Recognize a preposition when you see one.

Prepositions are the words that indicate location. Usually, prepositions show this location in the physical world. Check out the three examples below:

The puppy is **on** the floor.

The puppy is **in** the trash can.

The puppy is **beside** the phone.

**On**, **in**, and **beside** are all prepositions. They are showing *where* the puppy is. Prepositions can also show location in *time*. Read the next three examples:

*At midnight*, Jill craved mashed potatoes with grape jelly.

*In the spring*, I always vow to plant tomatoes but end up buying them at the supermarket.

*During the marathon*, Iggy’s legs complained with sharp pains shooting up his thighs.

*At midnight, in the spring, and during the marathon* all show location in time. Because there are so many possible locations, there are quite a few prepositions. Below is the complete list:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>about</th>
<th>concerning</th>
<th>onto</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>above</td>
<td>despite</td>
<td>on top of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>according to</td>
<td>down</td>
<td>out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>across</td>
<td>during</td>
<td>out of</td>
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<tr>
<td>after</td>
<td>except</td>
<td>outside</td>
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<tr>
<td>against</td>
<td>except for</td>
<td>over</td>
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<td>along</td>
<td>excepting</td>
<td>past</td>
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<td>along with</td>
<td>for</td>
<td>regarding</td>
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<td>among</td>
<td>from</td>
<td>round</td>
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<td>apart from</td>
<td>in</td>
<td>since</td>
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<tr>
<td>around</td>
<td>in addition to</td>
<td>through</td>
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<td>as</td>
<td>in back of</td>
<td>throughout</td>
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<td>as for</td>
<td>in case of</td>
<td>till</td>
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<td>at</td>
<td>in front of</td>
<td>to</td>
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<td>because of</td>
<td>in place of</td>
<td>toward</td>
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<tr>
<td>before</td>
<td>inside</td>
<td>under</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>behind</td>
<td>in spite of</td>
<td>underneath</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
*But* is very seldom a preposition. When it is used as a preposition, *but* means the same as *except*—*Everyone ate frog legs but Jamie.* *But* usually functions as a coordinating conjunction.

**Understand how to form a prepositional phrase.**

Prepositions generally introduce prepositional phrases. Prepositional phrases look like this:

\[
\text{PREPOSITION + OPTIONAL MODIFIERS + NOUN, PRONOUN, OR GERUND}
\]

Here are some examples:

At school

\[At = \text{preposition; school = noun.}\]

According to us

\[According to = \text{preposition; us = pronoun.}\]

By chewing

\[By = \text{preposition; chewing = gerund.}\]

Under the stove

\[Under = \text{preposition; the = modifier; stove = noun.}\]

In the crumb-filled, rumpled sheets

\[In = \text{preposition; the, crumb-filled, rumpled = modifiers; sheets = noun.}\]

**Realize that some prepositions also function as subordinate conjunctions.**

Some prepositions also function as subordinate conjunctions. These prepositions are *after, as, before, since,* and *until.* A subordinate conjunction will have both a subject and a verb following it, forming a subordinate clause.
Look at these examples:

After Sam and Esmerelda kissed goodnight

*After* = subordinate conjunction; *Sam, Esmerelda* = subjects; *kissed* = verb.

As Jerome buckled on the parachute

*As* = subordinate conjunction; *Jerome* = subject; *buckled* = verb.

Before I eat these frog legs

*Before* = subordinate conjunction; *I* = subject; *eat* = verb.

Since we have enjoyed the squid eyeball stew

*Since* = subordinate conjunction; *we* = subject; *have enjoyed* = verb.

Until your hiccups stop

*Until* = subordinate conjunction; *hiccups* = subject; *stop* = verb.

If you find a noun [with or without modifiers] following one of these five prepositions, then all you have is a prepositional phrase. Look at these examples:

After the killer calculus test

*After* = preposition; *the, killer, calculus* = modifiers; *test* = noun.

As a good parent

*As* = preposition; *a, good* = modifiers; *parent* = noun.

Before dinner

*Before* = preposition; *dinner* = noun.

Since the breakup

*Since* = preposition; *the* = modifier; *breakup* = noun.

Until midnight

*Until* = preposition; *midnight* = noun.