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* .....
2 adjective + *about* .....
3 adjective + *at* .....
4 verb + *at* .....
5 adjective + *in* .....
6 noun + *of* .....
7 verb + *with* .....
8 adjective + *by* .....

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

⚠ 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.*

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2 Adjective + preposition

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

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
anything, information, nothing, something	***about***
excuse, explanation, ideas, in return, need, reasons, reputation, responsibility	***for***
change, decrease, drop, experience, fall, increase, rise	***in***
experience, knowledge, understanding	***of***
effect, impact, influence	***on***
in association, experience	***with***

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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.*

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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. .....

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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.



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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

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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:

- Hail 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** .....

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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.

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