



Chapter 9.

Prepositions and the Prepositional Group

Contents

Prepositions with specific meaning.....	1
Idiomatic use of prepositions	4
Prepositions and syntax	6
After reading about prepositions	7
Links for exercises and resources.....	8

Prepositions with specific meaning

Web activity 1

1. Danish learners often find it difficult to distinguish between the prepositions below. Make up examples that illustrate the differences.
2. Why are they difficult for Danes?
3. How and when would you teach these problems to pupils?
 - a. *In* ↔ *into*
 - b. *Against* ↔ *towards*
 - c. *Between* ↔ *among*
 - d. *Over* ↔ *above*
 - e. *Under* ↔ *below*

Web activity 2

1. Check prepositions in your dictionary in connection with the noun *school*. Write examples with *to*, *at* and *in*.
2. Are there any differences in American and British English?

Web activity 3

Here are some ideas for how to teach prepositions. Discuss them from a teacher's perspective:

- Do they introduce prepositions or automatize?
- Do they emphasise MEANING, FORM or USE?
- Which level is appropriate?
- Which other learning potential do you see in them?



Activity 3-A

Could you use one of the following songs to introduce prepositions?

- "In on under over in front behind": <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mxDvaryY8M4&feature=fvw>
- School House Rock: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8GI4sDoTIK0>

Activity 3-B

Simon says

The teacher tells the students what to do and that they can only do it when he introduces the activity with the phrase "Simon says" or the polite word *please*. Otherwise they are "dead". The game is about being the last survivor.

*E.g. Simon says, "Go **to** the door. Stand **on** your chair". Simon says, "Sit **under** your chair. Take a pencil **from** your pencil case". Simon says, "Put the pencil **into** your school bag" etc.*

Afterwards pupils can direct other pupils in class or in groups.

Activity 3-C

Listen to and watch the activity chant: *We're going on a bear hunt*: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WzIcu6tbEko>

The song includes many concrete prepositions: *on a bear hunt, with my camera, walk down the road, coming to a wheat field, we can't go under it* etc.

The teacher is meant to chant while making body movements and the children repeat.

Discuss when and why it is relevant to use this chant.

Activity 3-D

Kim's game in pairs: Each student has a picture of a room with things and clothes scattered everywhere. The first student looks at his room for 2 minutes. Afterwards the pupils must tell the other student what he remembers (e.g. *There was a book in the armchair.*)

Activity 3-E

Hide and seek: Send a student outside. Then hide an item in the classroom. The student returns and must ask questions to find the hidden item. Afterwards the pupils can play in pairs.

Activity 3-F

Write a biography

1. Answer the questions below and write a short text about yourself.
2. Afterwards find out information about your favourite pop/sports star or a famous person regarding questions a-e. Write a short text and let somebody else guess who it is.
 - a. *When and where were you born? (I was born on.....in...)*
 - b. *Where do you live? (address)*
 - c. *For how long have you lived there? When did you move in?*
 - d. *Which school do you go to?*
 - e. *What do you do in your spare time?*

Activity 3-G

After the discussion activity, the learners could work in pairs on an information gap activity with two almost identical drawings of a room but certain things are missing in each room, which means that one student has info that the other learner hasn't got. Such activities can e.g. be found in ma-



materials with pair work activities by Peter Watcyn-Jones or you might find a picture of a kitchen, a living room etc. and delete some of the things. Tell the learners that because they are so messy, they have lost e.g. their watch, their mobile phone etc. and need to find them and draw them in their drawing on the right spot. Afterwards they can check if they got it right.

As an alternative, they could draw their own room at home and then explain how the room looks like to the partner, who must draw it according to their directions. Afterwards they can compare their drawings. Or yet another alternative: they could draw how they would design their ideal room and explain it to a partner afterwards

Activity 3-H

Read the songs:

- a. *My Room's Mess* by Marla Lewis: <http://www.broadjam.com/artists/songs.php?artistID=59803&mediaID=429444>
(listen to it here: <http://www.quia.com/jw/297155.html>)
- b. Shivaree: *Goodnight Moon* http://www.lyricsdomain.com/19/shivaree/goodnight_moon.html

1. Find some prepositions and discuss how you could use them for teaching prepositions.
2. Create activities for discussion based on the content of the songs?

Activity 3-I

Write small poems with prepositions.

1. Here is a poem written by a learner.

Fish by Mike K³

Before my wondering eyes swims a fish
Between the slimy green pebbles
Without limitations
Into a shaded area he disappears
Since the sun is shining brightly
Beneath the cool dampness of a lily pad he rests
For a while, he is nowhere to be found
Across the muddy bank, he shimmers
But he quickly disappears
To a new place round the bend.

2. Write your own poem by starting each line with a preposition.

Activity 3-J

Finding a date

1. You are good friends and try to find out when to go to the cinema. Here are your diaries for this week. (Each pupil should only get a copy with his own diary).
2. You need to ask each other what you are doing e.g.

Pupil B: *Are you free on Monday in the evening?*

Pupil A: *No, I am going to visit my grandmother between 7-8 PM.*



Pupil A

Monday: play tennis 13.30-14.30 Visit grandmother at hospital 19-20
Tuesday
Wednesday: Homework 15-17
Thursday: birthday Anne 18-20
Friday:
Saturday: swim with family 10-12
Sunday: TV (favourite film) 19-20

Pupil B

Monday: homework 15-17
Tuesday: scouts 19-21
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday
Saturday: football match 13-15
Sunday: ZOO 10-18

3. Afterwards write a letter to your grandmother who is in hospital and tell her about your week and your plans. Include the following times:

At the weekend

Since 8 this morning

On 23 December

From 8 to 10 AM

Until I go to bed

During the evening

At night

In the morning

On Mondays

This summer

In the afternoon

For 2 hours

Before 7

In a week

One week ago

At Christmas

At 6 o'clock

Next week

Last month

Activity 3-K

Read directions on a map or give directions to go specific places on a map with shops, parks etc. This could be done as an information gap task with two almost similar maps. The pupils will pretend to be tourists that try to find specific locations. You might be able to use this map: <http://www.neathfoodfestival.co.uk/site/files/129/default/5/Neath%20Town%20Centre.jpg> and also try the interactive links for prepositions of place.

Idiomatic use of prepositions

Web activity 4

Here are some examples of activities for learners regarding the idiomatic use of prepositions. Discuss them from a teacher's perspective. Can you think of other ways of teaching these idioms?



Activity 4-A

The Danish preposition *på* corresponds to many different prepositions in English in idiomatic chunks. Check the following expressions:

1. *håbe på*
2. *sigte på*
3. *tro på*
4. *tænke på*
5. *vred på*
6. *løsning på*

Activity 4-B

1. Matching task – find the other half.

A group of 3-4 students are given the following slips of papers. They must assemble 26 sentences. The sentences must make sense.

Afterwards: the groups take turns reading aloud a sentence. Each correct sentence is awarded a point.

2. Discuss: In which other ways could you teach idiomatic prepositions?

She was delighted	with his present
He was worried	about his exam
They were always kind	to animals
He was rude	to his grandfather
He was fed up	with the boring teacher
We were shocked	at his death
She wasn't satisfied	with her exam results
He is afraid	of snakes and mice
She was ashamed	of her brother
We are proud	of our flag
He was jealous	of my good marks
I was suspicious	of his intentions
I'm not very good	at history
My sister is married	to an englishman
He was sorry	for his bad behaviour
This area is famous	for its lakes
They are responsible	for the mess
I'm not interested	in football



He's very fond	of computer games
She was tired	of standing up
Your hat is similar	to mine
Your essay is different	from mine
The hall was crowded	with people
I can't pay. I am short	of cash

Activity 4-C

1. Match the following nouns, verbs and adjectives with the appropriate preposition and write sentences with them. There are sometimes several solutions.
2. Afterwards, interview each other in pairs to find out what the other person thinks, using the adjectives and verbs, e.g. *good at* (you could ask "What are you good at?")
3. Many grammars provide idiomatic lists of prepositions. Discuss this idea and compare it to teaching students strategies for using a dictionary or letting pupils write their own lists, marking which ones they have problems with.

Nouns

*example
solution
anger
expert
information
reason
lack
answer*

Verbs

*care
depend
congratulate
wait
look
accuse
speak
think
believe
succeed
depend
prevent*

Adjectives

*bad
angry
jealous
important
good
tired
impressed*

on, about, with, at, for, of, to, in, by, from

Prepositions and syntax

Web activity 5

Problems for Danes regarding nominal sub-clauses (*that* and *to*-infinitives):

1. The following sentence is correct even though there is a preposition in front of the nominal sub-clause. Explain why.

It depends on what you mean.

2. Translate the following sentences into English and remember to avoid prepositions in combination with *to*-infinitives and *that*-clauses:

- a. *Digitet handler om at man skal leve i nuet.*
- b. *Jeg tænker på at købe en gave til hende.*



After reading about prepositions

Web activity 6

Identify, correct and explain problems in the following sentences:

- a. *I'm afraid of that I cannot come tonight*
- b. *I am so angry on her*
- c. *We talked about we would like to go to England*
- d. *You look exactly like your mother did when she was 20*
- e. *The sun was high on the sky*
- f. *He needed to go to the loo so he ran against the bathroom*
- g. *They thought about to tell it to their parents*
- h. *The ball rolled slowly in the goal*
- i. *Let's meet on the corner of Frith Street and Oxford Street*
- j. *He arrived to London in 1998*
- k. *I dropped my contact lens and I looked after it for hours afterwards.*

Web activity 7

It's time for your final reflections.

A. Reflections in relation to didactics

- a. Sum up what is most important to know about prepositions for an English teacher.
 - a. Why are they called prepositions?
 - b. In which two main ways do we use prepositions?
 - c. Which functions do PGs have?
- b. Sum up what is difficult for Danes
 - a. Regarding that-clauses and to-infinitives? What can we do to avoid the problem?
- c. Discuss how you would handle the progression of prepositions in your English teaching, if possible compare with what it says in *Fælles Mål - engelsk*.
 - When would you start teaching prepositions – why?
 - What is most important for the pupils to learn?
 - What is easiest and what is most difficult – why?
 - What needs automatization already for young learners?
- d. Think back at your own experience as a pupil: did you change your opinion about how to teach prepositions?

B. Reflections in relation to what you have learnt

- Which areas relating to prepositions have you now mastered?
- In which areas do you still need to improve?

Web activity 8

Analyse the learner's text below.

1. Identify, categorize, correct and explain problems regarding prepositions in the learner's text below.



2. Sum up how the learner is doing regarding prepositions and what and how you want to help him

1
2
3
4 *Travel mail to your Friend*
5 *Hallo my dear friend.*
6 *How are you? I hope you are fine? I really miss you and hope soon to see you again. Remember I told you*
7 *about that I was going to New York? Well, I'm sitting on a hotel in New York right now. Fantastic. I'm in*
8 *New York because I now have worked in two years and now think it was time to come out and see apart of*
9 *the world.*
10 *I arrived to the US for three days ago and I went home again about two and a half week. When I ordered*
11 *the tickets to this trip I was not sure how long I want to be her, but I'm glad to have ordered 3 weeks.*
12 *Her are so much to see and acetyl I don't think it's time enough to see it all. The first days I most have been*
13 *in my room on the hotel and slept, because I have a little bit jetlag.*
14 *As I wrote have I not do so much the first couple of days, so I have not either seen so much yet, but*
15 *tomorrow I'm going in the theatre and see a musical. I really look forward. Of course I also am going to*
16 *shopping. I don't know when but maybe it first will be in next week. I think I need some new dress and it's*
17 *not everyday you have possibility to shop in New York's shopping streets.*
18 *Maybe I'm buying a real Gucci bag, but they are also really expensive. I have talked with the company I'm*
19 *traveling with about guided tour here in the city and they have one trip in next week.*
20 *I think I will bye a ticket to that, so I can see the city with persons who know the city and can tell were the*
21 *good and bad places are.*
22 *From this trip I expect many knew experience and another look at New York, than the city just are very big*
23 *and confused, have a lot of shopping malls and are a place for rich people. My impressions from home have*
24 *always been that New York it's a big city, where there are so many incredible things, you never couldn't*
25 *imagine will be possible to have in Denmark, but I also think New York is a creative and beautiful city. That*
26 *also a reason for that I have chosen to use my money on a vacation like this.*
27 *After I only have been her in three days I already have seen a kind of the difference in the culture from here*
28 *and home in Denmark. It hard to explained what it exactly is, but when you come to the city you just know*
29 *it with the same. People also look very different here, there are really many different kind of people. I actually*
30 *think I have seen a group of people with a stile I never have seen before, special not in Denmark. But it's*
31 *also that there make it all so fantastic.*
32 *I will stop now and go out and find a place where I can eat my lunch. I hope to hear from you soon, and so*
33 *we can found a day where we can meet and I can show you picture from my trip. I have already got some*
34 *pictures at the city in the night, it's very beautiful and I don't think you found everything like that other*
35 *places in the world.*
36 *See you soon*
37 *Lovely greetings from xxx*

Links for exercises and resources

- <http://www.ello.org/yeartwo/feb7th/directions.htm> (place/map)
- <http://pagesperso-orange.fr/michel.barbot/hotpot/directions/dir1.htm> (place/map)
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/game/en33inst-game-destination-impossible> (place/map)
- <http://bogglesworldesl.com/directions.htm> (giving directions)
- <http://www.tcet.com/eaonline/flashedesl/CatsMX.swf> (place: cat and mouse game)
- http://elt.oup.com/student/englishfile/elementary/i_games/theanteatergame/?cc=globa&selLanguage=en (time)



- <http://bogglesworldesl.com/prepositions.htm> (flash cards)
- <http://www.esl-lab.com/eslbasic/travel-sightseeing-1.htm#list> (listening activity with prepositions of place/map)
- <http://www.ello.org/games/games/12-LG-Directions.htm> (listening activity with prepositions of place/map)
- http://www.ello.org/yeartwo/march13th/main_car_trouble.htm (listening/prepositions of place)
- <http://ogden.basic-english.org/wordpic2.html> (posters with prepositions)
- http://www.bbc.co.uk/apps/iftl/worldservice/quiznet/quizengine?quiz=943_prepositions (idiomatic use of prepositions)
- <http://www.usingenglish.com/quizzes/111.html> (idiomatic use of prepositions)
- http://www.bbc.co.uk/apps/iftl/worldservice/quiznet/quizengine?ContentType=text/html;quiz=1710_verb_prep (idiomatic use of prepositions)
- http://www.grammar.cl/Games/Adjectives_Prepositions.htm (idiomatic use of prepositions)

Quotes

- 1 Lewis, Marla, "My Room's Mess", Plum Juice, 2005: <http://www.broadjam.com/artists/songs.php?artistID=59803&mediaID=429444>
- 2 Shivaree, "Goodnight Moon", I Oughtta Give You a Shot in the Head for Making Me Live in This Dump, Capitol, 1999 http://www.lyricsdomain.com/19/shivaree/goodnight_moon.html
- 3 Mike K, "Fish":
<http://www.google.dk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=%22before%20my%20wondering%20eyes%20swims%20a%20fish%22&source=web&cd=2&ved=0CGQQFjAB&url=http%3A%2F%2Fgiraffebytes.pbworks.com%2Fw%2Ffile%2Ffetch%2F38304071%2FPrepositions.docx&ei=xtWoT7-fKaXe4QTv7-SWCQ&usq=AFQjCNHnVIDGwnCMCHBgOzBWjNhMx-nwyw>

