

# Level A

## Overview

Objective #1: Students will learn to find all the prepositional phrases in any sentence and will place parentheses around them.

Note to "Grammar Nerds": Don't worry if, at this level, your student occasionally places parentheses around infinitives ("to" plus a verb, such as to run or to fly). Ignore any marked infinitives until Level D, typically 10<sup>th</sup> grade. If you'd like to elaborate further with them, simply tell them that they've marked an infinitive but that you don't expect them to know what an infinitive is at this stage.

Objective #2: Students will learn to find compound prepositional phrases. For instance,

They were playing **(with Bill and Mary)**.

Rationale: As Dr. Vavra explains, prepositional phrases are relatively easy to learn. Research shows that over a third of all words are in prepositional phrases (although this percentage will be smaller in the writing of a typical third grader). If a student's ultimate purpose is to be able to explain the grammatical purpose of every word in every sentence, identifying all the prepositional phrases will have them well on their way! Being able to identify the objects of prepositions will also help prevent annoying errors such as subject/verb agreement. For instance, which sentence is correct?

- A. One of the class members has won an award.
- B. One of the class members have won an award.

If you know that **of the class members** is a prepositional phrase, and if you put it in parentheses like this,

One **(of the class members)** ...

Then you'll easily see that the rest of the sentence should be written like this,

One has won an award.

Doesn't this simplify things? We think so, too!

## Preparation for Level A

Preparation is easy when you use the K.I.S.S. Approach! First, before your school year begins, get some brightly colored paper (8"x11 1/2" size paper, cut in half lengthwise, works well), and write the prepositions listed below on the paper. Letters about 4 inches high are easy to read. If you have several children, laminate these so they can be reused in future years. You'll end up with about 50 preposition cards that you can hang all over a wall (won't your husband be thrilled?). You don't need to require them to memorize a list of these prepositions; simply seeing them plastered on a wall

should do the trick! Note that there are over one hundred prepositions, but the ones we've listed are the most common ones that your children will see.

### Common Prepositions

aboard	before	during	off	towards
about	behind	except	on	under
above	below	for	onto	underneath
across	beneath	from	outside	until
after	beside	in	over	up
against	besides	inside	since	upon
along	between	into	through	with
among	beyond	like	throughout	within
around	by	near	to	without
at	down	of	toward	

As you begin teaching what a preposition is, it might be helpful to explain it like my teacher used to. A preposition is anything an angel could do to a cloud.

The angel can fly **above** the cloud, **around** the cloud, **beside** the cloud, **inside** the cloud, **through** the cloud, **under** the cloud, etc.

Of course, this might not work in every situation, but it's a fun way to introduce the concept to children.

Below you'll find an overview schedule for teaching Level A grammar over one school year, handy for printing and sticking with your lesson plans. The most difficult preparation required will be finding paragraphs to analyze (Weeks 7 and following). Plan to spend a few minutes each weekend choosing the paragraphs to analyze the following week. If you have older children, you could easily delegate this chore to them. Almost any sentences will do! Photocopy the selected paragraphs or simply type them (double or triple spaced). It may be wise to keep a journal of where you found paragraphs to use, so that you can re-use them in future years.

Oh, and Mom... don't be afraid to participate with your children each day! It's fun!

Week	<b>Level A</b> What to Teach
1	Give Worksheet A1, which includes the sentence, "Matt came home." Talk about what prepositional phrases are, then have the students add as many prepositional phrases as possible to this sentence. Vote on the nicest sentence, the silliest sentence, the longest sentence, etc. Repeat this daily if desired (optional).
2	Give Worksheet A2, which includes the sentence, "I like hot dogs." Follow the same procedure as in Week 1. Repeat this daily if desired, or allow the students to invent their own sentences.
3	Give Worksheet A3. The students will fill in the blanks with prepositions. Compare worksheets if several children are working together. One sentence per day is fine, or do all 5 sentences on one day.
4	Give Worksheet A4. The students will fill in the blanks with entire prepositional phrases. Compare worksheets if several children are working together. One sentence per day is fine, or do all 5 sentences on one day.
5	Give Worksheet A5. The students will fill in the blanks with prepositional phrases. See Week 4.
6	Give Worksheet A6. The students will fill in the blanks with prepositional phrases. See Week 4.
7	Choose a 5- or 6-sentence paragraph from a book that you're all enjoying. Other sources could include newspapers, letters from Grandma, your Bible or a Bible story book... (anything, really!). Photocopy the selection, or type it (double or triple spaced) on another sheet of paper. Have the students find every prepositional phrase and mark it with parenthesis. Do just one sentence from the paragraph each day.*
8	See instructions for Week 7.
9	See instructions for Week 7.
10	See instructions for Week 7.
11	See instructions for Week 7.
12	See instructions for Week 7.
13	See instructions for Week 7.
14	See instructions for Week 7.

(Note: If you have students using other levels, you can all be studying the same paragraph.)

15	See instructions for Week 7.
16	See instructions for Week 7.
17	See instructions for Week 7.
18	Choose a paragraph from each student's own writing to evaluate. Photocopy it (or retype it), and put parenthesis around all the prepositional phrases. Do just one sentence each day.
19	See instructions for Week 18.
20	See instructions for Week 18.
21	See instructions for Week 7. In addition, have the students attempt to rewrite each sentence, making it better by changing the placement or use of prepositional phrases. (It may not always be possible.)
22	See instructions for Week 21.
23	See instructions for Week 21.
24	See instructions for Week 21.
25	See instructions for Week 21.
26	See instructions for Week 21.
27	See instructions for Week 18. In addition, have the students attempt to rewrite each sentence, making it better by changing the placement or use of prepositional phrases. (It may not always be possible.)
28	See instructions for Week 27.
29	See instructions for Week 27.
30	See instructions for Week 27.
31	See instructions for Week 27.
32	See instructions for Week 27.
33	See instructions for Week 7.
34	See instructions for Week 7.
35	Give Worksheet A7. Using the answer key provided, grade your students' answers.
36	Give Worksheet A8. Using the answer key provided, grade your students' answers. Do not move on to Level B unless 100% of the answers are correct.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Worksheet A1

Add as many prepositional phrases as possible to this sentence. Vote on the nicest sentence, the silliest sentence, the longest sentence, etc.

Matt came home.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Worksheet A2

Add as many prepositional phrases as possible to this sentence. Vote on the nicest sentence, the silliest sentence, the longest sentence, etc.

I like hot dogs.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### Worksheet A3

Fill in the blanks with any preposition you choose.

1. The young boy stood looking \_\_\_\_\_ the window  
\_\_\_\_\_ the store.
2. He was wishing \_\_\_\_\_ some candy \_\_\_\_\_  
eat \_\_\_\_\_ his house.
3. Samantha found a rock \_\_\_\_\_ the  
waterfall, and she climbed \_\_\_\_\_ the side  
\_\_\_\_\_ the water.
4. The globe \_\_\_\_\_ her desk helped Louise  
imagine places \_\_\_\_\_ the world.
5. When the first big log was splashed \_\_\_\_\_  
the top \_\_\_\_\_ the big stone wall, the water  
began to run \_\_\_\_\_ the top and  
\_\_\_\_\_ both ends.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Worksheet A4

Fill in the blanks with any prepositional phrases you choose.

1. There was a stir

\_\_\_\_\_ nearby, sending  
the birds \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Old Mr. Cross and his wife made presents

\_\_\_\_\_ and had a good time  
\_\_\_\_\_.

3. When the bear rose \_\_\_\_\_

and looked at him, Johnnie could not run fast enough  
\_\_\_\_\_.

4. One morning, when the dew was still

\_\_\_\_\_, Billy saw his  
mother dash \_\_\_\_\_, whisk  
off her apron and reach  
\_\_\_\_\_.

5. When Farmer Green put the harness

\_\_\_\_\_, to keep the  
horse \_\_\_\_\_, she began  
to cry.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Worksheet A5

Fill in the blanks with any prepositional phrases you choose.

1. When the train stopped, the adults heard the noise \_\_\_\_\_ but didn't know what was happening.
2. As they came \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, a terrible sight greeted them.
3. When Uncle Ned was well enough to sit \_\_\_\_\_, Rachel waited until everyone else was \_\_\_\_\_ and then came to sit \_\_\_\_\_ at his feet.
4. \_\_\_\_\_, when the castle was \_\_\_\_\_, the others stopped and waited.
5. Suddenly he heard a scream \_\_\_\_\_, and suddenly Polly tumbled \_\_\_\_\_.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Worksheet A6

Fill in the blanks with any prepositional phrases you choose.

1. The wagon lurched \_\_\_\_\_,  
jostling the youngsters  
\_\_\_\_\_.

2. The engineer opened the door  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ and came  
inside.

3. The other end of the rope was still  
\_\_\_\_\_, but it  
wasn't doing any good because Les was holding the bottom  
\_\_\_\_\_ with his bare  
hands.

4. My father believes that the farm  
\_\_\_\_\_ would be  
a nice place to live.

5. Mandie sat down \_\_\_\_\_  
to eat \_\_\_\_\_.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Worksheet A7

Put parentheses around all the prepositional phrases.

The children laid all their treasures, even the wheels, on a board, and the girls carried the board back to the boxcar between them. They put the dishes down by the brook.

"Now we must wash them," said Jessie.

"All right," agreed Benny. "We'll wash my pink cup."

And never did a little boy hand dishes so carefully to his sisters as Benny did.

The girls washed the dishes with soap, and Jessie used sand to get the rust off the spoons.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Worksheet A7 - Answer Key

Put parentheses around all the prepositional phrases.

The children laid **(all their treasures)**, even the wheels, **(on a board)**, and the girls carried the board back **(to the boxcar) (between them)**. They put the dishes down **(by the brook)**.

"Now we must wash them," said Jessie.

"All right," agreed Benny. "We'll wash my pink cup."

And never did a little boy hand dishes so carefully **(to his sisters)** as Benny did.

The girls washed the dishes **(with soap)**, and Jessie used sand to get the rust **(off the spoons)**.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Worksheet A8

Put parentheses around all the prepositional phrases.

Uncle Wirt turned to the braves and spoke rapidly in Cherokee. The young Indians immediately unrolled the blankets they carried and prepared a hammock-type bed to carry the old man over the mountain. Gently lifting him, they placed him on the blankets. Each brave took hold of a corner and lifted him from the ground. The old man did not move or utter a sound.

Note: Selection is from *Mandie and the Ghost Bandits*, by Lois Gladys Leppard (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1984), p. 61.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Worksheet A8 - Answer Key

Put parentheses around all the prepositional phrases.

Uncle Wirt turned **(to the braves)** and spoke rapidly **(in Cherokee)**. The young Indians immediately unrolled the blankets they carried and prepared a hammock-type bed to carry the old man **(over the mountain)**. Gently lifting him, they placed him **(on the blankets)**. Each brave took hold **(of a corner)** and lifted him **(from the ground)**. The old man did not move or utter a sound.

Note: Selection is from *Mandie and the Ghost Bandits*, by Lois Gladys Leppard (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1984), p. 61.