

Prepositions

Background Information

A **preposition** is a word that shows the relationship between two words in a sentence. Examples of prepositions are: on, in, under.

Prepositions come before a noun or pronoun. In fact, the word preposition comes from the Latin and Greek words for “to put before.” The noun or pronoun preceded by a preposition is known as the **object of a preposition**. An article might appear between a noun or pronoun and a preposition. In the sentence, “The cat is on the bed,” “on” is the preposition that links “cat” and “bed.” Bed is the object of the preposition.

Prepositions do not always exist as single words. A **compound preposition** is made up of two or more words grouped together. Examples: in addition to, in front of, in the corner of.

The grammar symbol for the preposition is a green crescent. It can be compared to a bridge, showing the relationship between (connecting) two things.

ACTIVITY 1

Getting to Know Prepositions

Purpose

To become familiar with prepositions and to understand their function.

Material

Slips of white paper.

Pencil.

Green coloring pencil.

Vase.

Flower.

Box of grammar symbols.

Language Arts journals and pencils.

Presentation

- Most Montessori teachers introduce this concept in Year 1 and review if needed in Year 2.
- Announce that the students will have an opportunity to investigate another interesting part of speech: prepositions.
- Place the vase and the flower on the mat, with the flower on the students' left.
- In pencil, print the words "the red flower" on a slip of paper, and pass the slip to a student.
- Invite the student to read the phrase aloud and place it by the corresponding object on the mat.
- On another slip of paper, print the words "the glass vase," and pass the slip to a different student.
- Invite the student to read the phrase aloud and place it by the corresponding object on the mat.
- On a third slip of paper, print the word "in" in green, and insert it between the two phrases. Example: the red flower in the glass vase.
- Invite the student to place the correct grammar symbol above each word in the phrase, except "in." Invite the student to put the flower in the vase.
- Continue this activity by printing other prepositions on slips of paper and placing them on top of the previous preposition. With each new preposition, encourage students to take turns reading the new phrase and making the objects

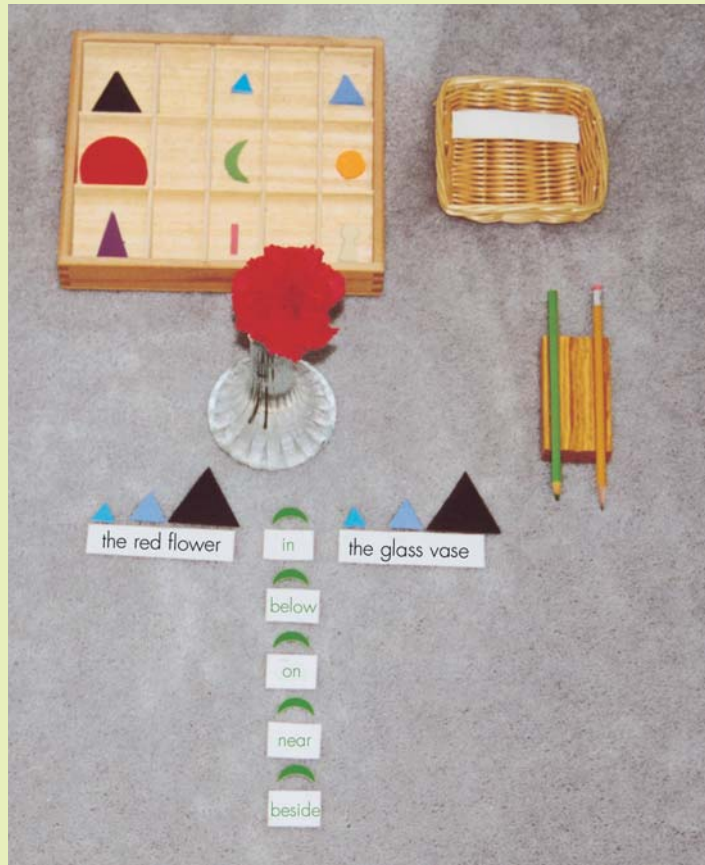


match. Example: the red flower beside the glass vase; the red flower behind the glass vase; the red flower behind the glass vase; the red flower near the glass vase; the red flower under the glass vase. (With this last example students will notice that this preposition does not suit the phrase very well.)

- After each student has had a turn, display the prepositions in a column between the two phrases.
- Point to the column and announce to the students that prepositions show the relationship between words, and come before their object.
- Present the symbol of the preposition, a green crescent, and explain that it is the symbol for words that show the relationship between two things. It is like a bridge between the two things.
- Invite a student to place the green crescent above the appropriate word in the original phrase, as well as above the other prepositions.
- Ask the students to record the phrases and prepositions in their journals and draw the appropriate grammar symbol above each word.

Extensions

- In pairs, practice prepositions, one student asking the other to move a classroom object. Example: Please put the pencil on the desk. Please put the



pencil in the desk. Take turns giving each other simple commands.

- Set up a scavenger hunt. Hide an object in the classroom. (To add interest, wrap the object in colored paper.) On small slips of blank paper, write a series of clues to help a classmate find the object, and place these notes in appropriate spots around the classroom. For example, the first clue (left where a classmate can easily find it) might be “look under your chair.” When the classmate looks under the chair, he/she will find another clue, such as “pick up the plant on the windowsill.” Give five to ten clues to lead the classmate to the object.

ACTIVITY 2

Understanding the Placement of Prepositions

Purpose

To understand how the placement of the preposition affects meaning.

Material

Slips of white paper.

Pencil.

Green coloring pencil.

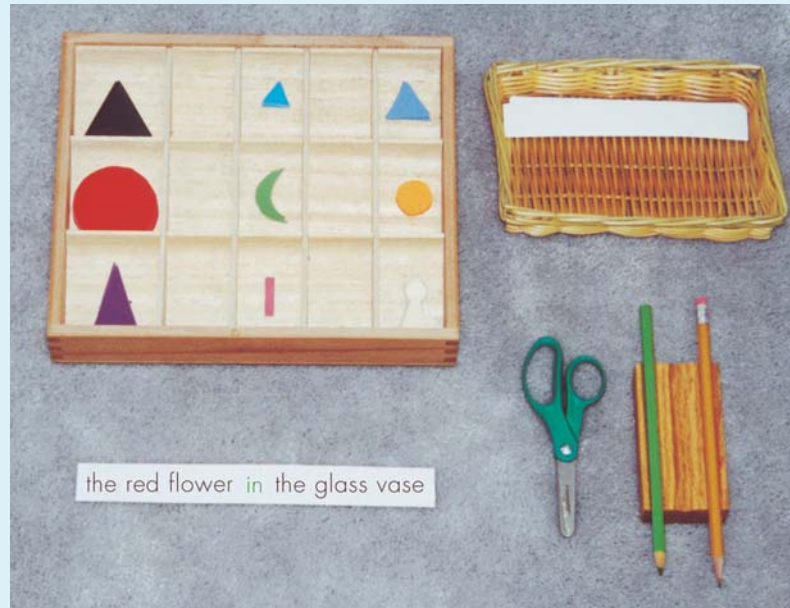
Box of grammar symbols.

Scissors.

Language Arts journals and pencils.

Presentation

- Most Montessori teachers introduce this concept in Year 1 and review if needed in Year 2.
- Announce that the students will have an opportunity to investigate more about how prepositions are placed in a sentence.
- On a blank slip of paper, print the phrase from the previous activity: the red flower in the glass vase. (Remember to isolate the preposition by printing the word “in” in green.)
- Using the scissors, cut the phrase into three parts so that the preposition stands by itself: the red flower in the glass vase.



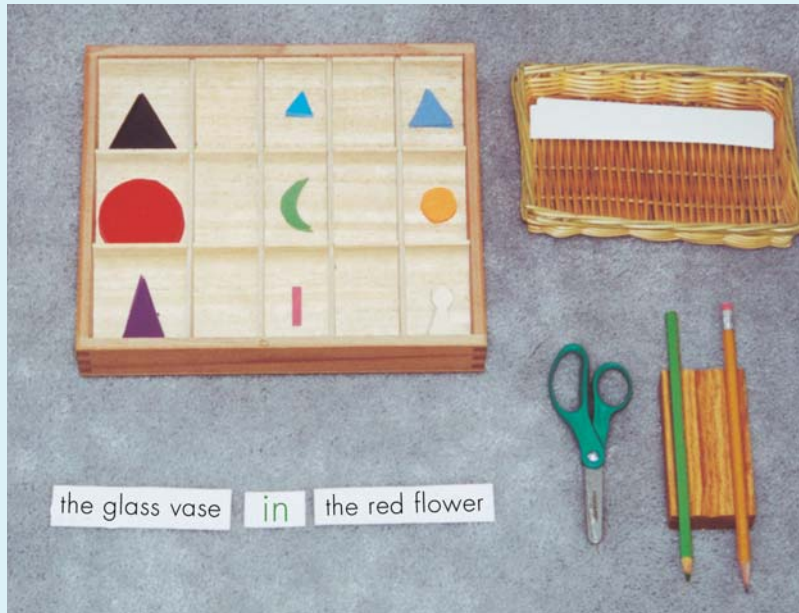
- Invite a student to rearrange the three slips of paper as many ways as she/he can. Does the phrase still make sense?
- Invite a different student to return the phrase to its original order and place the appropriate symbol over each word.
- Continue this activity in the same manner, with different phrases. Examples:
the student on the swing
the sugar in the cake
the house by the woods
the airplane in the sky
- Discuss with the students the fact that even when the words appear in a different order, sometimes the phrase will make sense and sometimes it will not. If

the phrase does make sense, the meaning will still differ from the original order.

- Ask the students to copy the phrases in their journals and draw the appropriate grammar symbol above each word.

Extension

- Form a small group. Take a ball and place it in various positions around the classroom. Examples: above the head, under a chair, next to Jasmine, between Jasmine and Terry. Allow the students to make sentences describing the location of the ball: The ball is above your head. The ball is under



the chair. The ball is next to Jasmine. Repeat until everyone in the group has had a chance to hold the ball in a variety of positions or make a sentence.

ACTIVITY 3

Identifying Prepositions in a Small Environment



Purpose

To practice using prepositions to link phrases.

Material

Items to make a small environment (e.g., barnyard, furnished dollhouse).

Labels that make phrases mounted on white paper. Phrases should include an article, an adjective, and a noun.

Labels with prepositions written on them and mounted on green paper.

Language Arts journals and pencils.

Presentation

- Most Montessori teachers introduce this concept in Year 1.
- Encourage the students to work together to arrange the objects in the small environment.
- Place the labels on the mat, in two piles: phrases and prepositions.
- Invite a student to choose two phrase labels and one preposition label.

- Encourage the student to arrange the labels in a logical manner and place the objects in relation to each other as indicated by the arrangement.
Example: the pink pig near the brown horse.
- Invite the students to take turns repeating the above process.
- Ask the students to record the phrases in journals and draw the correct symbol above each word.

Extension

- Create other phrases and arrange the objects in the small environment so that they reflect the phrases.
Example: the pink pig near the red barn.



ACTIVITY 4

Working with Compound Prepositions

Purpose

To understand and recognize compound prepositions.

Material

Heading that reads: Compound Prepositions

Labels that make phrases mounted on white paper. (Phrases should include an article, an adjective, and a noun. Phrases should relate to the small environment animals and enclosure.)

Labels with compound prepositions written on them and mounted on green paper. (Examples: in front of; in addition to; kitty corner to; at the side of; for the use of; in the corner of.)

Two animals from the small farm environment (example: pig, cow) and the animal enclosure (example: shed, barn, corral).

Language Arts journals and pencils.

Presentation

- Most Montessori teachers introduce this concept in Year 2 and review if needed in Year 3.
- Invite several students to come to the mat.
- Announce that the students will have an opportunity to learn something new about prepositions.
- Place the small environment animals and the enclosure on the mat.
- Put out a beginning and an ending phrase mounted on white that read for example: The pig is... ...the barn.
- Put the pig in the barn and invite a student to finish the above phrase by stating a preposition that expresses where the pig is in relation to the barn. Example: The pig is in the barn.
- Now move the pig in front of the barn. Ask the students: Now where is the pig?
- The students will answer: The pig is in front of the barn.
- Bring out the compound preposition (in front of) mounted on green card and place it between the beginning and ending phrases.
- Invite a student to read the sentence: The pig is in front of the barn.
- Now move the pig to the side of the barn. Ask the students: Now where is the pig?
- The students will answer: The pig is at the side of the barn.
- Move the first compound preposition up, creating a space between the beginning and ending phrases. Bring out the next compound preposition (at the side of) mounted on green card and replace it with the first one.

- Invite a student to read the sentence: The pig is at the side of the barn.
- Explain to the students that a compound preposition is made up of several words that indicate the relation of one noun to another.
- Put out the other compound prepositions.
- Invite the students to use one of the new compound prepositions to create a new sentence and then use the small environment animals and enclosure to

demonstrate the sentence. Examples:
The cow is kitty corner to the barn. The pig and cow are in the corner of the barn.

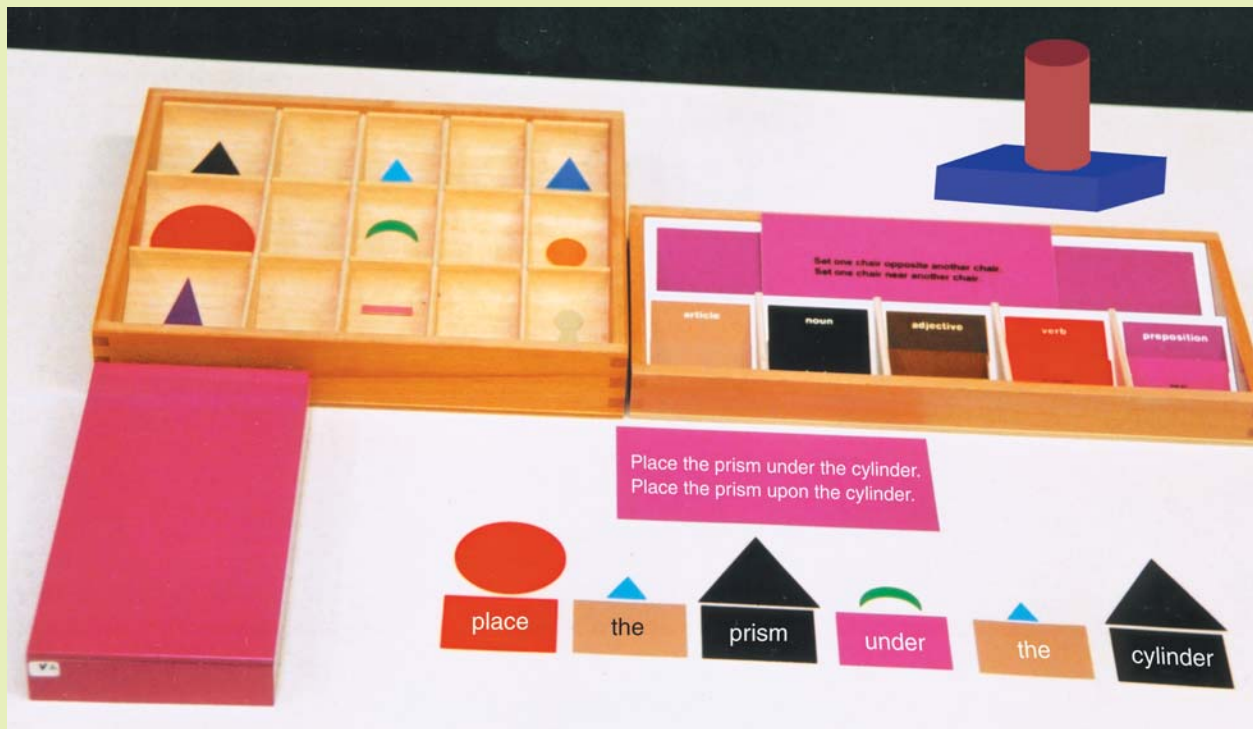
- Place the heading: Compound Prepositions at the top of the mat over the compound prepositions.
- Ask the students to write three to five sentences in their journals with compound prepositions.

Extension

- Continue to use the compound prepositions with the small environment.

ACTIVITY 5

Learning About Prepositions Using the Grammar Boxes



Purpose

To gain further practice in using prepositions.

Material

Grammar box V.

Filling box VA.

Box of grammar symbols.

Cylinder.

Prism.

Language Arts journals and pencils.

Presentation

- Most Montessori teachers introduce this concept in Year 1 and review if needed in Year 2.
- Invite a student to a mat on which all materials have been placed.
- Announce that today the student will practice using prepositions.
- Remove the cards (set VA) from filling box VA and shuffle them.
- Encourage the student to sort the cards into the appropriate compartments of grammar box V.

- Place a rectangular phrase card on the mat and invite the student to read the phrase aloud.

- Encourage the student to reproduce the first phrase using the small word cards found in grammar box V: Place the prism under the cylinder.



- Invite the student to place the correct grammar symbol above each word.
- Encourage the student to read the phrase aloud again and perform the action.
- Invite the student to change the order of the nouns in the phrase. Discuss with the student how changing the nouns, changes the phrase's meaning.
- Repeat, using the second phrase on the phrase card, and then with other phrase cards.
- Remind the student that the words "under" and "upon" are called prepositions, words that show the relationship between two words in a sentence.
- Ask the student to write two or three sentences, each containing at least one preposition, in her/his journal and draw the appropriate grammar symbols above each word.

- In later activities, present the five remaining preposition filling boxes in the same manner:

VA — same simple commands with different prepositions

VB — same simple commands with different prepositions

VC — simple commands with prepositions

VD — simple commands with prepositions with opposite actions

Extension

- Hide an object in the classroom. Write a series of notes with prepositions that will help a classmate find the object. Example: look in your desk drawer; (in desk drawer) go to the windowsill; (on windowsill) look behind the classroom door. Pass the first note to the classmate, and encourage her/him to follow the clues to find the object.