

Lesson Plan: Prepositional phrases (advanced)

Level: Advanced (C1–C2)

Time: 60–90 minutes

Skills: Grammar, speaking, writing, reading

Focus: Fixed phrases, abstract meaning, register, academic & idiomatic use

Objectives

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

- Use advanced prepositional phrases accurately and naturally
- Distinguish between similar phrases with different meanings or registers
- Incorporate prepositional phrases into formal and informal contexts
- Edit and refine writing for precision and fluency

Target language (examples)

1. Contrast & concession

- *in spite of*
- *on the contrary*
- *by contrast*
- *with the exception of*
- *contrary to expectations*

2. Cause, reason & condition

- *in light of*
- *by virtue of*
- *on the grounds that*
- *in the event of*
- *under the circumstances*

3. Perspective & reference

- *from a linguistic standpoint*
- *with respect to*
- *in terms of*
- *as far as ... is concerned*

4. Emphasis & precision

- *at the expense of*
- *in accordance with*
- *for the sake of*
- *to a certain extent*

Lesson Procedure

1. Warm-up (10 minutes)

Task:

Display 4–5 sentences with missing prepositional phrases.

Example:

_____ public opinion, the policy was approved.

Students work in pairs to suggest multiple correct answers (*in spite of / contrary to / regardless of*).

Goal:

Activate prior knowledge and show that **choice affects meaning and tone**.

2. Guided discovery (15 minutes)

Provide a short advanced text (academic or opinion-based).

Example excerpt:

In light of recent evidence, the theory has been revised, contrary to earlier assumptions.

Tasks:

- Underline prepositional phrases
- Identify:
 - Function (contrast, cause, reference, etc.)
 - Register (formal / neutral / idiomatic)

Teacher focus:

Emphasize that advanced usage is about **appropriacy**, not just correctness.

3. Meaning & nuance focus (15 minutes)

Compare similar phrases:

Phrase	Key Nuance
<i>in spite of</i>	unexpected contrast
<i>regardless of</i>	indifference
<i>by contrast</i>	comparison
<i>on the contrary</i>	direct opposition

Mini-task:

Students explain differences in their own words, then create example sentences.

4. Controlled practice (10–15 minutes)

Task A: Sentence transformation

Rewrite sentences using a given prepositional phrase.

Example:

The rule was changed because of new data.
 → *The rule was changed **in light of** new data.*

Task B: Error correction

Identify and correct subtle errors.

Example:

In spite the weather, the event continued.
 → **In spite of** the weather...

5. Communicative practice (15–20 minutes)

Option A: Debate task

Students discuss a topic (e.g., social media, school rules, technology).

Requirement:

- Use **at least 5 advanced prepositional phrases**
- Different functions (contrast, cause, perspective)

Option B: Writing task

Write a short opinion paragraph (120–150 words) using:

- 1 contrast phrase
- 1 cause/reason phrase
- 1 perspective phrase

6. Feedback & refinement (10 minutes)

- Peer feedback: underline prepositional phrases and comment on appropriacy
- Teacher feedback: focus on **collocation, register, and overuse**

Extension/homework

Choose one:

1. **Corpus task:** Find 5 examples of advanced prepositional phrases from news or academic articles
2. **Style shift:** Rewrite a formal paragraph into a more conversational version (or vice versa)
3. **Phrase journal:** Students record new prepositional phrases with example sentences