Prepositional Phrases Master List

"AT," "BY," "FOR," "FROM," "IN," "ON," "OUT OF," "TO," "UNDER," "WITH," and "WITHOUT."

Phrases with AT:

- **at random**
    - **Explanation:** Chosen or done without any particular method, plan, or order.
    - **Example (Report):** For the quality control check, five samples were selected *at random* from the production line.
- **at a loss**
    - **Explanation:** Feeling uncertain about what to do or say, often because you are surprised or confused.
    - **Example (Letter):** Upon hearing the unexpected news of the factory's closure, many long-serving employees were *at a loss* as to their future.
- **at times**
    - **Explanation:** Occasionally; sometimes.
    - **Example (Essay):** While the film is generally light-hearted, *at times* it explores more serious themes of social injustice.
- **at once**
    - **Explanation:** Immediately; straight away.
    - **Example (Review):** The reviewer stated that the restaurant's unique selling proposition was clear *at once*: its commitment to locally sourced ingredients.
- **at least**
    - **Explanation:** Not less than a particular amount or number; or used to make a statement less definite or to introduce a positive point in a negative situation.
    - **Example (Report):** The survey indicated that *at least* seventy per cent of residents were in favour of the new recycling scheme.
- **at first**
    - **Explanation:** In the beginning; initially.

- **Example (Essay):** *At first*, the government's policy seemed controversial, but public opinion gradually shifted as its benefits became apparent.

- **at present / at the moment**
  - **Explanation:** Currently; now.
  - **Example (Letter):** *At present*, we are reviewing all applications and will contact shortlisted candidates in due course.
- **at heart**
  - **Explanation:** Referring to someone's real nature or character, as opposed to how they may appear.
  - **Example (Review):** Despite its complex plot, the novel is, *at heart*, a simple story about friendship and loyalty.
- **at the expense of**
  - **Explanation:** Resulting in loss or damage to something or someone else.
  - **Example (Report):** The company's rapid expansion was achieved *at the expense of* its customer service quality, leading to numerous complaints.
- **at short notice**
  - **Explanation:** With very little warning or time for preparation.
  - **Example (Letter):** Thank you for agreeing to speak at the conference *at short notice* after our original keynote speaker fell ill.
- **at odds with**
  - **Explanation:** In disagreement with; conflicting with.
  - **Example (Essay):** The witness's testimony was *at odds with* the evidence presented by the prosecution.
- **at all costs**
  - **Explanation:** Whatever is required; no matter what difficulties or sacrifices are involved.
  - **Example (Report):** The project manager insisted that the deadline must be met *at all costs*.

- **at fault**
    - **Explanation:** Responsible for a mistake or something bad that has happened.
    - **Example (Letter):** In his formal complaint, the customer clearly stated why he believed the company was *at fault* for the error.
- **at a glance**
    - **Explanation:** Immediately, after a quick look.
    - **Example (Review):** The dashboard provides all the key performance indicators *at a glance*, which is very useful for a quick overview.
- **at risk (of)**
    - **Explanation:** In a situation where something unpleasant or dangerous might happen.
    - **Example (Report):** Coastal communities are increasingly *at risk of* flooding due to rising sea levels.
- **at one's disposal**
    - **Explanation:** Available for someone to use whenever or however they wish.
    - **Example (Letter):** Please remember that our full range of support services is *at your disposal* should you require any assistance.
- **at the crack of dawn**
    - **Explanation:** Very early in the morning, when the sun first appears.
    - **Example (Review):** To capture the best photographs of the wildlife, the tour group had to be ready *at the crack of dawn*.
- **at the latest**
    - **Explanation:** No later than the time specified.
    - **Example (Report):** All expense claims must be submitted by Friday *at the latest*.
- **at the peak of**
    - **Explanation:** At the most successful or busiest point of something.

- **Example (Essay):** *At the peak of* his career, the artist produced some of his most iconic and influential works.

Phrases with BY:

- **by accident / by chance**
  - **Explanation:** Without being intended or planned.
  - **Example (Letter):** I discovered this wonderful little café purely *by chance* while exploring the old town.
- **by mistake**
  - **Explanation:** As a result of an error; unintentionally.
  - **Example (Report):** The incorrect figures were included in the initial draft *by mistake* but have since been rectified.
- **by heart**
  - **Explanation:** From memory; having memorised something perfectly.
  - **Example (Review):** The lead actor knew all his lines *by heart*, delivering a flawless performance.
- **by far**
  - **Explanation:** By a large amount or degree; used to emphasize a comparison.
  - **Example (Essay):** Shakespeare is *by far* the most widely studied playwright in the English language.
- **by hand**
  - **Explanation:** Made or done by a person rather than a machine.
  - **Example (Review):** The exquisite detail on the pottery clearly showed it had been painted *by hand*.
- **by no means**
  - **Explanation:** Not at all; certainly not. (A strong way of saying 'no').
  - **Example (Report):** Although there were some minor setbacks, the project was *by no means* a failure.

- **by the way**
    - **Explanation:** Used to introduce a new subject, or a remark that is not directly relevant to what you are talking about.
    - **Example (Letter):** The arrangements for the meeting are confirmed. *By the way,* did you hear that Sarah got the promotion?
- **by law**
    - **Explanation:** According to the law; legally required.
    - **Example (Report):** Companies are required *by law* to provide a safe working environment for their employees.
- **by oneself**
    - **Explanation:** Alone; without help from anyone else.
    - **Example (Essay):** The protagonist's decision to undertake the perilous journey *by oneself* highlights their independence and determination.
- **by virtue of**
    - **Explanation:** Because of or as a result of a particular quality, fact, or position.
    - **Example (Review):** *By virtue of* its innovative design and superior performance, the new smartphone model quickly dominated the market.

Phrases with FOR:

- **for a change**
    - **Explanation:** As something different from what is usual.
    - **Example (Letter):** Instead of our usual restaurant, let's go to that new Italian place *for a change* next week.
- **for good**
    - **Explanation:** Permanently; forever.
    - **Example (Report):** After the fire, the historic theatre was closed *for good*, much to the dismay of the local community.
- **for instance / for example**
    - **Explanation:** Used to introduce a specific thing that illustrates a general point.

- **Example (Essay):** Many renewable energy sources are becoming more cost-effective; solar power, *for instance*, has seen a significant price reduction.

- **for sale**
  - **Explanation:** Available to be bought.
  - **Example (Review):** The art gallery featured several unique sculptures *for sale*, created by local artists.
- **for granted (take for granted)**
  - **Explanation:** To assume something is true or will happen without questioning it; or to not appreciate something or someone because they are always there.
  - **Example (Essay):** It is a common mistake to *take for granted* the freedoms we enjoy in a democratic society.
- **for the time being**
  - **Explanation:** For the present moment; temporarily.
  - **Example (Letter):** *For the time being*, all staff meetings will be held online until the office renovations are complete.
- **for a while**
  - **Explanation:** For a period of time.
  - **Example (Report):** The company's profits dipped *for a while* during the economic downturn but have since recovered.
- **for fear of**
  - **Explanation:** Because of anxiety or worry about something happening.
  - **Example (Essay):** Many witnesses were reluctant to testify *for fear of* retribution.
- **for sure / for certain**
  - **Explanation:** Definitely; without any doubt.
  - **Example (Review):** I can say *for certain* that this is one of the most engaging books I have read this year.

- **for the sake of**
    - **Explanation:** For the purpose or benefit of someone or something; or out of consideration for someone or something.
    - **Example (Report):** Additional safety measures were implemented *for the sake of* all employees working on the construction site.
- **for lack of**
    - **Explanation:** Because of not having enough of something.
    - **Example (Essay):** The research project was unfortunately discontinued *for lack of* adequate funding.

Phrases with FROM:

- **from scratch**
    - **Explanation:** From the very beginning, without using anything that has been prepared before.
    - **Example (Review):** The restaurant prides itself on making all its pasta *from scratch* daily.
- **from time to time**
    - **Explanation:** Occasionally; sometimes, but not regularly.
    - **Example (Letter):** We like to visit the art exhibition *from time to time* to see the new displays.
- **from now on**
    - **Explanation:** Starting from this moment and continuing into the future.
    - **Example (Report):** *From now on*, all employees will be required to use the new security software.
- **from bad to worse**
    - **Explanation:** Describing a situation that is deteriorating or becoming even more difficult.
    - **Example (Essay):** The economic situation in the country went *from bad to worse* following the international sanctions.

- **from experience**
    - **Explanation:** Based on what one has learned through doing, seeing, or feeling things.
    - **Example (Letter):** *From experience*, I can tell you that early booking is essential for this popular holiday destination.

Phrases with IN:

- **in advance**
    - **Explanation:** Before a particular time, or before doing a particular thing.
    - **Example (Report):** Tickets for the conference should be purchased *in advance* to secure a place.
- **in charge (of)**
    - **Explanation:** Having control or responsibility for a group of people or an activity.
    - **Example (Letter):** Ms Evans is *in charge of* the marketing department and will be your main point of contact.
- **in common**
    - **Explanation:** Shared by two or more people or things.
    - **Example (Essay):** Despite their different backgrounds, the two leaders found they had much *in common* regarding their political ideologies.
- **in danger (of)**
    - **Explanation:** In a situation where it is possible that something bad will happen to you/it.
    - **Example (Report):** Several ancient woodlands are *in danger of* being destroyed due to proposed new housing developments.
- **in fact**
    - **Explanation:** Used to emphasize the truth of an assertion, especially one that is surprising or contrasts with what has been said.

    - **Example (Review):** The café looks small from the outside, but *in fact*, it has a surprisingly spacious seating area at the back.

- **in favour of**
    - **Explanation:** In agreement with or supporting a plan, idea, or person.
    - **Example (Essay):** The majority of committee members voted *in favour of* the proposal to extend the library's opening hours.
- **in general**
    - **Explanation:** Usually; mainly; or considering something as a whole rather than its details.
    - **Example (Report):** *In general*, the feedback from the customer satisfaction survey was overwhelmingly positive.
- **in a hurry**
    - **Explanation:** Moving or acting quickly, often because you do not have much time.
    - **Example (Letter):** I apologise for the brevity of this email; I am writing it *in a hurry* before my next meeting.
- **in the long run**
    - **Explanation:** Over a long period of time; eventually.
    - **Example (Essay):** Investing in renewable energy may be costly initially, but it will be beneficial *in the long run*.
- **in vain**
    - **Explanation:** Without success; futilely.
    - **Example (Report):** All attempts to recover the corrupted data proved to be *in vain*.
- **in detail**
    - **Explanation:** Including all the facts or items; thoroughly.
    - **Example (Review):** The instruction manual explains *in detail* how to assemble and operate the new equipment.
- **in the meantime / in the meanwhile**

- **Explanation:** During the time before something else happens or before a specified period ends.
- **Example (Letter):** Your application is being processed; *in the meantime*, please ensure you have all the necessary supporting documents ready.

- **in touch (with)**
  - **Explanation:** In communication with someone.
  - **Example (Report):** Our team has been *in touch with* various suppliers to negotiate better terms.
- **in trouble**
  - **Explanation:** In a situation where you may be punished or criticised.
  - **Example (Essay):** The company found itself *in trouble* with the regulators for failing to comply with environmental standards.
- **in theory... in practice...**
  - **Explanation:** Used to contrast an idea or plan with its actual results or feasibility.
  - **Example (Report):** *In theory*, the new system should improve efficiency, but *in practice*, employees are finding it difficult to adapt.
- **in tears**
  - **Explanation:** Crying.
  - **Example (Review):** The film's poignant ending left many members of the audience *in tears*.
- **in terms of**
  - **Explanation:** In relation to a particular aspect or subject.
  - **Example (Essay):** *In terms of* historical accuracy, the documentary was meticulously researched.
- **in (actual) fact**
  - **Explanation:** Used to emphasise what is really true, or to correct a wrong idea. (Similar to 'in fact' but can be more emphatic).

- **Example (Report):** It was initially believed the project would be completed under budget; *in actual fact*, it exceeded the allocated funds by ten per cent.

- **in due course**
  - **Explanation:** At the appropriate or expected time in the future.
  - **Example (Letter):** We will inform you of our decision *in due course*, once all interviews have been conducted.
- **in essence**
  - **Explanation:** Basically; fundamentally.
  - **Example (Review):** *In essence*, the book argues that modern technology is reshaping our social interactions.
- **in retrospect**
  - **Explanation:** Thinking now about something in the past, often with a different view than you had then.
  - **Example (Essay):** *In retrospect*, the decision to invest heavily in that particular stock was clearly a mistake.
- **in season / out of season**
  - **Explanation:** (For fruit, vegetables, etc.) available and at its best / not available or not at its best at a particular time of year.
  - **Example (Review):** The restaurant's menu changes frequently to highlight ingredients that are currently *in season*.
- **in view of**
  - **Explanation:** Considering something; because of something.
  - **Example (Report):** *In view of* the recent decline in sales, the company is reassessing its marketing strategy.
- **in the habit of**
  - **Explanation:** Accustomed to doing something regularly.
  - **Example (Letter):** I am not *in the habit of* complaining, but the service I received was truly unacceptable.

Phrases with ON:

- **on average**
  - **Explanation:** Typically; based on a calculation of the usual amount or number.
  - **Example (Report):** *On average*, employees at this company take five days of sick leave per year.
- **on behalf of**
  - **Explanation:** As a representative of someone; in the interest of someone.
  - **Example (Letter):** I am writing to you *on behalf of* Mr Smith, who is currently unable to attend to his correspondence.
- **on board**
  - **Explanation:** On a ship, aircraft, or other vehicle; also, as part of a team or group.
  - **Example (Report):** Once the new director was *on board*, the project gained new momentum.
- **on business**
  - **Explanation:** For the purpose of work, not for pleasure.
  - **Example (Letter):** My colleague will be in Manchester next week *on business* and would be happy to meet with you.
- **on condition that**
  - **Explanation:** Only if; provided that a particular thing happens or is agreed.
  - **Example (Report):** The funding was approved *on condition that* regular progress reports were submitted.
- **on duty / off duty**
  - **Explanation:** Actively working at one's job / not working at one's job.
  - **Example (Review):** The security guard *on duty* was quick to respond to the alarm.
- **on foot**
  - **Explanation:** By walking.

- **Example (Letter):** We decided to explore the historic city centre *on foot* to better appreciate its architecture.

- **on good terms (with)**
  - **Explanation:** Having a friendly and amicable relationship with someone.
  - **Example (Report):** Despite the competitive nature of their industries, the two CEOs remained *on good terms*.

- **on purpose**
  - **Explanation:** Intentionally; deliberately.
  - **Example (Essay):** It seemed the author had included the ambiguous ending *on purpose* to provoke discussion amongst readers.

- **on second thoughts**
  - **Explanation:** Used when you want to change a decision you have made.
  - **Example (Letter):** I initially planned to travel by train, but *on second thoughts*, driving might be more convenient.

- **on time**
  - **Explanation:** Punctually; not late.
  - **Example (Report):** It is crucial that all project milestones are completed *on time*.

- **on the whole**
  - **Explanation:** Generally; considering everything.
  - **Example (Review):** There were a few minor issues, but *on the whole*, the hotel provided an excellent service.

- **on hold**
  - **Explanation:** Postponed or delayed; or waiting on the telephone.
  - **Example (Report):** The construction project has been put *on hold* pending further environmental assessments.

- **on loan**

- **Explanation:** Borrowed from someone or an institution, usually for a temporary period.
- **Example (Review):** Several masterpieces in the exhibition were *on loan* from private collections.

- **on offer**
  - **Explanation:** Available, often at a special price or under special conditions.
  - **Example (Letter):** We would like to inform you about the new range of services currently *on offer* to our valued clients.
- **on schedule**
  - **Explanation:** According to the planned timetable; not late.
  - **Example (Report):** Despite the initial delays, the project is now back *on schedule* for completion by December.
- **on the verge of**
  - **Explanation:** Very close to experiencing or doing something.
  - **Example (Essay):** The country was *on the verge of* a major political transformation.

Phrases with OUT OF:

- **out of breath**
  - **Explanation:** Breathing with difficulty, usually after physical exertion.
  - **Example (Review):** After climbing the numerous steps to the viewpoint, most visitors were understandably *out of breath*.
- **out of control**
  - **Explanation:** No longer possible to manage or direct.
  - **Example (Report):** The fire spread rapidly and was soon *out of control*, threatening nearby buildings.
- **out of date**
  - **Explanation:** Old-fashioned and no longer suitable for modern times or use; expired.

- **Example (Essay):** The textbook's information on this topic is now considered *out of date* due to recent discoveries.

- **out of order**
  - **Explanation:** Not working correctly (for a machine); or inappropriate (for behaviour).
  - **Example (Letter):** I am writing to report that the ticket machine at the station was *out of order* this morning.

- **out of place**
  - **Explanation:** Not in the correct location; or feeling unsuitable or uncomfortable in a particular situation.
  - **Example (Review):** The modern sculpture looked rather *out of place* in the traditional garden setting.

- **out of practice**
  - **Explanation:** No longer good at doing something because you have not done it recently.
  - **Example (Letter):** I used to play the piano regularly, but I'm a bit *out of practice* now.

- **out of reach**
  - **Explanation:** Not able to be accessed or achieved.
  - **Example (Report):** For many first-time buyers, owning a home in the city centre remains financially *out of reach*.

- **out of stock**
  - **Explanation:** Not currently available to buy because all items have been sold.
  - **Example (Review):** I was disappointed to find that the specific edition of the book I wanted was *out of stock*.

- **out of work**
  - **Explanation:** Unemployed; not having a job.
  - **Example (Essay):** The closure of the factory left hundreds of skilled labourers *out of work*.

- **out of the question**
    - **Explanation:** Impossible; not to be considered.
    - **Example (Report):** Extending the deadline any further is *out of the question* due to contractual obligations.

Phrases with TO:

- **to a certain extent / to some extent**
    - **Explanation:** Partly; in some ways but not completely.
    - **Example (Essay):** The government's new policy has been successful *to a certain extent*, but further measures are needed.
- **to someone's surprise**
    - **Explanation:** Causing someone to feel surprised.
    - **Example (Review):** *To my surprise*, the budget airline offered excellent customer service and comfortable seating.
- **to date**
    - **Explanation:** Up to the present time.
    - **Example (Report):** *To date*, we have received over 500 applications for the position.

Phrases with UNDER:

- **under arrest**
    - **Explanation:** When the police take someone to a police station because they believe they have committed a crime.
    - **Example (Report):** The suspect was placed *under arrest* following a lengthy investigation.
- **under construction**
    - **Explanation:** In the process of being built or developed.

- **Example (Letter):** Please be advised that the new wing of the hospital is currently *under construction* and access is restricted.

- **under control**
  - **Explanation:** Being dealt with or managed successfully.
  - **Example (Report):** The situation at the protest site was quickly brought *under control* by the authorities.
- **under pressure**
  - **Explanation:** Feeling stressed or anxious because of demands or difficulties.
  - **Example (Essay):** Many students feel *under pressure* to achieve high grades in their final examinations.
- **under the impression**
  - **Explanation:** Believing something, often mistakenly.
  - **Example (Letter):** I was *under the impression* that the meeting was scheduled for 10 a.m., not 9 a.m.
- **under discussion**
  - **Explanation:** Being talked about or considered.
  - **Example (Report):** The proposal for a new public park is currently *under discussion* by the local council.
- **under age (can also be written** *underage)*
  - **Explanation:** Younger than the legal age for a particular activity (e.g., drinking alcohol, voting).
  - **Example (Review):** The film was certified as suitable for all ages, so there were no concerns about anyone being *under age*.

Phrases with WITH:

- **with regard to / in regard to**
  - **Explanation:** Concerning; in relation to. (Formal)
  - **Example (Letter):** I am writing *with regard to* your recent enquiry about our services.

- **with the exception of**
    - **Explanation:** Not including; apart from.
    - **Example (Report):** All departments met their targets *with the exception of* sales, which saw a slight decrease.

- **with flying colours**
    - **Explanation:** Very successfully; with a very high score or grade.
    - **Example (Review):** She passed her final exams *with flying colours*, securing a place at her first-choice university.
- **with a view to**
    - **Explanation:** With the aim or intention of doing something.
    - **Example (Report):** The company invested in new technology *with a view to* improving efficiency and reducing costs.

Phrases with WITHOUT:

- **without a doubt**
    - **Explanation:** Certainly; definitely.
    - **Example (Essay):** Leonardo da Vinci was, *without a doubt*, one of the most multi-talented individuals in history.
- **without fail**
    - **Explanation:** Always; in every case, without any exception.
    - **Example (Letter):** Please ensure you submit your weekly progress report by Friday at 5 p.m. *without fail*.
- **without warning**
    - **Explanation:** Suddenly and unexpectedly.
    - **Example (Report):** The storm hit the coastal town *without warning*, causing considerable damage to property.