The Object of a Preposition

Recognize an object of a preposition when you see one.

Prepositions often begin prepositional phrases. To complete the phrase, the preposition usually teams up with a noun, pronoun, or gerund, or the object of the preposition. Here are some examples:

At noon

At = preposition; noon = noun or the object of the preposition.

Behind them

Behind = preposition; them = pronoun or the object of the preposition.

Without sneezing

Without = preposition; sneezing = gerund or the object of the preposition.

The object of the preposition will often have modifiers that add description:

At the kitchen counter

At = preposition; the, kitchen = modifiers; counter = noun or the object of the preposition.

Between us only

Between = preposition; us = pronoun or the object of the preposition; only = modifier.

Without completely finishing

Without = preposition; completely = modifier; finishing = gerund or the object of the preposition.

Infrequently, a clause will be the object of the preposition, as in this example:

In class today, we talked about what Mr. Duncan expects in our next research essay.

About = preposition; what Mr. Duncan expects in our next research essay = noun clause or the object of the preposition.