

Nouns+Preposition

Although there are some tricks we can use, there is no specific way of determining which prepositions pair with particular nouns—we just have to know them by heart. The only way to do this is by seeing them used in everyday writing and speech.

Below we will look at examples of the most common prepositions that pair with nouns.

Noun + to

One of the most common prepositions used with nouns is *to*. The following table contains examples of combinations you might see:

Noun + to	Example Sentence
access to	“I couldn’t enter the building without access to the door’s password.”
addiction to	“Alison has an addiction to football.”
answer to	“Her answer to the teacher’s question was incorrect.”
approach to	“Professor Smith’s approach to the experiment was incredibly innovative.”
damage to	“The damage to the car is worse than I thought it’d be.”
dedication to	“Ned has intense dedication to his schoolwork.”
devotion to	“Everyone admired the doctor’s devotion to her patients.”
reaction to	“The child had an adorable reaction to the kitten.”
response to	“She gave no response to the question I’d asked her.”
solution to	“No one could come up with a solution to the math problem.”
threat to	“Climate change is a potential threat to certain species.”

Noun + for

Another common preposition used with nouns is *for*. Examples can be seen in the table below:

Noun + for	Example Sentence
admiration for	“Penny has so much admiration for her mother.”
cure for	“Health officials recently announced that a cure for the fatal disease had been found.”
desire for	“My desire for success is more important than my desire for romance.”
hope for	“Youths often have high hopes for humanity.”
need for	“The need for social interaction is a basic human trait.”
passion for	“Simply having a passion for writing doesn’t necessarily mean you will become a best-selling author.”
reason for	“There is always a reason for change.”

respect for	“Certain cultures promote respect for elders.”
room for	“There’s room for one more person at this table.”
sympathy for	“You should always have sympathy for strangers.”
talent for	“Greg has a talent for stand-up comedy.”

Noun + of

The preposition *of* can be used with many nouns. Here are some common combinations:

Noun + of	Example Sentence
advantage of	“Most people seem to underestimate the advantage of majoring in philosophy.”
disadvantage of	“The disadvantage of becoming an entrepreneur is the amount of debt you can accumulate.”
fear of	“My niece has a fear of the dark.”
habit of	“I used to have a habit of biting my fingernails.”
intention of	“Do you have any intention of going out today?”
knowledge of	“Timothy’s knowledge of beekeeping is impressive.”
lack of	“The police cannot arrest him due to a lack of evidence.”
memory of	“I have no memory of my first year in school.”
process of	“The process of elimination is a popular technique when taking multiple-choice tests.”
smell of	“I love the smell of freshly baked cookies.”
sound of	“Can you hear the sound of birds chirping?”
taste of	“The taste of cooked octopus is an acquired one.”

Noun + in

Several nouns take the preposition *in*, examples of which can be seen in the following table:

Noun + in	Example Sentence
belief in	“It is not uncommon to have a belief in a higher power.”
change in	“Scientists detected little change in the atmosphere.”
decrease in	“A decrease in taxes would dramatically affect the economy.”
delay in	“There appears to have been a delay in processing your payment.”
experience in	“She has little experience in backpacking.”
increase in	“I’m hoping for an increase in environmentally friendly products.”
interest in	“Even as a child, the girl had an interest in archaeology.”

pleasure in	“He took pleasure in playing the piano.”
reduction in	“Meredith was forced to take a reduction in her pay.”
rise in	“After he won the jackpot, his hometown witnessed a sharp rise in sales of lottery tickets.”

Noun + *on*

The preposition *on* is less commonly paired with nouns, but there are instances where it is used. Here are some examples of *on* being used with nouns:

Noun + <i>on</i>	Example Sentence
advice on	“I read magazines for advice on relationships.”
attack on	“Some view the new law as an attack on our rights.”
ban on	“The early 20th century saw a short-lived ban on alcohol.”
emphasis on	“She is studying East Asian cultures with an emphasis on Japanese society.”
focus on	“His focus on success has hindered his social life.”
report on	“The report on fast food made people more aware of the number of calories they consume.”

Noun + *at*

The preposition *at* is only paired with a few nouns. For example:

- “Though new to skiing, he made an **attempt at** the highest slope.”
- “I have no **chance at** winning this game.”

Often, we use the preposition in conjunction with *which*, as in:

- “This is the **age at which** you are eligible for military service.”
- “There’s always a **point at which** trying to reason with him becomes futile.”

Noun + *from*

From is only occasionally used with nouns. The preposition usually refers to two things at opposition with each other, or specifies an origin or starting point when used in conjunction with *to*:

- “The town sought **protection from** bandits.”
- “His **transition from** pauper **to** prince was something out of a fairy tale.”

Noun + *with*

Generally, nouns combined with the preposition *with* point to relationships and connections between two or more things. For example:

- “What’s the **matter with** you?”
- “I noticed a small **problem with** the story you submitted.”
- “Her close **relationship with** her sister is enviable.”
- “If you’re having **trouble with** the assignments, consult your teacher.”

Noun + *about*

When paired with a noun, *about* means *concerning* or *in regards to*. For example:

- “His **anxiety about** public speaking is so bad that he sweats when he’s onstage.”
- “Do you have any **information about** the changes in the schedule?”
- “She wants to hear the **story about** her favorite superhero again.”

Noun + *between*

A noun that takes the preposition *between* forms a **comparison between** two things. Here are some common combinations:

- “For her thesis, Stacy submitted a **comparison between** classical music and contemporary rock.”
- “The **connection between** good and evil is fascinating.”
- “Is there a **difference between** green onions and scallions?”

Nouns with multiple prepositions

Some nouns are capable of combining with more than one preposition. In some of these cases, the meaning does not change no matter which preposition is chosen:

- “My **opinion of** her is the same as yours.”
- “My **opinion about** her is the same as yours.”
- “Abby is an **expert in** changing tires.”
- “Abby is an **expert at** changing tires.”
- “I appreciate his newfound **love for** animals.”
- “I appreciate his newfound **love of** animals.”

In other cases, however, the meaning changes entirely when a different preposition is substituted:

- “No one can deny the positive **impact of** France.” (France has a positive influence.)
- “No one can deny the positive **impact on** France.” (Something positively affects France.)
- “Her **transition from** vegetarian **to** vegan wasn’t difficult.” (She started as a vegetarian and ended as a vegan.)
- “Her **transition to** vegetarian **from** vegan wasn’t difficult.” (She started as a vegan and ended as a vegetarian.)