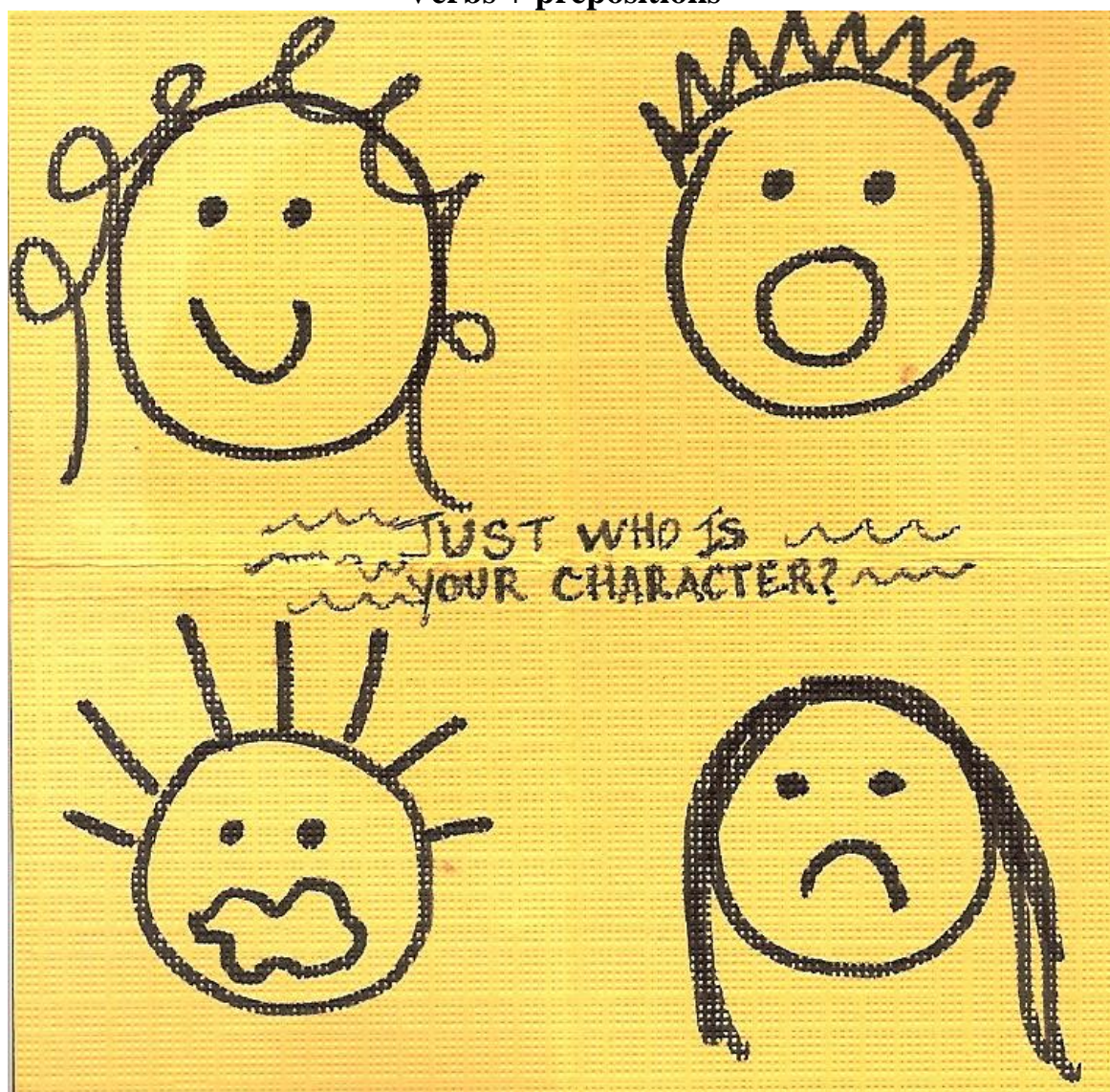


Grammar

Verbs + prepositions



Some verbs are frequently followed by particular prepositions. This table shows some common verb + preposition combinations:

| | <i>about</i> | <i>after</i> | <i>for</i> | <i>of</i> | <i>on</i> | <i>with</i> |
|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| <i>agree</i> | ✓ | | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| <i>argue</i> | ✓ | | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| <i>ask</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| <i>care</i> | ✓ | | ✓ | | | |
| <i>enquire (or inquire)</i> | ✓ | ✓ | | | | |
| <i>know</i> | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| <i>learn</i> | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| <i>talk</i> | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

about usually means 'concerning a particular thing':

- They began to **learn about** nutrition when they were at primary school.

We use **care about** to talk about something we are (not) concerned about:

- He doesn't seem to **care about** the effect smoking has on him.

after is used with **ask** and **enquire** meaning to try to get information about a person (but not a thing), particularly concerning their health. Compare:

- I'm phoning to **ask/enquire after** Mrs Brown in Ward 4. (*or ...ask/enquire about...*) *and*
- He got angry when they **asked/enquired about** his private life. (*not ...asked/enquired after...*)

for is used with **ask** to talk about what people want:

- He finished the drink quickly and **asked for** another.

and with **care** to talk about doing the necessary things for someone or something in order to keep them in good health or condition:

- Jan **cared for** her disabled mother until her death last year. (*or Jan took care of...*)

or to mean 'like', particularly in negative sentences, and to mean 'want' in offers. Both of these uses of **care for** are rather formal:

- I don't **care for** the theatre much. Would you **care for** a cup of coffee?

of is used with **talk**, **know**, and **learn** to talk about discussing, having or getting information:

- Diane went recently to Laos and can **talk of** nothing else. (*or less formally '...talk about...'*)
- The whole country **knew of** Churchill's love of cigars. (*or less formally '...knew about...'*)
- I have just **learnt of** the death of Dr Brown. (*or less formally '...learnt about...'*)

We use **ask of** when we make or talk about requests:

- I have a favour to **ask of** you and your sister.

on is used with **talk** and **agree** to mean 'concerned with a particular topic':

- I was asked to **talk on** my research. (*or ...to talk about...*)
- We **agreed on** a time to meet. (usually there has been previous discussion or disagreement.)

Notice that we use **agree to** to say that someone allows something to happen:

- Once the government **agreed to** the scheme it went ahead without delay.

with is used with **argue** and **talk** when we go on to mention the person involved:

- I used to **argue/talk with** Les for hours.

We use **agree with** to say that two people have the same opinion:

- Adam thinks we should accept the offer, and I **agree with** him.

and to say that we approve of a particular idea or action:

- I **agree with** letting children choose the clothes they wear. (*or I agree about/on...*)

or to say that two descriptions are the same:

- Tom's story **agreed with** that of his son.

Exercise 1

Choose the appropriate answer.

1. When I phoned the hospital to enquire _____ Ricky, I was told that he's gone home.
a) after
b) on
c) about
2. I only advertised the car for sale on Wednesday, but by the end of the week ten people had phoned to ask _____ it.
a) after
b) for
c) about
3. We can learn a great deal _____ the oceans by studying even a small piece of coral.
a) after

- b) of
c) about
4. I did not agree _____ a word of what she said.
a) to
b) with
c) for
5. Professor Owen is giving a talk _____ the Romans in Lecture Hall 1.
a) of
b) with
c) on
6. I had to care _____ my elderly parents when they both became ill.
a) for
b) after
c) about
7. For many years we have been arguing _____ changes in the way the college is managed.
a) for
b) on
c) with
8. She didn't know _____ her stepbrother's existence until her mother died.
a) off
b) about
c) on



Exercise 2

Fill in the gaps

of about

of

with

for

on

after

with/to

of/ about

on/to

after/about

1. 'If you want to enquire _____ a motor insurance quotation, please press 1.'
2. I hope you're brothers feeling better soon. When you see him, tell him I asked _____ him.
3. I first learnt _____ his decision to resign when it was announced on the radio last night.
4. We're going to talk _____ the council about the possibility of planting some new trees in the park.
5. I don't care _____ pop music at all. I much prefer classical music.
6. The teacher says we've got to do the test, so there's no point in arguing _____ it.
7. The government has agreed _____ a public inquiry into the helicopter crash.
8. If you know _____ any reasons why you should not be given medical insurance, you must declare then here.
9. "John can be really stupid sometimes." You should not talk _____ your brother like that."
10. I'm calling to enquire _____ Mr Dawes, who was operated on last night.
11. She's always arguing _____ her parents about what to watch on television.
12. I know it's a lot to ask _____ you, but would you look after the children while I'm in Japan on business?
13. The course was brilliant. We learnt _____ using the Internet in language learning.
14. Dan said he'll try to fix my car. "What does he know _____ cars?"
15. I don't think the government cares enough _____ nursery education to fund it properly.
16. After hours of discussion, the committee finally agreed _____ the amount of money to donate.



Exercise 3

Choose the appropriate answer

1. What's happened _____ Mike? He should be here.
 - a) about
 - b) with
 - c) to
2. 'Do you know a band called Glass Onion?'

'I've never heard _____ them.'

 - a) from

- b) about
c) of
3. The course consists _____ ten two-hour lessons plus a tutorial.
a) of
b) for
c) with
4. Do you believe _____ ghosts?
a) for
b) about
c) in
5. She accused him _____ stealing her bag.
a) with
b) about
c) of
6. Who does this bag belong _____ ?
a) to
b) with
c) for
7. I complained _____ the noise that the builders were making.
a) about
b) for
c) to
8. I agree _____ Martha. She's absolutely right.
a) to
b) on
c) with
9. We divided the cake _____ five pieces - one piece for each of us.
a) into
b) between
c) among
10. We may go hiking on Sunday. It depends _____ the weather.
a) about
b) on
c) for
11. 'Why are you laughing _____ me? '
'You've got your shirt on inside out.'
a) to
b) on
c) at
12. She suffers _____ headaches.
a) on
b) from
c) about
13. 'What do you know _____ electronics? '
'Not much.'

- a) on
- b) about
- c) of

14. They blamed the pilot _____ the crash.

- a) for
- b) about
- c) with

15. I got _____ the bus and walked to my office.

- a) out
- b) away
- c) off

Exercise 4

Gap-fill

coming wrapped turn kicks spread come took picked put pass

1. I seem to have _____ out in a rash.
2. This is urgent, so don't _____ it off.
3. I feel tired and achy, I must be _____ down with flu.
4. It's too good an offer to _____ down.
5. The plane _____ off smoothly.
6. The search party _____ out over the fields.
7. Henry _____ up a hitchhiker on his way to London.
8. Please don't _____ this information on to anyone else.
9. Lesley is completely _____ up in her studies at the moment.
10. The match _____ off at 10 pm.

Exercise 5

Put in the correct preposition

1. Please come _____ once. We have a big problem.
2. She worked very hard and _____ last she managed to pass the exam.
3. We need to be _____ time or my grandmother will start to get anxious.
4. It feels like owning a house is _____ the ordinary. I'll never be able to do it.
5. We thought about it a lot and _____ last we decided to buy a new flat.
6. We watched a film _____ a change. Usually we read.
7. She was really _____ danger for a few minutes in the rough sea, but luckily a lifeguard saw her.
8. I went to the bookshop and _____ chance I found a really interesting book about Switzerland.

9. He walked into the kitchen and _____ his surprise there was food all over the floor.

10. She drinks a litre of water every day _____ fail.

11. The little girl broke the toy _____ purpose because she was so angry.