

Activities for teaching prepositions and prepositional Phrases in High School

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Introduction

In some countries children start learning English when they are three. Teaching prepositions to preschool children is very important for their further development. There can be no doubt about the importance of mastering prepositional usage in a foreign language. Spatial and temporal relationships, for example, depend on a restricted number of prepositions for their expression. Although all humans may have similar experience of time and space, the way that different languages encode these relationships very significantly. In this sense, it is hardly surprising to find that the most prominent grammars of the English language contain at least one or in most cases, several sections or chapters to this aspect of the language. However, materials designed for teaching prepositions to very young learners often lack any such detailed treatment, and, indeed, even for older learners the methodological proposals are often unsystematic. The function of the teacher in this process has received a great deal of attention recently. New trends and research into second language acquisition in young learners have given new life to old ideas, putting special emphasis on the Vygotskyian framework and its application to classroom practices. Parents, teachers, and other adults help children to grasp concepts when they play with them, when they ask them questions and answer theirs, or when they read stories to them. Providing appropriate mediated learning experiences for children is crucial for their conceptual development and their growing linguistic competence. This means that children progress in their learning when they are helped. The teacher's role is therefore fundamental in this process of laying the proper foundations for solid future development.

The fact that children experience and talk about similar events, such as putting on and taking off clothing, opening and closing, putting things in and taking them out of containers, and so on, may influence their development of spatial concepts. However teaching prepositions to very young learners is very important for their education and teachers must be very careful.

The meaning preposition as a part of speech

The preposition is a part of speech which denotes the relations between objects and phenomena.

It shows the relations between a noun or a pronoun and other words.

Usually the preposition is not stressed and stands before the word it refers to.

Desert moved quickly to the windows.

Sometimes, however, a preposition may be separated from the word it refers to and placed at the end of the sentence or clause. In that case it is stressed.

But he sounds as though he knows what he's talking about.

The prepositions may be weakly stressed before a pronoun.

She wrote the world to them herself, and other poems.

The preposition is stressed when its meaning is emphasized.

The book was in the table, not on it.

According to their morphological structure prepositions are divided into the following groups:

1. simple (in, on, at, for, with, since, etc.)
2. derivative (below, behind, across, until, etc.)
3. compound (outside, within, without, etc.)
4. composite (in front of, because of, in connection with, etc.).

According to their meaning prepositions may be divided into prepositions of place direction (in, on, below, under, between, etc.), time (after, before, at, etc.) prepositions expressing abstract relations (by, with, because, of, with a view to, etc.).

The lexical meaning of some prepositions is quite concrete (e.g. in, below, between, before, offer, till, etc.) while that of some other prepositions may be weakened to a great extent (e. g. to , by, of).

For instance , the preposition to generally indicates direction or movement towards something.

Every night sissy went to Rachel's lodging, and with her in her small neat room.

Some prepositions are polysemantic and may express different relations.

Never once had Erik sensed the struggle for life (purpose).

The children are playing in the garden (space).

They will arrive in the morning (time).

He stayed in London for a few days (time).

Some prepositions are homonymous with adverbs and conjunctions.

For instance, the prepositions after and before are homonymous with the adverbs after and before and with the conjunctions after and before.

She saw John before classes (preposition).

She has never sun him before (adverb).

He did not write to her, and it was almost a tear before he began to see her again (conjunction).

Though identical in form, adverbs, prepositions, and conjunctions are different parts of speech. The adverb unlike the preposition and conjunction, sewer as part of the sentence, e.g. after is an adverbial modifier of time, etc. Some prepositions (on, in, by, over, off, up) are homonymous with postpositions.

A preposition as well as a postposition does not perform any independent function in the sentence. But while a preposition denotes the relation between objects and phenomena, a preposition is part of a composite verb. A preposition is not usually stressed, while a postposition usually bears the stress.

We've got to live on what we earn (preposition).

He liked Erik more than any of the assistants the department had taken on in a long time, as much as he could like one of the younger men (preposition).

The great preposition mystery during the education

The great preposition mystery is designed to be used as a review of prepositions in an intermediate grammar course. The vocabulary is not graded, and some students may have to use a dictionary more frequently than others.

The student gets practice with prepositions in three ways: by choosing an appropriate preposition in context: by selecting an appropriate preposition in a narrowly defined situation: and by using prepositions in student – generated sentences.

In every chapter of the mystery story, certain passages contain blanks where prepositions have been deleted. The students should fill in the blank with an appropriate preposition. In some cases, more than one preposition may be correct either because two prepositions have the same meaning or because there is insufficient context. In some cases, the blank may use more than one word where the -----preposition consists of two words (e. g. next to, instead of).

In most chapters of the mystery story, certain passages do not contain blanks. In these cases, the students should note all prepositions. However, they should note word which are particles of two word verbs or which function as adverbs or conjunctions.

The underlined words are particles of two – word verb and should not be circled as prepositions.

Particles of two – word verbs cannot usually be separated from the main verb.

He fell off the cliff.

She come in the house.

He fell off.

In the first sentence, the word off functions as a preposition. In the second, the word off function as an adverb. In the third, off function as an adverb and of is a preposition.

We started the exam after 9 o'clock.

We started the exam after hearing the bell.

We started the exam after the teacher told us to begin.

Everyone passed the exam but me.

I sat there looking at the exam but not reading it.

I took the exam but didn't pass it.

In the first and second sentences, the word after function as a preposition. Such words are prepositions when they are followed either by a noun phrase or by a gerund 'hearing'. They function as subordinate conjunctions when followed by a subject + verb (the teacher told). Similarly, the word but functions as a preposition in the fourth and fifth sentences and as a conjunction in the sixth sentence.

A preposition is used to connect nouns and noun structures to other structures in the sentence. A noun structures to other structures in the sentence. A noun structure following the preposition is called the object of the preposition.

The object of the prepositions can be a noun:

We gave a present to our secretaries.

A pronoun: We gave a present to them.

A gerund: We thought about a present to them.

A noun close: We thought about giving a present to whoever worked for us.

The preposition is usually placed before the object. But may be placed at the end of a sentence in a question. Which country did you go to? an adjective clause: This map show the countries which we went to.

A noun clause: We forget which countries we went to.

An adjectival prepositional phrase is placed after the noun it modifies.

The book on the desk is mine.

The dog next door bothers me.

The adverbial prepositional phrase, like any adverb, may be placed anywhere in the sentence. Or it may be placed at the end. I came at nine o'clock.

Middle: He leaves in two hours to visit his friends beginning: on Monday, I have my French class. There are times when prepositions can be used without object. At such times, they no longer function as prepositions but become (1) either two word verbs, (2) adverbs; or (3) conjunctions.

Two words verbs (verb + particle)

Examples: bring up (sais) find out (discover)

These combinations have idiomatic meanings and therefore are not discussed in this text.

Examples, however, will be found in the mystery story.

Adverbs

Example: Did you take the elevator: No, we walked up.

Conjunctions

Examples: He came before I did. Please come before the meeting starts.

Conclusion

Having investigated the topic of this research-paper we've come to the following conclusion.

Although the format of the kinds of activities described in this paper is likely to be familiar to most teachers of English, it is important to bear in mind that the activities need to be systematically introduced and carried out.

1. First, it is very important to draw attention to the fact that teaching prepositions need to be suitable for the children's cognitive development these early ages.
2. Secondly, the function of the teacher in the process has received a great deal of attention recently. The teacher's role is therefore fundamental in the process of laying the proper foundations for solid future development.
3. Finally, after learning prepositions systematically children can also differentiate several prepositions from each other.

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