



Unit 68 – Prepositions with Verbs (*I apologized for my mistake.. I travelled to Europe..*)

A) Many verbs require prepositions in order to connect to the object of a sentence. These combinations, called prepositional verbs, allow prepositions to act as links between verbs and a direct object (a noun or gerund).

-> I **agree with** Tim completely. (*noun*) Dan **specializes in** repairing fridges. (*gerund*)

Prepositional verbs or phrasal verbs?

Although both combinations use verbs and prepositions, they are differentiated when looking at the meanings of the verbs; prepositional verbs are *literal*, whereas phrasal verbs tend to be *figurative* (non-literal). For example:

-> He opened the envelope and **took out** the letter. (*He literally took out, or removed, the letter.*)

-> We **took out** Mark for a few drinks after work. (*We invited socially, or 'took out' Mark, figuratively.*)

Verbs with multiple prepositions – Certain verbs can take different prepositions without changing the overall meaning of the sentence. For example, the verb 'talk' can use the prepositions *to* and *with* interchangeably:

-> 'I'd like to **talk to** you after class.' or: -> 'I'd like to **talk with** you after class.'

However, the meanings of other verbs *do* change when a different preposition is introduced. For example, '*laughing at*' someone is seen as negative, while '*laughing with*' someone implies reacting in a funny way to a mistake that one of you (or both of you) made together.'

-> 'They shouldn't have **laughed at** her.' -> 'They **laughed with** each other about messing up the song.'

Examples of common pairings – There are no established rules to confirm which prepositions link with each verb. However, there are common meanings among them. Here are the most common verb + preposition combinations:

B) **Verb + for** – used with a number of verbs, often to emphasize *purpose* or *reason*.

- a) apologize for -> 'I must **apologize for** not being able to meet you today.'
- b) ask for -> 'You can **ask for** help whenever you need it.'
- c) care for -> 'I don't **care for** taking the bus much. I'd rather go by subway.'
- d) fight for -> 'Historically speaking, people have had to **fight for** their liberty.'
- e) hope for -> 'The doctors expressed **hope for** her full recovery.'
- f) pay for -> 'How much did you **pay for** the tickets?'
- g) search for -> 'Volunteers joined the **search for** the lost child.'
- h) wait for -> 'I'll **wait for** you at the front gate to the stadium.'
- i) wish for -> 'You have everything you could **wish for**.'
- j) work for -> 'Which department do you **work for**?'

C) **Verb + to** – refers to direction (literal or figurative) or connections between people or things.

- a) adjust to -> 'Don't worry. You'll **adjust to** college life in no time.'
- b) belong to -> 'We **belong to** the same church together.'
- c) travel to -> 'Many people **travel to** work each day by car.' / 'I want to **travel to** broaden my horizons.'
- d) listen to -> 'What sort of music do you **listen to**?'
- e) go to -> 'Most children **go to** public elementary and secondary schools.'
- f) respond to -> 'The patient did not **respond to** treatment.' / 'How did you **respond to** the news?'
- g) talk to -> 'Can I **talk to** you for a minute?' / 'They **talked to** the professor after class for an hour.'
- h) turn to -> 'Now please **turn to** page 10.' / '**Turn to** the right and you'll see the hospital in the distance.'

D) **Verb + about** – often used when referring to things, events, or gerunds.

- a) ask about -> 'I made a mental note to **ask about** the cost.'
- b) care about -> 'You know how much I **care about** you.'
- c) complain about -> 'People often **complain about** things that they are not willing to work hard to change.'
- d) forget about -> 'It was just a mistake. Try to **forget about** it.'
- e) hear about -> 'I'm pleased to **hear about** your promotion.' / 'Did you **hear about** the accident?'
- f) joke about -> 'Don't **joke about** such a delicate subject.' / 'She often **jokes about** her high-pitched voice.'



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- g) know about -> 'What do you **know about** chemistry?'
- h) learn about -> 'Students in the course **learn about** all aspects of business.'
- i) talk about -> 'Robert was eager to **talk about** life in the army.' / 'Let's **talk about** this later.'
- j) think about -> 'What did you **think about** the idea?' / 'We really need to **think about** hiring new staff.'
- k) worry about -> 'There's nothing to **worry about**.' / 'He often **worries about** life after graduation.'
- l) write about -> 'I'd love to travel the world and then **write about** it.'

E) **Verb + with** – usually refers to connections and relationships between people or things.

- a) agree with -> 'I don't **agree with** her opinions sometimes.'
- b) argue with -> 'I used to **argue with** my brother all the time when we were younger.'
- c) begin with -> 'Let's **begin (start) class** with a short quiz about the last lecture.'
- d) compare with -> 'How does the actual cost **compare with** the budget?'
- e) compete with -> 'When John runs, he only **competes with** the clock.'
- f) cope with -> 'It's not easy to **cope with** the stress of everyday life.'
- g) interfere with -> 'I try not to let work **interfere with** my personal life.'
- h) meet with -> 'Did you **meet with** Mr. Smith to discuss the presentation?'

F) **Verb + of** – can be used with a variety of verbs that have a direct link to the corresponding noun.

- a) approve of -> 'Did the manager **approve of** your proposal?'
- b) consist of -> 'Jazz trios normally **consist of** a piano, guitar and double bass.'
- c) dream of -> 'She **dreams of** becoming a famous pianist one day.'
- d) take care of -> 'He has to **take care of** his sick mother.' / 'Please **take care of** yourself on vacation.'

G) **Verb + in** – this combination tends to point to involvement or connections between people or things.

- a) believe in -> 'Most young kids **believe in** Santa Clause.' / 'I don't personally **believe in** ghosts.'
- b) invest in -> 'Now is the right time to **invest in** the markets.'
- c) live in -> 'She has always **lived in** Boston.' / 'Would you rather **live in** the city or suburbs?'
- d) participate in -> 'What sort of sports did you **participate in** as a child?'
- e) success in -> 'He **succeeded in** earning a scholarship.' / 'I admire him for his **success in** business.'

H) **Verb + at** – commonly used with verbs to refer to *places, skills, and reactions*.

- a) arrive at -> 'At what time will the train **arrive at** the station?' / 'Tom always **arrives at** class early.'
- b) look at -> 'The teacher told us to **look at** the blackboard.' / 'Take a **look at** this picture!'
- c) shout/yell at -> 'You don't have to **shout / yell at** me!'
- d) stare at -> 'It isn't good manners to **stare at** others.' / 'The cat stopped and **stared at** itself in the mirror.'

I) **Verb + on** – used with a number of different verbs that relate directly to the forthcoming noun.

- a) comment on -> 'White House officials refused to **comment on** the story.'
- b) focus on -> 'The noise made it hard for me to **focus / concentrate on** my work.'
- c) decide on -> 'Let's work together to **decide on** a plan of action.'
- d) depend on -> 'You can always **depend on** Michael in a crisis.' / 'Plants **depend on** sunlight and water.'
- e) experiment on -> 'The company states that it does not **experiment on** animals.'
- f) operate on -> 'Doctors learn to **operate on** patients in school.' / 'Most tractors **operate on** diesel oil.'
- g) plan on -> 'When do you **plan on** going to Geneva?'

J) **Verb + from** – used to identify a point of origin or a connection / disconnection between people or things.

- a) benefit from -> 'Local musicians **benefit from** the support of their local communities.'
- b) come from -> 'Maple syrup **comes from** the sap of maple trees.'
- c) escape from -> 'Prisoners made a daring **escape from** jail through the night.'
- d) recover from -> 'She **recovered from** her accident remarkably quickly.'
- e) retire from -> 'My father **retired from** his company when he was 55 years old.'
- f) suffer from -> 'A lot of students **suffer from** exam nerves.' / 'Do you **suffer from** migraines?'



Unit 68 – Exercises:

68.1 – The position of the object in a prepositional verb or phrasal verb. (68-A)

With a phrasal verb (a verb + an element -> an adverb or preposition), the position of the object is flexible, i.e.: it can either sit *between* the verb and element or *after* the element: 'He **took his coat off.**' or: 'He **took off his coat.**'

Note: -> When the object is a pronoun (him, her, us, them, etc.), it must sit between the verb and the element:

-> She **took it off.** not: **took off it**

With prepositional verbs the position of the object (whether it's a noun or pronoun) is not flexible. The object must sit after the preposition: 'We **looked after the kids/them.**' not: 'We **looked the kids/them after.**'

For each sentence, change the **noun** to a **pronoun**. Important: change the *word order* if necessary. Also write down whether it is a **prepositional verb** or a **phrasal verb**. For example, 'Cut up the carrot.' -> 'Cut it up.' -> phrasal verb

- The kids jumped on the bed. -> The kids jumped on it. -> **prepositional verb**
- I need to send back the letter. -> _____ . -> _____ .
- Please put away your phone. -> _____ . -> _____ .
- Kelly is looking for her key. -> _____ . -> _____ .
- Mark put on his jacket. -> _____ . -> _____ .
- I picked up the kids from school. -> _____ . -> _____ .
- Mr. Smith put off the meeting. -> _____ . -> _____ .
- Sally talked about her vacation. -> _____ . -> _____ .

68.2 – Underline the more appropriate **prepositional verb** in each sentence. (68-A)

- She is actively **looking for** / **looking to** a new job at the moment.
- What made you **decide about** / **decide on** a career as a vet?
- Please look at me when I'm **talking about** / **talking to** you!
- Mary **complained about** / **complained to** the waiter for the bad service when she got home.
- Mike **glanced to** / **glanced at** his watch and mentioned that he had to run.
- Chris **succeeded in** / **succeeded to** winning the competition after months of preparation.
- John has a tendency to **brag about** / **brag with** his brother's celebrity status.
- My mother **insisted in** / **insisted on** going with me to visit the doctor.

68.3 – Place the right **preposition** after each verb: about / against / at / for / from / in / of / on / to / with. (68-All)

- Future generations depend _____ our ability to reduce climate change and live sustainably.
- Researchers worldwide have been searching _____ the best technologies to reduce global warming.
- Activists have protested _____ the destruction of rainforests for decades.
- We looked _____ the information being presented which we felt was quite convincing.
- A prominent scientist came _____ our university and gave us a lecture to really think _____.
- Most millennials agree _____ the need to take action on climate change now.
- I dream _____ a future in which poverty is eliminated and the world is much more equitable.
- Low-lying nations will be the first to suffer _____ the consequences of rising sea levels.
- Fortunately, billions has already been invested _____ climate technologies that will be most needed.

68.4 – Rewrite each sentence so that it has a similar meaning and contains the word provided in brackets. (68-All)

- This city is a bit like Manchester. (remind) _____ .
- Dad didn't like my decision to drop art class. (disapprove) _____ .
- Do you find ancient history interesting? (interest) _____ .
- Katie is a very dependable person. (rely) _____ .
- They haven't chosen their wedding venue yet. (decide) _____ .
- A Greek word meaning 'city' is in the origin of politics. (derive) _____ .