

**LUC WRITING CENTER –
“PREPOSITIONS AND PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES”**

A *preposition* is a part of speech that often provides **detailed instructions** or more information about a situation, rather like a treasure map does to let people know the precise geographical location of the treasure.

Imagine a conversation between two pirates, in which the first pirate wants to know exactly where the second one buried their loot:

Pirate 1: “Where is the treasure?”

Pirate 2: “I buried the treasure.”

P1: “Where did you bury the treasure?”

P2: “I buried the treasure **down** the hole **on** the sandy beach **near** a rock marked X.”

Using **prepositions**, the second pirate gives the first pirate the information he needs to find the treasure and dig it up.

Common prepositions include: *in, of, from, for, by, across, around, among, up, down, beneath, between, beyond, before, near, about, above, over, under, inside, into, like, off, on, behind, against, out, outside, until, till, during, except, through, throughout, at, beside, besides, since, to, toward, with, without, according to, because of, by way of, in addition to, in front of, in place of, in regard to, in spite of, instead of, on account of, out of.*

A *prepositional phrase* usually contains a preposition, an article, and a noun, which is called the **Object of the Preposition**. One way to figure out which of your clauses are prepositional phrases is to put parentheses around each one, as in the following example:

I found my lost bike (in a field) (by the lake) (near the old mill house).

What remains is the sentence *“I found my lost bike.”* See how the sentence still makes sense without the prepositional phrases? Adding such explanatory details just helps clarify the context of the situation described, and provides more information. In the prepositional phrase (*in a field*) taken from the example above, the noun and Object of the Preposition is **“field.”**

Exercises (Answers on next page):

- 1) In the following example, put parenthesis around each prepositional phrase:

Tyrone ran along the river past the boats through the meadow and found his sister.

a) Now that you’ve found the phrases, can you locate an **Object of the Preposition** inside each phrase?

b) Does the sentence still make sense **without** the prepositional phrases?

c) Which clause is **NOT** a prepositional phrase, and why?

**LUC WRITING CENTER –
“PREPOSITIONS AND PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES”**

Answers:

- 1) **Tyrone ran along the river (past the boats) (through the meadow) and found his sister.**
 - a) The objects of the prepositions in the two prepositional phrases are “boats” and “meadow.”
 - b) Yes, the sentence **Tyrone ran along the river and found his sister** still makes sense without the two prepositional phrases.
 - c) The phrase “found his sister” could be mistaken for a prepositional phrase, but the word “found” is not a preposition, but a verb, the past tense of “to find.”

LUC Writing Center Curriculum, Lydia Craig 2017 ©