

Lesson 29 Grammar (1) – part 2
Nouns + Prepositions



Many nouns are followed by the same prepositions as their related adjective or verb. Compare:

- Are you **satisfied** *with* the way that the business is being run? *and*
- The shareholders have expressed **satisfaction** *with* the way the business is being run.

A few nouns are followed by different prepositions. Compare:

- They became **fond** *of* each other at school. *and*
- Their **fondness** *for* each other grew and many years later they married.

Other nouns like this and their corresponding adjective or verb are **proud of/pride in**, **ashamed of/shame about/at**.

Some nouns take a preposition where their related verb does not. Compare:

- They're going to **ban** smoking in restaurants. *and*
- I would support a **ban** *on* smoking in restaurants.

Other nouns like this include **admiration for**, **amazement at**, **discussion about/on**, **improvement in**, **influence on**, **interview with**, **lack of**. Note that many other nouns are commonly followed by **of**-phrases which indicate possession, a property, or classify the noun by describing what it relates to. Compare:

- He **described** the conductor as moving his arms like a windmill. *and*
- His **description** *of* the conductor was very funny.

Exercise 1

Gap-fill

- | | | | | | |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|-------|---------|-------------|
| admiration | advice | amazement | shame | cruelty | discussion |
| improvement | influence | interview | lack | pride | vaccination |

1. I am against any form of _____ *to* animals and would support a ban on hunting.
2. Maggie is still in hospital, but there has been a big _____ *in* her condition in the last couple of days.
3. Maurice took great _____ *in* his cooking, and was always eager to talk about his recipes.
4. The website is full of useful _____ *about/on* how to lose weight.
5. In her _____ *with* The Daily Herald, the Finance Minister denied that she plans to rise taxes.
6. I have the greatest _____ *for* people who work full time and also study for the university degree.
7. We had a long _____ *about/on* the relative merits of CDs and records.
8. He confessed his _____ *at/about* not having spent more time with his children when they were young.
9. I had to have a _____ *against* typhoid before entering the country.
10. Benny Carter had a significant _____ *on* the development of British jazz.
11. She stared in _____ *at* the sigh that met her eyes - Dave had shaved all his hair off.
12. There is a severe _____ *of* affordable housing in the city and many people are homeless.

Some nouns can be followed by **of + -ing** but not usually a **to-infinitive**:

- He's got into the **habit of biting** his nails when he's nervous.

Other nouns like this include **cost, effect, fear, likelihood, possibility, probability, problem, prospect, risk, sign**.

Some nouns can be followed by a **to-infinitive** but not usually **of + -ing**:

- His unhappy childhood explains his **reluctance to talk** about his parents.

Other nouns like this include **ability, attempt, concern, decision, desire, determination, failure, inability, permission, proposal, reason, refusal, (un)willingness**. Note that many of these nouns can also be used with other prepositions + **ing** (e.g. **attempt at -ing, reason for -ing**, etc.).

Exercise 2

Complete the sentences with a noun from I and II. Use either **of + ing** or **to + infinitive**

ability	cost	decision	failure
fear	possibility	reason	risk
sign		unwillingness	

acknowledge	allow	buy
fly	get	remember
stop	transmit	win
worry		

1. My mother recently overcome her _____ and had a holiday in South Africa.
2. The show has been failing now for two days and shows no _____.
3. The government has defended its _____ coal meaning in the national park.
4. Your blood pressure is a little high, but there is no _____ about it.
5. She was kept in isolation to reduce the _____ the virus to other people in the hospital.
6. The exercise tests children's _____ a random sequence of numbers.
7. The manager was sacked after his team's _____ promotion from the second division.
8. The _____ new cars in Europe is expected to fall in the next year.
9. I knew that there was little _____ the job with so many applicants.
10. It is very difficult to work with Chris because of his _____ that he ever makes mistakes.

Some nouns can sometimes be followed either by **of + -ing** or a **to-infinitive** with a similar meaning, usually after **the**:

- Do staff have *the opportunity of taking* unpaid leave? (or ...*the opportunity to take*...)
- The aim of providing* clean drinking water has been achieved. (or *The aim to provide*...)

Other nouns like this include **ambition, idea, option, plan**.

However, some nouns, such as **chance, sense** and **way**, have more than one meaning and are followed either by **of + -ing** or a **to-infinitive** depending on which meaning is used. Compare:

- What's the **chance of throwing** five heads when you throw a coin five times?
(= likelihood; *not ...chance to throw...*) *and*
- Will you get the **chance to visit** Miki in Japan? (= opportunity; *not ...of visiting...*)
- He didn't have the **sense to move** away from the puddle of water as the bus went past.
(= good judgement; *not ...sense of moving...*) *and*
- Everyone was very friendly and she had a **sense of belonging** within a few days of moving to her new school. (= feeling; *not ...sense to belong...*)
- I've got a **way of cooking** rice perfectly every time. (= method; or ...*way to cook*...) *and*
- She has a really funny **way of speaking**. (= manner; *not ...way to speak*)

Notice also that **of + -ing** usually follows **no/every/the sole/the slightest/(not) any/with the + intention**, but that we can use either **of + -ing** or a **to-infinitive** in most other cases. Compare:

- I have **no intention of lending** Dan any more money. (*not ...no intention to lend...*) *and*
- He announced his **intention to stand** in the election. (or ...*intention of standing*...)

Exercise 3

Choose **of + ing** or **to + infinitive**. Sometimes both options are correct

1. Although Debbie said she would think about it, she never had the slightest intention of _____ my suggestion.
 - a) of accepting
 - b) to accept
2. It's going to be cloudy tonight so there is only a fifty-fifty chance _____ the eclipse of the Moon.
 - a) of seeing
 - b) to see
3. It's pouring with rain. I hope David had the sense _____ an umbrella with him.
 - a) of taking
 - b) to take
4. The head of the company repeated his intention _____ on his 65th birthday.
 - a) to retire
 - b) of retiring
5. When the History Department closed she was given the option _____ another job.
 - a) of taking
 - b) to take
6. Martha had a very unusual way _____, keeping her feet firmly on the floor and waiving her arms around her head.
 - a) of dancing
 - b) to dance



Exercise 4.

Complete the sentences with appropriate prepositions

1. There are some differences _____ British and American English.
 - a) in
 - b) between
- 2 Money isn't the solution _____ every problem.
 - a) to
 - b) for
- 3 There has been an increase _____ the amount of traffic using this road.
 - a) in
 - b) on
- 4 The advantage _____ having a car is that you don't have to rely on public transport.
 - a) in
 - b) of
- 5 There are many advantages _____ being able to speak a foreign language.
 - a) in
 - b) of
- 6 Everything can be explained. There's a reason _____ everything.
 - a) of
 - b) for
- 7 When Paul left home, his attitude _____ his parents seemed to change.
 - a) with
 - b) to
- 8 Ben and I used to be good friends, but I don't have much contact _____ him now.
 - a) to
 - b) with
- 9 There has been a sharp rise _____ property prices in the past few years.
 - a) for
 - b) in
- 10 What was Sarah's reaction _____ the news?
 - a) to
 - b) on

11 If I give you the camera, can you take a picture _____ me?

a) for

b) of

12 The company has rejected the workers' demands _____ a rise _____ pay.

a) for; in

b) about; on

13 What was the answer _____ question 3 in the test?

a) for

b) to

14 The fact that Jane was offered a job has no connection _____ the fact that she is a friend of the managing director.

a) on

b) to



Exercise 5

Put in, to or at.

1 They apologised _____ me for what happened.

a) in

b) to

c) at

2 I glanced _____ my watch to see what time it was.

a) in

b) to

c) at

3 Please don't shout _____ me! Try to calm down.

a) in

b) to

c) at

4 I saw Sue as I was cycling along the road. I shouted _____ her, but she didn't hear me.

a) in

b) to

c) at

5 Don't listen _____ what he says. He doesn't know what he's talking about.

a) in

b) to

c) at

6 What's so funny? What are you laughing _____?

a) in

b) to

c) at

7 Could I have a look _____ your magazine, please?

a) in

b) to

c) at

8 I'm lonely. I need somebody to talk _____.

a) in

b) to

c) at

9 She was so angry she threw a book _____ the wall.

a) in

b) to

c) at

10 The woman sitting opposite me on the train kept staring _____ me.

a) in

b) to

c) at

11 Can I speak _____ you a moment? There's something I want to ask you.

a) in

b) to

c) at