Help With: Prepositions II

Prepositions
A preposition helps define the relationship between the noun and some other word in the sentence. Prepositions are generally used to indicate time, place or location.

The Object of a Preposition
The noun or pronoun that follows the preposition is its object. In the prepositional phrases below, notice how the preposition relates to the noun. The prepositions are underlined; the nouns (or objects) are italicized.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>on the table</th>
<th>with the red cover</th>
<th>under the papers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>for the class</td>
<td>about Jane Austen</td>
<td>behind the plant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prepositions can have more than one object. When a prepositional phrase contains two or more objects, the objects are said to be compound.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>without errors or mistakes</th>
<th>on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>between you and me</td>
<td>with pepperoni, olives, and mushrooms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prepositional Phrases
A prepositional phrase consists of the preposition, the noun or pronoun that is its object, and other words which modify the object. In the prepositional phrase with the red cover, with is the preposition, cover is the object of the preposition, and the and red modify the word cover.

A prepositional phrase can act as either an adjective or an adverb. When prepositional phrases function as adjectives, they answer the question “Which one?” For example:

The book on the desk belongs to Margaret.  Which book? The one on the desk.
The man in the suit is the teacher.  Which man? The one in the suit.
I want the hat with the bow.  Which hat? The one with the bow.

When prepositional phrases function as adverbs, they answer the questions How? When? Where? For example:

The car sped down the street.  Sped where? down the street
We swam on Tuesday.  Swam when? on Tuesday
I decorated the hat with flowers.  Decorated how? with flowers
During class, he read her note.  Read when? during class

Many long introductory phrases begin with prepositional phrases. Such phrases should end with a comma. Notice how these italicized phrases modify the underlined verb or verb phrases after the comma.

On Sunday afternoons, Mrs. Potter always works in her flower garden.
Between 1991 and 1997, the company grew rapidly.
In two years and three months, he will be graduating from college.

Avoid Ending a Sentence with a Preposition
In formal writing, avoid ending a sentence with a preposition, especially when such a preposition would serve no purpose. For example:

☒ Where are you going to?  ☒ When is it at?  ☒ Where is it at?