

Lesson Plan: Prepositions in formal writing

Level	Advanced (C1–C2)
Time	60–90 minutes
Skills	Writing, vocabulary
Focus	With regard to, in terms of, on behalf of, in light of — formal prepositional phrases

OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Use complex prepositions and prepositional phrases correctly in formal writing
- Understand the precise meaning and typical context of each phrase
- Avoid overuse and choose prepositional phrases that add precision
- Produce formal written text using complex prepositions naturally

TARGET LANGUAGE (EXAMPLES)

Reference and perspective

- with regard to / with respect to: With regard to your application...
- in terms of: In terms of cost, the second option is preferable.
- as far as ... is concerned: As far as the budget is concerned, there is room for adjustment.
- in the context of: In the context of global trade, this decision carries significant weight.

Cause, reason, condition

- in light of: In light of the new evidence, we must revise our position.
- by virtue of: By virtue of her experience, she was the ideal candidate.
- on the grounds that: The claim was rejected on the grounds that it lacked sufficient evidence.
- in the event of: In the event of an emergency, please follow the evacuation procedure.

Representation and addition

- on behalf of: I am writing on behalf of the entire team.
- in addition to: In addition to the main findings, the report highlights...
- in accordance with: The decision was made in accordance with the company's policy.

LESSON PROCEDURE

1. Warm-up (10 min)

Task: Match the formal prepositional phrase to its simpler equivalent.

- 'with regard to' = about / concerning
- 'by virtue of' = because of / due to
- 'in the event of' = if

2. Presentation (15 min)

Task: Categorise by function: reference, cause, representation.

- Show how formal prepositional phrases signal register.
- Highlight common collocations: 'in light of recent events', 'on the grounds that the evidence suggests...'

3. Guided practice (10 min)

Task: Replace informal expressions with formal prepositional phrases.

- 'Because she was experienced, she got the job.' → 'By virtue of her experience, she was appointed.'
- 'About the budget issue...' → 'With regard to the budget...'

4. Writing task (25 min)

Task: Write a formal letter or report section using at least 5 complex prepositional phrases.

- Peer review: do they sound natural in context?

5. Error correction (5–10 min)

Task: Fix 5 errors in formal prepositional phrase usage.

EXTENSION / HOMEWORK

Choose one:

1. Write a formal report section (150 words) using at least 6 formal prepositional phrases.
2. Rewrite an informal email as a formal letter, replacing casual language with formal prepositional phrases.
3. Find 8 formal prepositional phrases in a business document or academic paper. Note their function.