

# Preposition (*in/for/about, etc.*) + *-ing*

**A**

If a *preposition* (*in/for/about, etc.*) is followed by a *verb*, the verb ends in *-ing*. For example:

*preposition + verb (-ing)*

Are you interested	in	working	for us?
I'm not very good	at	learning	languages.
She must be fed up	with	studying.	
What are the advantages	of	having	a car?
This knife is only	for	cutting	bread.
How	about	playing	tennis tomorrow?
I bought a new bicycle	instead of	taking	a vacation.
Carol went to work	in spite of	feeling	sick.

**B**

Note the use of the following prepositions + *-ing*:

**before -ing and after -ing:**

- Before going out, I called Sarah. (*not* Before to go out)
- What did you do after finishing school?

You can also say "Before I went out . . ." and ". . . after you finished school."

**by -ing** (to say how something happens):

- The burglars got into the house by breaking a window and climbing in.
- You can improve your English by reading more.

**without -ing:**

- I ran ten miles without stopping.
- They climbed through the window without anybody seeing them. (*or . . . without being seen.*)
- She needs to work without people disturbing her. (*or . . . without being disturbed.*)
- It's nice to take a vacation without having to worry about money.

**C**

**To -ing**

To is often part of an *infinitive* (to do / to see, etc.):

- We decided to go out.
- Would you like to play tennis?

But to is also a *preposition* (like *in/for/about/from, etc.*):

- We drove from Houston to Chicago.
- I prefer tea to coffee.
- Are you looking forward to the weekend?

If a preposition is followed by a verb, the verb ends in *-ing* (*in doing / about going, etc.*) – see Section A. So, when to is a preposition and it is followed by a verb, you must say **to -ing**:

- I prefer driving to traveling by train. (*not* to travel)
- Are you looking forward to seeing Ann again? (*not* looking forward to see)

For *be/get used to -ing*, see Unit 58.

# Exercises

**57.1** Complete the sentences so that they mean the same as the sentences in parentheses.

- (Why is it useful to have a car?)  
What are the advantages of having a car \_\_\_\_\_ ?
- (I don't intend to lend you any money.)  
I have no intention of \_\_\_\_\_ .
- (Karen has a good memory for names.)  
Karen is good at \_\_\_\_\_ .
- (Mark won't pass the exam. He has no chance.)  
Mark has no chance of \_\_\_\_\_ .
- (Did you get into trouble because you were late?)  
Did you get into trouble for \_\_\_\_\_ ?
- (We didn't eat at home. We went to a restaurant instead.)  
Instead of \_\_\_\_\_ .
- (Tom thinks that working is better than doing nothing.)  
Tom prefers working to \_\_\_\_\_ .
- (Our team played well, but we lost the game.)  
Our team lost the game in spite of \_\_\_\_\_ .

**57.2** Complete the sentences using *by -ing*. Use one of the following (with the verb in the correct form):

borrow too much money ~~break a window~~ drive too fast stand on a chair turn the key

- The burglars got into the house by breaking a window \_\_\_\_\_ .
- I was able to reach the top shelf \_\_\_\_\_ .
- You start the engine of a car \_\_\_\_\_ .
- Kevin got himself into financial trouble \_\_\_\_\_ .
- You can put people's lives in danger \_\_\_\_\_ .

**57.3** Complete the sentences with an appropriate word. Use only one word each time.

- I ran ten miles without stopping \_\_\_\_\_ .
- He left the hotel without \_\_\_\_\_ his bill.
- It's a nice morning. How about \_\_\_\_\_ for a walk?
- I was surprised that she left without \_\_\_\_\_ good-bye to anyone.
- Before \_\_\_\_\_ to bed, I like to have some hot cocoa.
- We were able to translate the letter into English without \_\_\_\_\_ a dictionary.
- It was a very long trip. I was very tired after \_\_\_\_\_ on a train for 36 hours.
- I was annoyed because the decision was made without anybody \_\_\_\_\_ me.
- After \_\_\_\_\_ the same job for ten years, I felt I needed a change.

**57.4** For each situation, write a sentence with ... (*not*) *looking forward to*.

- You are going on vacation next week. How do you feel about this?  
I'm looking forward to going on vacation.
- Diane is a good friend of yours, and she is coming to visit you. So you will see her again soon. How do you feel about this? I'm \_\_\_\_\_ .
- You are going to the dentist tomorrow. You don't like to go to the dentist. How do you feel about this? I'm not \_\_\_\_\_ .
- Carol hates school, but she is graduating next summer. How does she feel about this?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- You like tennis. You've arranged to play tennis tomorrow. How do you feel about this?  
\_\_\_\_\_