

Noun/Verb/Adjective + Preposition Combinations

WORDS COMMONLY USED AS PREPOSITIONS:

(**boldface** words represent some of the more frequently used)

| | | | |
|--------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| about | besides | inside | since |
| above | between | into | through |
| across | beyond | like | throughout |
| after | by | near | till |
| against | concerning | of | to |
| along | despite | off | toward |
| among | down | on | under |
| around | during | onto | underneath |
| at | except | out | until |
| before | excepting | outside | up |
| behind | for | over | upon |
| below | in | past | with |
| beneath | | regarding | within |
| beside | | round | without |

Prepositions represent one of the more difficult aspects of the English language, and ESL students in particular often find it difficult to decide which preposition to use in certain situations. The task of choosing the right preposition is made even more difficult when the preposition is used together with a noun, a verb or an adjective, especially since there are no general rules by which a preposition is assigned. It is strictly a matter of usage.

Some English words take on a new meaning when used together with a preposition, and this can be confusing when a word (a verb usually) takes on a *different* meaning with each preposition. For example, to **look at** means “to observe”; however, to **look over** means “to study or examine.”

For this reason, it is very important to review your **noun/verb/adjective + preposition** combinations in your writing to be sure that you are using the correct preposition to convey the right meaning. The following exercise will familiarize you with some preposition combinations.

For future work, the *Longman Dictionary of American English* is recommended. This dictionary will list all preposition combinations for a given word and will also define each word/preposition combination. With the help of the dictionary, you will soon learn to distinguish the different combinations and will eventually be able to employ them without hesitation.

Exercise: Fill in each blank with the preposition that you think correctly completes the sentence. Use your dictionary to check any you are uncertain about.

1. The manager decided to put me in charge ____ (for/of/with) the project.
2. The road was not suitable ____ (for/about/on) driving, so we pulled to the side.
3. I was excited ____ (for/in/about) going to the movie.
4. My boss insisted ____ (for/on/to) giving me a raise, so I accepted.
5. Rosenberg didn't agree ____ (with/in/about) Ross's description of the problem.
6. If you drive during rush hour, plan (in/on/of) getting stuck in traffic.
7. This report will establish all factors essential ____ (to/on/in) starting a new business.
8. Smith denied responsibility ____ (from/on/for) the error.
9. We encountered some difficulty ____ (on/in/of) finding a replacement.
10. The organization recognized a need ____ (for/about/over) new management strategies.
11. The doctor said there was no reason ____ (for/of/into) worry.
12. I never listen ____ (at/on/to) the radio.
13. It's more profitable to invest ____ (on/in/through) several companies at once.
14. My friend never apologized ____ (for/of/to) her actions.
15. Visitors to the U.S. are often not accustomed ____ (on/to/of) our cultural idiosyncrasies.
16. The C.E.O. expressed approval ____ (for/about/of) the management strategy.
17. I was content ____ (with/for/at) the results of my test.
18. The store owner was more concerned ____ (of/in/about) damaged property than injured personnel.
19. The director asked me to apologize ____ (for/of/to) my colleague ____ (for/of/to) getting angry ____ (at/on/over) her.
20. The economy never adjusted ____ (at/to/with) the recession.
21. Most managers don't believe ____ (in/on/into) rewarding good work with time off.
22. The secretary must deal ____ (on/in/with) several calls each day.
23. The student expressed interest (on/in/about) Russian literature.
24. All those in favor ____ (for/of/onto) raising the minimum wage spoke to the assembly.
25. They decided to cut costs instead ____ (with/in/of) laying off employees.