

**INSTRUCTOR:** "Prepositions and Prepositional Phrases."

Prepositions are words that connect a noun or pronoun with another part of a sentence. Prepositions include words such as about, by, in, of, and with. Prepositions rarely function alone. They almost always introduce a noun or a pronoun, which is called the object of the preposition.

The old tree fell onto the parked car. Onto is a preposition that relates its object-- the parked car-- to the rest of the sentence, helping to explain where the tree fell. The entire word group, onto the parked car, is called a prepositional phrase.

Prepositional phrases are used to modify nouns and verbs, explaining where things are or how things happened. The tiger jumped through the hoop. The prepositional phrase, through the hoop, includes the preposition through and the noun hoop. The entire prepositional phrase, through the hoop, explains where the tiger jumped.

The object of prepositional phrases can be confused with the subject of the sentence. This confusion leads to errors in subject-verb agreement or pronoun case. To find the subject, cross out all the prepositional phrases.

At the Apollo Theater in New York City, many famous African American musicians got their start. When we cross out the prepositional phrases, we can see that the subject of the sentence is musicians and the verb is got.

Some of the big future stars were Count Basie, Billie Holiday, and Ella Fitzgerald. The subject of the sentence is some and the verb is were.

In the 1970s, after some years of slow business, the theater closed. The subject of the sentence is theater and the verb is closed.

After major renovations, the theater reopened in 1985. The subject of the sentence is theater and the verb is reopened.

Notice that prepositional phrases appear at the beginning, middle, and end of

sentences. Often they are separated from the rest of the sentence by commas. Ignoring prepositional phrases makes it easier to identify subjects, which can help you avoid errors related to subject-verb agreement and pronoun case.

Remember, prepositions connect a noun or pronoun with another part of the sentence. Prepositional phrases are made up of a preposition and its object and all the words in between. The object of a preposition can never be the subject of a sentence.