

## SHAPING SENTENCES WITH PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES

Another noun modifier that we commonly use is the prepositional phrase. A prepositional phrase consists of a preposition followed by a noun (and any modifiers that noun may have). Prepositions are among the most common words in the language; you've seen and used them millions of times. They are little function words, like these: *in, on, up, down, across, from, to, of, and at*. Prepositional phrases serve a wide variety of purposes. Here is a sentence with all its prepositional phrases underlined:

Without a doubt, the horse in the lead at the end of the second turn will finish in front of the field.

Prepositional phrases often tell location:

on the water	up the street
in the water	down the street
across the river	inside the box
over the river	beside the box

Sometimes they indicate time:

in a minute	at the moment
-------------	---------------

But they perform a variety of other functions as well:

of the dog	for a friend
about George	with her mother

In the following exercises, you will use prepositional phrases to modify or add meaning to nouns, as in these examples. The prepositional phrases are underlined to help you spot them.

1. A bird is worth two.

The bird is in the hand.

The two are in the bush.

**Solution:** A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

2. A stone gathers moss.

The stone is in a swamp.

The moss is on its surface.

**Solution:** A stone in a swamp gathers moss on its surface.

3. A flight is a beautiful sight.

The flight is of pelicans.

The pelicans are over the water.

The sight is in the late afternoon.

**Solution:** A flight of pelicans over the water is a beautiful sight in the late afternoon.

In the last example, note that the second prepositional phrase--*over the water*--modifies a noun in the prepositional phrase preceding it. Prepositional phrases frequently work this way, coming in a series with each modifying the noun of the phrase before it:

the people / with a canoe / on a lake / in Canada

However, long strings of prepositional phrases generally don't sound good and are usually considered bad style. In the following exercises, the prepositional phrases are underlined to aid you in locating them.

**EXERCISE:**

### *Buying a Bathing Suit*

1. A sale attracted a crowd.

The sale was at the local shopping center.

The crowd was of bargain hunters.

2. A friend wanted to find a new swimsuit.

The friend was of mine.

The swimsuit was in the latest style.

3. The store was mobbed with people.

The store was with the biggest sale.

The people were of every age.

4. The bathing suits usually look better than they do on a body, but we found a promising one.

The bathing suits are on the rack.

The one was on the sale table.

5. People were standing in a long line.

The people were with all kinds of clothes.

The line was for the dressing rooms.

6. The person was a woman who didn't seem to have any clothes to try on.

The person was in front of us.

The woman was in her thirties.

The clothes were in her hands.

7. Finally, we noticed a small piece, a swimsuit.

The piece was of nylon.

The nylon was in her hand.

The swimsuit was of a truly astounding size.

8. It was a tiny garment.

The garment was from a collection.

The collection was by a Brazilian designer.

9. When we found the racks, we saw other tiny pieces.

The racks were of designer swimsuits.

The racks were down another aisle.

The pieces were of nylon.

The pieces were in violent reds, bright blues, blazing yellows.

10. The tiny pieces of nylon bore large cardboard tags when we reached the parking lot, we agreed that since the swimsuits were about the size, it was appropriate that they bore the price.

The tags were with prices of astronomical size.

The parking lot was outside the store.

The size was of diamonds.

The price was of diamonds.

### REVIEW:

In the following exercises, you will practice using all the modifiers you have worked with so far.

### **Round-Trip**

1. The student waited at a bus stop in the rain.  
The student was shivering.  
The student was suffering from a cold.  
The bus stop was on a wind-swept corner.  
The rain was pouring.
2. When the bus arrived, it was jammed with people.  
The bus was overcrowded.  
The people were depressed.  
The people were dripping water on each other.
3. At that moment, the student decided it was time to buy a car.  
The student was disgusted.  
The student was standing between two people.  
The two people were sneezing on her.  
The car was nice.  
The car was clean.  
The car was convenient.  
The car was for the commute.  
The commute was to school.
4. Several days later, she went to a dealer and selected a car.  
The dealer was reputable.  
The car was attractive.  
The car was used.  
The car was apparently in good condition.
5. The student loved her car, which kept her out of buses.  
Her car was new.  
Her car was used.  
The buses were crowded.  
The buses were full of people.  
The people were miserable.  
The people were suffering from colds.
6. The student gave her car a name, Fritz.  
The student was happy.  
The car was friendly.
7. One morning, Fritz the car showed some symptoms.  
The morning was gloomy.  
The morning was threatening.  
The symptoms were alarming.  
The symptoms were of trouble.
8. Fritz developed a disposition, so she took him to a garage.  
The disposition was surly.  
The disposition was uncooperative.  
The garage was recommended by a friend.  
The friend was trustworthy.

9. The mechanic said that Fritz was suffering from old age in many of his parts.  
The mechanic was sympathetic.  
The mechanic was at the garage.  
His parts were most essential.

10. In particular he pointed out Fritz's oil pump, his radiator, his cylinders, and others.  
His oil pump was ailing.  
His radiator was leaking.  
His cylinders were worn out.  
The others were of equal importance.

11. The student waited at a bus stop in the rain.  
The student was shivering.  
The student was remembering her car.  
Her car was cozy.  
Her car was warm.  
Her car was named Fritz.  
The bus stop was on a wind-swept corner.  
The rain was pouring.

## **JOINING IDEAS TO SHOW BASIC LOGICAL RELATIONSHIPS**

### **Coordinating Conjunctions**

The most common way we have of joining sentences is to use words called *coordinators*, or coordinating conjunctions, and the ones we use most frequently are *and*, *but*, and *so*.

John took typing lessons, and he never regretted it.  
Mary took flying lessons, but she couldn't afford to fly.  
I needed to relax, so I put away my work.

The coordinators not only join the two sentences but also show the logical relationship between the ideas in them. *And* indicates the addition of two similar ideas; *but* tells us that there is some kind of logical opposition between them; *so* indicates that the first one is the reason for the second one. In addition to these three words, we use four others in the same way--to join sentences while showing the logical relationship between the ideas in them: *or*, *for*, *yet*, *nor*.

It is easy to remember these seven words if you remember the word *FANBOYS*. *FANBOYS* is an acronym, a word formed from the first letters of other words. The word *FANBOYS* is made up of the first letter of the seven coordinators:

**For And Nor But Or Yet So**

There are two reasons for remembering the *FANBOYS* words, the coordinators. The first is that, as in the sentence examples just given, when we use one of these words to join two complete sentences, we normally put a comma *between* the two sentences and *in front of*