1) Simple, (2) Compound, (3) Participial, (4) Phrase-Prepositions.

(1) The Simple prepositions are:—at, by, for, from, on, in, of, off, over, to, through, till, (until), with, up, down, since, under, after.

(2) The Compound prepositions are:—about, above, across, against, along, amid, among, around, before, behind, below, beside, besides, between, beyond, into, onto, out of, within, without.

(3) The Participial prepositions are:—concerning, considering, during, except (excepting), notwithstanding, pending, regarding, save, owing.

(4) Phrase prepositions are:—on account of, in the event of, for the purpose of, with a view to, etc., etc.

## (3) Kinds of Objects

The Object of a preposition may be

(1) A Noun:—These goods came from *Japan*.

(2) A Pronoun:—He wrote a letter for *me*.

(3) An Adjective with the article *the*:—  
I gave large sums to the *poor* (men).

(4) An Adjective without *the*:—*a*. The yellow stock has gone for *good*. *b*. To master English is far from *easy*.

(5) An Adverb:—*a*. He kept on working till *now*. *b*. Since *then* we have never heard from him.

(6) An Infinitive:—*a*. He did nothing *but* (*to*) *play* all day long. *b*. We would rather die than (*to*) *yield*.

(7) A Gerund or Verbal Noun:—*a*. He turned back before *reaching* the top. *b*. I cannot run far without *resting*.

(8) A Noun Phrase:—*a*. This book treats of *how to use prepositions correctly*. *b*. We should master long sentences in order to obtain a proper knowledge of *how to connect the different parts of a sentence*.

(9) Noun Clause:—*a*. Can you see the coming boat from *where you stand*? *b*. His success depends upon *whether he can study hard or not*. *c*. The thought of *what I had seen* made me keep close to my home for quite two years. *d*. They told me about *what they saw in the Great World*.

(10) A Prepositional Phrase (a phrase beginning with a preposition):—*a*. He would go except

*on a rainy day.* *b. Save for a single figure,* that of Nancy, the bridge itself was deserted. *c. The boy came from within the house.* *d. The cart stands over against the bank.*

#### (4) The Use of a Prepositional Phrase

A preposition followed by a Noun or Noun-equivalent is called the Prepositional Phrase. A prepositional phrase can be used as an adjective to modify a noun, or as an adverb to modify a verb, an adjective or another adverb.

(1) As an adjective to modify a noun attributively:—

*a. Persons of good fame* are welcome every where.

*b. The old man with spectacles on* is the ex-principal of our college.

In (a) “of good fame” modifies the noun “persons”, and in (b) “with spectacles on” modifies the noun “man”, both being used as adjectives in the attributive adjunct.

(2) As an adjective to modify a noun or pronoun predicatively:—

*a. This book is of great use* to us.

*b. He is without money.*

“Of great use” in (a) and “without money” in (b) are used as adjectives in the predicate (*i.e.*

the subjective complement to the linking verb "is").

(3) As an adverb to modify a verb, an adjective, or an adverb:—

a. He wrote *on the blackboard*.

b. She is good *at reading*.

c. That horse runs faster *by thirty seconds*.

In (a) "on the blackboard" is an adverbial phrase modifying the verb "wrote", in (b) "at reading" modifies the adjective "good", and in (c) "by thirty seconds" modifies the adverb "faster" (comparative of "fast").

### Exercise I

Pick out the prepositions and tell what words they show the relation between.

1. The gatekeeper stood by the gate.
2. Rice grows best in wet ground.
3. The old man sat under a tree near a thatched house.
4. A picture hangs over the door.
5. Ever greens were placed round the roof.
6. We can do nothing without money.
7. You ought to be polite to your superiors.
8. The stag felt ashamed of its thin legs.
9. He was very angry with me.

10. The express train arrived at Kashing by 4:15 p.m.
11. We sleep in the night.
12. His birthday will occur on the next Monday.
13. The black dog ran behind the tree.
14. He sat beside my sister.
15. He was on no account to let them pass through the gate.
16. The little sparrow is a very good friend to the farmer.
17. They cannot but speak broken and fragmentary English.
18. We are going to have a house built on the mountains.
19. The direction between north and east is called northeast.
20. With the compass we can always tell the four directions.

## Exercise II

Name the objects of the prepositions in the following sentences.

1. These boys swim across the canal.
2. We must rely upon ourselves.
3. She could not but laugh to see such a strange sight.

4. We may prefer to expire rather than surrender.

5. Without your help I should have failed in the final examination.

6. He has come from beyond the seas.

7. Now we cannot go to Tientsin except by steamer.

8. How far is it from here?

9. I have never truly seen my father till now.

10. The second part on how to improve one's English while out of school will be taken up at another time.

11. The rich must render assistance to the poor.

12. The poor are dependent upon the rich.

13. There is no royal road to learning.

14. We often pass things without seeing and hearing.

15. He cried for help in vain.

16. He will go except that it rains.

17. There is always a period of what is called development.

18. He was better for what he had done.

19. He was much surprised at how the engines could be made to work themselves.

20. His father asked as to who had cut the cherry tree.

## CHAPTER II

## THE SIMPLE PREPOSITIONS

**Prepositions**

**After:** Sequence (在後):—

(1) *Sequence in place or order*

- a. You should come out after your teacher.
- b. I will enter after you.
- c. Two boys walked after him.
- d. A phrase modifying a noun is placed after the noun it modifies.

(2) *Sequence in time.*

- a. This shop will be closed after January first.
- b. You must not make any noise after ten o'clock.
- c. His wealth was gained only after a few years.
- d. He was released after three years of imprisonment.
- e. His wife died a few days after the birth of her daughter.

(3) *Sequence in effect.*

a. His words will not be believed after this dishonest deed.

b. I am always tired after playing hard.

c. He won success after toiling hard.

(4) *Pursuit or search.*

a. He is always seeking after wealth.

b. I went after it, and soon gained upon it.

c. The policeman ran after the thief.

d. The students thirst after knowledge.

e. What are you looking after?

f. What is he after (=in pursuit of)?

(5) *Resemblance or similarity.*

a. He takes after his father.

b. We have the opportunity of studying in schools modelled after Western lines.

c. They saw five or six houses marked after this same fashion.

d. It was a homely little room after the fashion of old country house.

(6) *Contrast, notwithstanding.*

a. After all the advice I gave, he adopted a contrary course.

b. After all our advice, he still took that course.

**At:** Proximity with actual or intended contact (在):—

(1) *Proximity in place (relating to a small extent of space).*

a. While in Shanghai, I stayed at the Great Eastern Hotel.

b. Mr. Wang addressed the Kiangsu Educational Association at the West Gate Shanghai.

c. He has taught at many schools.

d. We arrived at Pinghu by 4:14 p.m.

e. He is not at home just now.

f. After trading at various towns, we landed at Canton.

(2) *Proximity in time (relating to a small extent of time).*

a. He will start at six o'clock a.m.

b. There, is no vacant position at the present time.

c. The peace negotiations can be brought to a successful close at an early date.

d. The four lovers were married at this very day.

(3) *Proximity in state.*

a. China is at peace with other nations.

b. He is now quite at ease.

*c.* We go to Shanghai by train or by steamer at our pleasure.

*d.* I am now at leisure to hear you.

(4) *Cause of emotion.*

*a.* Her mother was much grieved at her rudeness.

*b.* They were discontented at his absence.

*c.* He was somewhat provoked at hearing this.

*d.* I am surprised at hearing this news.

*e.* She was almost heartbroken at parting from her lover.

*f.* He shuddered at the sight.

(5) *Proximity in value.*

*a.* We have sold quite a lot of such plates at much higher price.

*b.* We'll let you have it at four dollars.

*c.* This is Siberian butter at eighty cents per pound.

*d.* That is American cheese at forty-five cents per pound.

*e.* At what price is this sold?

*f.* That is sold at a dollar a yard.

(6) *Cost or rate.*

*a.* You may return it at our expense.

*b.* The steamer is traveling at very high speed.

c. The swans found it harder and harder to fly at their former rate.

d. We met several men riding at a rapid pace.

(7) *Proximity in aim.*

a. Don't laugh at a poorly dressed man.

b. He leveled his revolver at the enemy.

c. The fox could not get at the grapes.

d. The cat cast an anxious glance at her master.

(8) *Proximity in occupation.*

a. The German army has 500 days at work with the armies in the west.

b. He was busily at work all day.

c. Were you at the game yesterday?

d. We enjoyed ourselves at the picnic.

**By:** Nearness of some kind (近):—

(1) *Nearness in place.*

a. Come and sit by me.

b. He stood by his father.

(2) *Nearness in time.*

a. Some birds fly by day and others by night.

b. We have to reach home by six o'clock.

c. The moon will have set by quarter past six a. m.

d. Always get up by sunrise.

(3) *Agency (usually in the passive sentence).*

a. He was fairly treated by us.

b. Our college was founded by Mr. Lee.

c. This book is compiled by Mr. Yü.

d. The street is lighted by electricity.

(4) *Manner, means, or instrument.*

a. Sieze him by the neck (not *his* neck).

b. A man pulls me by the sleeves (not *my* sleeves).

c. He held me by the button.

d. Elephants pull up trees by roots.

e. Every language must be learned by use rather than by rule.

f. Many without labor would live by their wits only.

g. They left for Paris by the steamer.

h. I should like to send this letter by express.

i. Reports of the earthquake poured into New York by cable and by radio.

j. Fishes breathe the air by means of their gills.

k. He recovered his health by means of sea air and sea bathing.

(5) *Measure or amount (usually in the comparative sentence).*

- a. He is cleverer than you by a good deal.
- b. He is taller than I by two inches.
- c. He is younger than you by three years.
- d. He is my senior (= older than I) by four years.
- e. This is by far (=very much) the better newspaper of the two.
- f. He runs faster by a few seconds.

(6) *Standard.*

- a. The Ministry of War has decided to reduce the pay of the officers of the regular army by 20 per cent from May 1.
- b. The crops of this year is expected to increase by about ten per cent as compared with those of a normal year.

(7) *Adjuration.*

- a. He swore by heaven.
- b. Don't swear by heaven, for it is the throne of God.

**Down:** descent of some kind (下) (usually after verbs of Motion).

- a. The moonlight creeps down the hillside.
- b. The baby squirrel climbed down the side of the tree.

- c.* He ran as fast as he could down the road.
- d.* The last tear trickled down her face
- e.* The boat drifted down stream.
- f.* He went down the garden walk to the cherry tree.

**For:** direction in or reason of (something)  
(向, 因):—

*(1) Direction in place.*

- a.* He will set out for Hangchow to-morrow morning.
- b.* We shall start for the station.
- c.* The soldiers are marching for the field.
- d.* I saw many boys running for the park.

*(2) Direction in time.*

- a.* I have not heard from them for several years.
- b.* He was imprisoned for life.
- c.* He has been working without food for a long time.
- d.* I came here for the first time.
- e.* They might let me stay here for the night.

*(3) Cause or reason.*

- a.* What are you here for?
- b.* The crowd jeered at the speaker for his awkward manner.

- c.* His mother scolded him for telling a lie.
- d.* He was punished for stealing.
- e.* We thanked him for helping us.
- f.* We hate him for doing such an unkind thing.

(4) *Purpose.*

- a.* This stuff is not fit for food
- b.* We all strive for success.
- c.* All shops are closed for celebrations.
- d.* Mr. Chow has invented a typewriter for the Chinese.
- e.* Books are for use not for show.
- f.* They store the wheat up for the winter months.

(5) *Exchange or value (see § 5 under At).*

- a.* He sold his horse for a small sum.
- b.* He bought that dictionary for three dollars.
- c.* The farmer sold the flock for ten dollars.
- d.* We can let you have it for six dollars.
- e.* Please cash the money order for twenty dollars.
- f.* You pay five cents for the ordinary postage and twelve cents for express.

(6) *Substitution or on behalf of.*

- a.* I have come to see you for my friend Mr. Ling.