Chapter 5
PREPOSITIONS, CONJUNCTIONS, AND INTERJECTIONS

Chapter Check-In

❑ Recognizing prepositions
❑ Learning the rules for prepositions
❑ Understanding conjunctions
❑ Knowing how to use interjections

Prepositions, conjunctions and interjections are the connecting elements in sentences. Finding the link between words is the secret to identifying prepositions. The two most important rules about using prepositions are avoid using excess prepositions and avoid ending sentences with prepositions.

Conjunctions are parts of speech that connect words, phrases, or clauses. There are three types of conjunctions: coordinating, correlative, and subordinating. They are the key to logically constructed sentences.

Interjections are used to express powerful or sudden emotion and are usually not grammatically connected to any other sentence. While there are no formal rules for interjections, they are most effective if used sparingly.

The Preposition

A preposition shows the relationship between a noun or pronoun and another noun or pronoun.

The cat under the fence.
The cat between the fence and the house.
Everyone except the girl in the blue dress.
A letter about us.
The italicized words in the preceding phrases are prepositions; the underlined words are objects of the prepositions. When the object is a pronoun, remember that the pronoun should be in the objective case (see Chapter 3).

**Recognizing prepositions**

How do you recognize a preposition? It’s sometimes not easy. Prepositions aren’t as obvious as nouns and verbs. Look for a word that establishes a certain kind of relationship with another word. For example, in the previous phrases, how is *cat* related to *fence*? The cat is *under* the fence. How is *Everyone* related to the *girl*? The *girl* is left out of the group *Everyone*. How is *girl* related to *dress*? She is *in* it. Table 5-1 shows several words commonly used as prepositions.

**Table 5-1  Words Commonly Used as Prepositions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>about</th>
<th>before</th>
<th>down</th>
<th>off</th>
<th>under</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>above</td>
<td>behind</td>
<td>during</td>
<td>on</td>
<td>underneath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>across</td>
<td>below</td>
<td>except</td>
<td>out</td>
<td>until</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after</td>
<td>beneath</td>
<td>for</td>
<td>over</td>
<td>unto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>against</td>
<td>beside</td>
<td>from</td>
<td>past</td>
<td>up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>along</td>
<td>between</td>
<td>in</td>
<td>since</td>
<td>upon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>among</td>
<td>beyond</td>
<td>into</td>
<td>through</td>
<td>with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>around</td>
<td>by</td>
<td>like</td>
<td>to</td>
<td>within</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at</td>
<td>concerning</td>
<td>of</td>
<td>toward</td>
<td>without</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some prepositions, called compound prepositions, are made up of more than one word, such as according to, because of, in front of, instead of, in spite of, and next to.

**Confusing use of prepositions**

The unnecessary use of prepositions is a common error. Be careful not to use a preposition where it isn’t needed.

Where have you been?

**NOT** Where have you been *at*?

Where is Robert going?

**NOT** Where is Robert going *to*?
Also, don’t use two prepositions when you need only one.

Don’t go near the water
NOT Don’t go near to the water.

The book fell off the table.
NOT The book fell off of the table.

Ending a sentence with a preposition can cause problems. The rule that a sentence should never end with a preposition is no longer strictly enforced. Still, many writers avoid ending sentences with prepositions, which is generally a good idea. But use your own judgment. If you feel ending with a preposition makes a particular sentence more natural, do so and don’t worry about it.

It is a comment to which I will not respond.
COMPARSED TO It is a comment I will not respond to.

I bought a pen with which to write.
COMPARSED TO I bought a pen to write with.

Defining Conjunctions

Conjunctions are words that join or link elements. Like prepositions, they get a job done rather than add excitement to your writing. But choosing the right conjunction makes the logic of your thought clear. For example, which of the following two sentences creates the more logical connection?

I’ve always disliked history, and I have never failed a test.
I’ve always disliked history, but I have never failed a test.

Because the two clauses suggest contradictory ideas, but provides a more logical connection than and.

Coordinating conjunctions

The coordinating conjunctions are and, but, for, nor, or, so, and yet. These conjunctions join words, phrases, or clauses that are grammatically equal in rank.

Words: Mother and daughter, tea and toast
Phrases: We found the Easter eggs under the couch and in the closet.
Clauses: He likes me, but I don’t care.

Each clause (He likes me and I don’t care) can stand alone. The two clauses are grammatically equal.
Correlative conjunctions

Correlative conjunctions are like coordinating conjunctions except that they come in matched pairs: either/or, neither/nor, both/and, not only/but also, and whether/or.

- Words: Neither mother nor daughter
- Phrases: We found the Easter eggs not only under the couch but also in the closet.
- Clauses: Either you surrender or I shoot.

For maintaining parallel construction when using correlative conjunctions, see Chapter 7.

Subordinating conjunctions

Subordinating conjunctions join unequal elements. A subordinating conjunction joins a clause that can't stand alone (called a subordinate or dependent clause) to a clause that can (called an independent clause). Clauses are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

- We will discontinue research in this area unless the results of the experiment are promising.

The clause beginning with unless cannot stand alone; it is subordinate to, or dependent on, the independent clause We will discontinue research in this area. Unless is the subordinating conjunction that links the two clauses.

- The train arrived before we did.

Before we did is a dependent clause; it cannot stand alone. It depends on the independent clause The train arrived. Before is the subordinating conjunction that links the two clauses.

Table 5-2 includes some words that can act as subordinating conjunctions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5-2 Words That Can Act as Subordinating Conjunctions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>after</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>although</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as if</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as long as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as though</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>because</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
You may notice that some of these words were also on the list of prepositions. Once again, remember that a word’s part of speech depends on its function, not on the word itself. A preposition shows a relationship between words and has an object, whereas a subordinating conjunction joins a dependent clause to an independent one.

The man stood hesitantly before the door.

In the preceding sentence, before is a preposition; its object is door. The preposition shows the relationship between the man and the door.

Before the expedition can begin, the details must be addressed.

Here, before is a subordinating conjunction, linking the dependent clause Before the expedition can begin to the independent clause the details must be addressed.

**Using Interjections**

Oh! The joy of interjections! Interjections, words that express a burst of emotion, are not grammatically related to other elements in a sentence.

Hey! Gadzooks! Oh, no! Bravo! Whoopee!

Curses are also interjections: Damn!

Interjections can add a sudden and emotional tone to your writing if they are used judiciously. The good news is that no rules apply to interjections. The bad news is that you should limit your use of them, particularly in formal writing. Even in informal writing the power of interjections will be diluted if they are used too often. Generally, although not always, exclamation points immediately follow interjections.

Ouch! Hurrah! Mercy!

Ah, to be in Paris in the spring!

**Chapter Checkout**

**Q&A**

1. Identify the preposition and the object of the preposition in the following sentences.
   a. Ivy grew between the bricks.
   b. Within a year, Tom will be an architect.
   c. The squirrels played beneath my window.
2. True or False: All of the following sentences are grammatically correct uses of prepositions.
   a. Would you like to come with me?
   b. Where did you graduate from?
   c. He lives near by the stream.
   d. I cannot decide between Libertarians and Democrats.
   e. I left my glasses beside of my book.
   f. He is involved by his music.
   g. Be quiet and listen at the instructions.
   h. We split the reward among three children.

3. Match the underlined word with the correct conjunction.
   a. We were surprised, yet we laughed. Coordinating
   b. Whenever she reads, Moesha takes notes. Correlative
   c. Not only was he cold, but also hungry. Subordinating

4. Underline the interjections in the following passage:
   Mary and Lisa were determined to surprise Staci on her birthday. “Oh Boy! She will never guess what we have planned,” exclaimed Mary. Lisa, who seemed lost in thought, suddenly cried, “Hey! We forgot to order a cake.” “Oh, No!,” Mary gasped.

Answers: 1. a. between, bricks b. within, year c. beneath, window
2. a. True b. False c. False d. True e. False f. False g. False h. True
3. a. Coordinating b. Subordinating c. Correlative
4. Oh, Boy!, Hey!, Oh, No!