The Object of the Preposition

Recognize the object of the preposition when you find one.

Prepositions often begin prepositional phrases. To complete the phrase, the preposition teams up with a noun, pronoun, or gerund—the object of the preposition.

Here are examples:

At noon

At = preposition; noon = noun (the object of the preposition).

Behind them

Behind = preposition; them = pronoun (the object of the preposition).

Without sneezing

Without = preposition; sneezing = gerund (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 (the object of the preposition).

Between us only

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

Without completely finishing

Without = preposition; completely = modifier; finishing = gerund (the object of the preposition).
Infrequently, a **noun clause** will be the object of the preposition, as in this example:

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

*About* = preposition; **what Professor Duncan expects in our next research essay** = noun clause (the *object* of the preposition).