

## Grammar – Prepositions

### Is the Preposition Correct or Incorrect? – Activities

*Preparation:*

Download four PDF files from <https://purlandtraining.com/prepositions/>:

<https://purlandtraining.com/prepositions/is-the-preposition-correct-or-incorrect-correct-sentences-page-1.pdf>  
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<https://purlandtraining.com/prepositions/is-the-preposition-correct-or-incorrect-correct-sentences-page-2.pdf>  
<https://purlandtraining.com/prepositions/is-the-preposition-correct-or-incorrect-incorrect-sentences-page-2.pdf>

*Print each pair of documents on thin card back to back. Cut out the cards and pick one up. You should have a correct sentence on one side and the corresponding incorrect sentence on the other side. SS (students) work in pairs or small groups.*

1. Throw a number of cards on the desk in a random order. SS divide them into correct and incorrect sentences, looking at both sides. Discuss findings, with particular reference to students' L1(s).
2. Place a number of cards on the desk incorrect side up. Ask SS to correct the errors. Discuss findings, as above.
3. Place a number of cards on the desk correct side up. Ask SS to translate them into their L1. Discuss the differences and the errors that could arise. How far does translating from their L1(s) cause errors with prepositions in English?
4. SS write new sentences based on the correct sentences.
5. SS write new incorrect sentences based on the correct sentences and give them to a partner or other group to correct.
6. Give SS the pages with incorrect sentences for them to correct and discuss – or for homework.
7. SS pick up a card and read one side to their partner / group. They have to say whether it is correct or incorrect. If it is incorrect, they correct it.
8. SS group all the cards by preposition, e.g. 'on'. They discuss when we use this preposition in English, e.g. 'on for platforms, days, and dates'. (See PDF: *'When do we Use Prepositions ON, IN, AT in English?'*) How does this compare with their L1(s)?
9. SS group all the cards by... a) prepositions of place, b) prepositions of time.
10. Using toys: take a box shape and a figure, e.g. a doll or LEGO figure. One student acts out a preposition with the figure and the box, e.g. 'he is on the box' while the partner or group has to guess it and make a sentence. Then the SS suggest a preposition and the student with the figure has to act it out, e.g. 'behind' = the figure is put behind the box.
11. Board game #1: use a 'snakes and ladders' board. SS play snakes and ladders in small groups with counters and a dice. One student or the teacher (with the answers) is the referee and doesn't play. At each snake or ladder the referee gives the student a card. They have to say whether it is correct or not. The referee has the answers and says whether they are right or not. If they are right they go up (the snake or ladder) and if they get it wrong they go down (the snake or ladder). The winner is the first student to reach the final square on the board. Twist: instead of using the cards, SS have to say a correct sentence with a preposition suggested by the referee. (See PDF: *'Common English Prepositions – Discussion Words'*.)
12. Board game #2: use a standard chess or draughts board. SS throw a dice and move forward the number on the dice. One student or the teacher is the referee and doesn't play. If a student throws an odd number (1, 3, or 5) they go ahead and move forward. If they throw an even number (2, 4, or 6) they have to take a card and say whether the sentence is correct or not. The referee adjudicates. If the player is right, they move forward that number of spaces. If they are wrong, they move backwards that number of spaces. The winner is the first student to reach the final square on the board. Twist: instead of using the cards, SS have to say a correct sentence with a preposition suggested by the referee.
13. Give SS a number of prepositional phrases. (See PDFs: *'60 General Prepositional Phrases – Parts 1 & 2'*.) They build sentences with them, using one, two, or more in a sentence, while paying attention to SVOPT word order: subject – verb – object – place – time.
14. SS look at the cards correct side up and try to predict what the errors will be, before turning them over to check.
15. SS have to say how they would teach English prepositions to a class of SS at a lower level than themselves.