The adjective *bad* means “in poor spirits” or is used to describe the degree of something. When it follows a linking verb, it is a predicate adjec- tive describing the condition of the subject.

She feels **bad**. (predicate adjective referring to the condition of the subject *she*)

That was a **bad** mistake. (adjective modifying *mistake*)

Never write *I feel badly* or *You look badly* when referring to the condition of the subject. These statements say that you feel (touch someone or some- thing) poorly or that someone looks (sees things) poorly.

## Prepositions

*Prepositions* are connecting words that show the relationship among words in a sentence. Nouns, pronouns, gerund phrases, or noun clauses can be the objects of prepositions. Together with the preposition they form a *prepositional phrase*. These phrases serve as adjectives modifying nouns and pronouns or as adverbs modifying verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs.

Put it **in** the box. (The noun *box* is the object of *in*; the prepositional phrase serves as an adverb and modiﬁes the verb *put*.)

Give this to the usher **on** the right. (The noun *right* is the object of *on*; the phrase is used as an adjective, modifying the noun *usher*.)

**After** telling them a story, he put the children to bed. (The gerund phrase *telling them a story* is the object of the preposition *after*.)

**Because of** what they told us, we cut our trip short. (The noun clause

*what they told us* is the object of the preposition *because of*.) Following is a list of some of the most commonly used prepositions.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| about | between | off |
| above | beyond | on |
| across | by | over |
| after | down | since |
| against | during | through |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| along | except | to |
| among | for | toward |
| around | from | under |
| at | in | until |
| before | inside | up |
| behind | into | upon |
| below | like | with |
| beneath | near | within |
| beside | of | without |

### *Phrasal Prepositions*

Although most prepositions are one word, some consist of phrases and are called *phrasal prepositions*. They are used frequently in spoken and writ- ten communication.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| because of | in case of | instead of |
| by way of | on behalf of | on account of |
| in care of | in spite of | on the side of |

**In care of (c/o)** is a common symbol used in correspondence. (*In care of* is a phrasal preposition that serves as the subject of the verb *is.*) They traveled **by way of** Vermont. (The phrasal preposition *by way of* modiﬁes the verb *traveled*. The noun *Vermont* is the object of the

phrase.)

### *Common Errors to Avoid*

Prepositions are among the most overworked words in the English lan- guage. Use the following guidelines to avoid committing two of the more common errors.

1. Avoid putting unnecessary prepositions at the end of sentences.

**Incorrect:** Where are my keys **at**? **Correct:** Where are my keys?

**Incorrect:** Can I go **with**?

**Correct:** Can I go? Can I go **with you**? **Incorrect:** Where did that remote get **to**? **Correct:** Where is that remote?

1. In formal writing and business communications, avoid putting the preposition at the end of a sentence. Rewrite the sentence so that it has a correct prepositional phrase.

**Avoid:** They were not sure which college they should apply **to**. **Better:** They were not sure **to** which college they should apply.

(The preposition is now part of the phrase *to which college*.)

**Avoid:** Ask not whom the bell tolls **for**. **Better:** Ask not **for** whom the bell tolls.

### *Prepositions Used with Verbs*

These guidelines are not rigid. Winston Churchill once remarked, “This is the sort of English up with which I will not put.”

Obviously, there will be exceptions to the rule, particularly when prepo- sitions are used with verbs. In the quote by Churchill, the verb-preposition form is *to put up with*. In writing, however, it is best to recast the sentence to read “I will not put up with this sort of English.”

Prepositions are used with verbs to change the meaning slightly or to distinguish between people and objects.

accompany by (a person) accompany with (an object)

The president was **accompanied by** his wife.

The form was **accompanied with** a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Knowing when to use the right preposition with a verb can be a challenge. Some of the most commonly confused verb-preposition combinations are listed in Appendix B at the end of this book.

## Conjunctions

*Conjunctions* link words or groups of words to other parts of the sentence and show the relationship between them. The four basic conjunctions are coordinating conjunctions, correlative conjunctions, subordinating con- junctions, and linking adverbs.

### *Coordinating Conjunctions*

Coordinating conjunctions *and, but, or,* and *nor* join two or more elements of equal rank. The conjunctions *but* and *nor* often are used with the adverbs *never* or *not*.

The elements joined by coordinating conjunctions can be single words—nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns—or phrases or clauses. (Clauses are groups of words with a subject-verb combination such as *when she came to work* or *because they are sailing tomorrow*.)

The telescope **and** its lens were repaired. (nouns) We called **and** called, but no one answered. (verbs)

He is a sore **but** victorious player tonight. (adjectives) You can have it done quickly **or** thoroughly. (adverbs) She **and** I seldom agree on anything. (pronouns)

We can go over the river **or** through the woods. (prepositional phrases)

Did you know that he’s **never** eaten a hot dog, had a real root beer,

**nor** played miniature golf? (verb phrases)

She went home last night **and** found the jury summons waiting for her. (clauses)

### *Correlative Conjunctions*

*Correlative conjunctions* are coordinating conjunctions used in pairs, and they emphasize the elements being joined. Some of the most frequently used correlative conjunctions are as follows:

both . . . and either . . . or

neither . . . nor

not only . . . but also

Correlative conjunctions also join elements of *equal rank*. Make sure that the elements following each part of the construction are truly equal.

E-mail **either** Judith **or** Andy about the party. (nouns) It is **both** raining **and** snowing outside. (verb forms)

The trade talks were **neither** hostile **nor** overly friendly. (adjectives)

He **not only** installed a new DSL line **but also** added the latest CD burner. (verb phrases)

### *Subordinating Conjunctions*

Unlike the conjunctions described in the preceding section, *subordinating conjunctions* join elements of *unequal rank* in a sentence. These elements are usually a subordinate clause (a group of words with a subject-verb combination that cannot stand alone) and an independent clause. Follow- ing is a list of commonly used subordinating conjunctions.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| after | how | than | when |
| although | if | that | where |
| as | in order that | though | which |
| as much as | inasmuch as | unless | while |
| because | provided | until | who/whom |
| before | since | what | whoever/whomever |

Subordinating conjunctions can be used to introduce a sentence as well as to join elements within it. When a subordinate clause comes at the beginning of a sentence, it is followed by a comma. No comma is used when the subordinate clause comes at the end of the sentence.

**Before** we left the theater, I had to dry my eyes. I had to dry my eyes **before** we left the theater.

**Provided** the books arrive, we can start class Tuesday. We can start class Tuesday **provided** the books arrive.

**Restrictive and Nonrestrictive Clauses.** Some clauses provide addi- tional information about a person, place, or object within a sentence. When the clause is essential to the meaning of that sentence, it is known as a *restrictive clause*. When it is descriptive but not essential, it is called a *nonrestrictive clause*.

**Restrictive:** The city **that was built along the river** escaped the ﬁre. (The clause *that was built along the river*distinguishes this city from all others in the area.

The information is essential to the sentence.)

**Nonrestrictive:** The city, **which was built along the river**, escaped the ﬁre. (In this sentence, the clause *which was built along the river* is simply descriptive information.)

Notice that the subordinating conjunction changes from *that* in a restric- tive clause to *which* in a nonrestrictive clause. In general, *that* is used to indicate information essential to the meaning of the sentence. *Which* indi- cates information that is not essential.

To decide whether a clause is restrictive or nonrestrictive, eliminate the clause from the sentence and determine if doing so changes the meaning.

The accountant **who works for John** has been missing for three days.

The accountant, **who works for John**, has been missing for three days.

In the ﬁrst sentence, *who works for John* identiﬁes which accountant among several is missing. The second sentence implies that the *accountant*, as opposed to the receptionist or some other individual, has been missing. The information *who works for John* can be eliminated without changing the meaning of the sentence.

### *Linking Adverbs*

*Linking adverbs* are used to join two *independent clauses*, that is, clauses with a subject-verb combination that can stand alone. Linking adverbs

indicate the relationship between two ideas expressed in independent clauses. In general, linking adverbs reﬂect results, contrast, or continuation.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Results** | **Contrast** | **Continuation** |
| accordingly | nevertheless | furthermore |
| as a result | however | further |
| therefore | nonetheless | in addition |
| thus | conversely | also |

Linking adverbs can come at the beginning of the second clause they are joining. In such cases, they are usually preceded by a semicolon and followed by a comma. They also can stand within the second clause or sen- tence and often are set off by commas.

We arrived late at night; **however**, no one complained.

I fail to see your point; **furthermore**, your entire argument is off the subject.

The strike delayed shipment; **therefore**, your order will not be sent on the date we promised.

The train slipped off the track at Innsbruck; the passengers,

**accordingly**, had to continue by taxis.

The storm ruined two speakers; the band, **however**, had spare ones in the van.

## Interjections

*Interjections* are words used to express emotion or to catch the reader’s attention. Interjections are rarely used in formal or business writing but do appear in advertising and promotional material, ﬁction, informal writ- ing, and personal letters.

### *Common Interjections*

These are some of the most commonly used interjections:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ah | hey | no way |
| alas | hooray | oh |
| congratulations | hurry | ouch |
| good grief | my goodness | outstanding |
| great | never | ugh |
| help | no | wow |

### *Punctuation*

Strong interjections are punctuated with an exclamation point (*wow! ouch! hooray!).* The ﬁrst word following the exclamation point is capitalized because it is the ﬁrst word in a new sentence.

Milder interjections are set off by commas and often introduce a sen- tence (*indeed, yes, well*). The word following the comma is not capitalized because it is a continuation of the same sentence.

**Strong interjections: Excellent!** That was a perfect dive.

You may be saying, “**Hey!** Why is the coffee cold?”

**Mild interjections: No,** we can’t visit you this summer.

**Well,** I just thought I’d ask.