

Prepositional Phrases for Formal Contexts

Practice Worksheet for B2-C1 Learners

Essays, reports, formal emails and Cambridge writing tasks

Name: _____ Date: _____

Aim: Practise using formal prepositional phrases to show cause, contrast, purpose, condition, reference, result and other relationships between ideas.

Quick Reference

Review the phrases before you begin. Try to notice which phrases are followed by nouns or -ing forms.

Function	Useful phrases
Cause / reason	due to, owing to, because of, as a result of, by virtue of
Contrast	despite, in spite of, in contrast to, contrary to, notwithstanding
Purpose	for the purpose of, with the aim of, with a view to, in aid of
Condition	in case of, in the event of, in the absence of, subject to
Addition	in addition to, apart from, as well as, together with
Means / method	by means of, through the use of, with the help of
Time / sequence	prior to, following, subsequent to, in the course of
Reference / relation	with regard to, in relation to, in connection with, with respect to
Result / effect	as a result of, as a consequence of, in response to, in light of
Rules / standards	in accordance with, in compliance with, in line with, in keeping with
Exception	except for, with the exception of, save for
Viewpoint	from the perspective of, according to, in the view of

Exercise 1: Match the Function

Match each prepositional phrase with its function. Write the correct letter next to each phrase.

Phrase	Answer	Functions
1. in spite of	___	A. cause or reason
2. with regard to	___	B. contrast
3. owing to	___	C. purpose
4. in the event of	___	D. condition
5. with the aim of	___	E. addition
6. in accordance with	___	F. means or method
7. in addition to	___	G. time
8. in light of	___	H. reference
9. prior to	___	I. result or new evidence
10. with the exception of	___	J. rules or standards
11. by means of	___	K. exception
12. from the perspective of	___	L. viewpoint

Exercise 2: Choose the Best Phrase

Choose the best phrase to complete each formal sentence.

1. The workshop was postponed ___ unexpected staff shortages.
 - a) in contrast to
 - b) owing to
 - c) with respect to
2. ___ the high cost, the new system was approved.
 - a) Despite
 - b) Due to
 - c) Prior to
3. The report was written ___ evaluating the current training programme.
 - a) for the purpose of
 - b) in the event of
 - c) contrary to
4. ___ reliable evidence, no final decision can be made.
 - a) In accordance with
 - b) In the absence of
 - c) In addition to
5. I am writing ___ your recent enquiry about the course.
 - a) with regard to
 - b) as a result of
 - c) save for
6. All procedures must be carried out ___ official guidelines.
 - a) in contrast to
 - b) in accordance with
 - c) as well as
7. ___ previous studies, this research reached a different conclusion.
 - a) In contrast to
 - b) In aid of
 - c) In case of
8. The school revised its policy ___ parental feedback.
 - a) in response to
 - b) with the exception of
 - c) by virtue of
9. The new software was installed ___ improving efficiency.
 - a) with a view to
 - b) in opposition to
 - c) except for
10. ___ the interview, candidates must submit a short writing task.
 - a) Regardless of
 - b) Prior to
 - c) In connection with

Exercise 3: Complete the Sentences

Complete the sentences with phrases from the box. Use each phrase once.

in addition to	in light of
in relation to	as a result of
with the help of	subject to
in the course of	with the aim of
in compliance with	with the exception of

- The company introduced new safety measures _____ recent inspection results.
- The research examines motivation _____ exam performance.
- All documents must be stored _____ data protection regulations.
- The proposal was accepted, _____ several minor changes.
- _____ the investigation, several irregularities were discovered.
- The course was created _____ improving students' formal writing skills.
- _____ regular lessons, students receive weekly feedback.
- The event was cancelled _____ severe weather conditions.
- The issue was resolved _____ an external consultant.
- All staff attended the meeting, _____ the finance manager.

Exercise 4: Correct the Mistakes

Each sentence contains one mistake with a formal prepositional phrase. Rewrite the sentence correctly.

- Despite the project was expensive, it was approved.

- The programme was introduced with a view to improve attendance.

- I am writing in relation of your recent complaint.

- The report was prepared for the purpose to identify common problems.

- In the event to an emergency, please contact reception immediately.

- The decision was made in accordance to the regulations.

- Students were selected by virtue to their previous experience.

- Prior the meeting, all participants received the agenda.

Exercise 5: Rewrite in a More Formal Style

Rewrite each sentence using the phrase in brackets. Keep the meaning the same.

1. The meeting was cancelled because the weather was bad. (due to)

2. The school changed the timetable because parents complained. (in response to)

3. Before the exam, students should revise key vocabulary. (prior to)

4. I am writing about your recent application. (with regard to)

5. The course was created to improve students' writing skills. (with the aim of)

6. Although there were several problems, the event was successful. (despite)

7. The rules say that all visitors must sign in at reception. (in accordance with)

8. The report looks at stress and exam performance. (in relation to)

9. The company used new technology to reduce costs. (through the use of)

10. Everyone attended the meeting except Mr Carter. (with the exception of)

Exercise 6: Formal Email Practice

Complete the formal email with suitable prepositional phrases from the box. You do not need to use all the phrases.

with regard to	in addition to
prior to	in the event of
in accordance with	with the aim of
in response to	

Dear Ms Johnson,

I am writing _____ your recent enquiry about our exam preparation course.
 _____ the information available on our website, please find attached a detailed timetable.
 The course has been designed _____ helping students improve their formal writing and exam technique.
 All lessons are planned _____ the current exam requirements.
 _____ any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Kind regards,
 Daniel Morris

Exercise 7: Report Writing Practice

Complete the short report extract with suitable formal prepositional phrases. Then write one additional recommendation of your own.

This report was prepared _____ evaluating the effectiveness of the current after-school study programme. _____ the review, feedback was collected from students, parents and teachers.
 _____ the survey results, several changes are recommended. The programme is generally successful, but some students reported difficulties _____ time management and independent study.
 _____ these findings, the school should provide additional guidance before the start of each term.

Your recommendation:

Exercise 8: Controlled Writing

Write five formal sentences. Use one phrase from each category below.

Category	Choose one phrase	Your sentence
Cause	due to / owing to / as a result of	
Contrast	despite / in spite of / in contrast to	
Reference	with regard to / in relation to / with respect to	
Rules	in accordance with / in compliance with / in line with	
Result	in light of / in response to / as a consequence of	

Exercise 9: Exam-Style Paragraph

Write a short formal paragraph of 90-120 words on one of the topics below. Use at least five formal prepositional phrases.

Choose one topic:

- Should schools use more technology in lessons?
- Should companies allow employees to work from home?
- How can young people improve their writing skills?

Answer Key

Suggested answers are provided where more than one answer is possible.

Exercise 1

1. B, 2. H, 3. A, 4. D, 5. C, 6. J, 7. E, 8. I, 9. G, 10. K, 11. F, 12. L

Exercise 2

1. b, 2. a, 3. a, 4. b, 5. a, 6. b, 7. a, 8. a, 9. a, 10. b

Exercise 3

1. in light of
2. in relation to
3. in compliance with
4. subject to
5. In the course of
6. with the aim of
7. In addition to
8. as a result of
9. with the help of
10. with the exception of

Exercise 4

1. Despite the cost of the project, it was approved. / Although the project was expensive, it was approved.
2. The programme was introduced with a view to improving attendance.
3. I am writing in relation to your recent complaint. / I am writing with regard to your recent complaint.
4. The report was prepared for the purpose of identifying common problems.
5. In the event of an emergency, please contact reception immediately.
6. The decision was made in accordance with the regulations.
7. Students were selected by virtue of their previous experience.
8. Prior to the meeting, all participants received the agenda.

Exercise 5

1. The meeting was cancelled due to bad weather.
2. The school changed the timetable in response to parents' complaints.
3. Prior to the exam, students should revise key vocabulary.
4. I am writing with regard to your recent application.
5. The course was created with the aim of improving students' writing skills.
6. Despite several problems, the event was successful.
7. In accordance with the rules, all visitors must sign in at reception.
8. The report examines stress in relation to exam performance.
9. The company reduced costs through the use of new technology.
10. Everyone attended the meeting with the exception of Mr Carter.

Exercise 6

1. with regard to, 2. In addition to, 3. with the aim of, 4. in accordance with, 5. In the event of

Exercise 7

Suggested answer: This report was prepared for the purpose of evaluating the effectiveness of the current after-school study programme. In the course of the review, feedback was collected from students, parents and teachers. In light of / As a result of the survey results, several changes are recommended. The programme is generally successful, but some students reported difficulties in relation to time management and independent study. In response to these findings, the school should provide additional guidance before the start of each term.

Exercise 8

Answers will vary. Check that each sentence uses the phrase accurately and is followed by the correct grammatical structure.

Exercise 9

Answers will vary. Students should write a coherent formal paragraph and use at least five appropriate formal prepositional phrases.

Teacher Notes

- Level: B2-C1
- Suggested timing: 45-60 minutes, depending on how much writing practice you include.
- Follow-up idea: Ask students to highlight the function of each phrase in their paragraph: cause, contrast, reference, result, etc.
- Common correction point: after despite / in spite of, use a noun phrase or -ing form, not a full clause.