

Using Prepositional Phrases

Never hesitate to reduce the number of words, phrases, and sentences in your drafts. The more you concentrate your thoughts, the clearer they will be. You can use prepositional phrases to combine sentences and make your writing clearer, more interesting, and more powerful.

A preposition is a word that shows the relationship of a noun or a **pronoun** to some other word in the sentence.

Some Common Prepositions

about	at	for	over
according to	below	from	past
across	between	in front of	to
after	by	near	under
against	down	off	up
around	during	on	with

A prepositional phrase includes a preposition, a noun or a pronoun, and any modifiers of that noun or pronoun.

Original:	Scott used his cell phone to call his office. He took the phone from his briefcase. He called during a meeting. His office is in Chicago.
Combined:	During a meeting, Scott took his cell phone from his briefcase and used it to call his office in Chicago.

Notice that the phrase to call his office is not a prepositional phrase. Note, too, that call is not the object of a preposition. In addition to being a preposition, the word to also functions as the sign of an infinitive.

When you use prepositional phrases to combine sentences, take care to place phrases that modify nouns or pronouns as close as possible to the words they modify. Prepositional phrases that modify

verbs, however, can appear anywhere in a sentence. After the call on the cell phone, Scott hurriedly left the meeting. Scott hurriedly left the meeting after the call on the cell phone.

DIRECTIONS In the following items, use prepositional phrases to create one sentence.

EXAMPLE	Alexander Graham Bell founded a great company. His father-in-law helped him.
	With help from his father-in-law, Alexander Graham Bell founded a great company.

1. The year of Alexander Graham Bell's birth was 1847. The place was Edinburgh, Scotland.

2. Bell immigrated. He went to Canada. He and his parents went there in 1870.

3. Bell established a school. It specialized in teaching people with impaired hearing. The school was in Boston, Massachusetts.

4. At the school, Bell performed many experiments. His experiments were with sound. They were with transmitting sound over wires.

5. Bell had a great dream. His dream was to help people whose hearing was impaired. His dream was to create a machine to help them.

6. Bell transmitted the first coherent spoken sentence. His assistant, Mr. Watson, received the message. The date was March 10, 1876.

7. Bell became a rich man. His invention made him rich. His invention was the telephone.

8. Bell helped other scientists. He used both his money and his interest in their work to do this.

9. Alexander Graham Bell died. The year was 1922. The place was his summer home, Nova Scotia, Canada.

10. At Bell's death, people paid their respects. They did not use the telephone.

Using Prepositional Phrases

Answer Key

Answer Keys:

Answers will vary. These are sample answers.

1. In 1847, Alexander Graham Bell was born in Edinburgh, Scotland.
2. Bell immigrated to Canada with his parents in 1870.
3. In Boston, Massachusetts, Bell established a school that specialized in teaching people with impaired hearing.
4. At the school, Bell performed many experiments with transmitting sound over wires.
5. Bell had a great dream of creating a machine to help people with impaired hearing.
6. On March 10, 1876, Bell transmitted the first coherent spoken sentence to his assistant, Mr. Watson.
7. Bell became a rich man through the invention of the telephone.
8. Bell helped other scientists with his money and his interest in their work.
9. Alexander Graham Bell died in 1922 at his summer home in Nova Scotia, Canada.
10. At Bell's death, people paid their respects by not using the telephone.