

Sentence Structure Grammar Tutorial Worksheet

For the Tutor

Sentences missing subjects often occur in ESL writing when prepositional phrases are present. When this type of error occurs, remind your L2 writer that main subjects do not occur in prepositional phrases. The solution is often as simple as eliminating a preposition. For example, in the following sentence, either the preposition *in* or *by* can be eliminated: “In the article by Smith states that crime has increased 50 percent over the last year.”

For the ESL Writer

Study the following:

SOME COMMON PREPOSITIONS

in	to	by	after	except	despite
on	out	from	along	upon	during
of	at	as	with	across	among

CORRECTED EXAMPLE

- *In* the painting by Dali shows melting clocks. (incorrect)
- The painting by Dali shows melting clocks. (correct)

In the above example, a preposition had to be removed in order to provide a subject for the sentence.

Correct the following:

PRACTICE SENTENCES

- In the article by Singh supports this point.
- *During* a long lecture by my cousin Suk is boring.
- *With Yusef and me to the park* is fun.
- *At* Josiah’s house is filled with many photographs.

Bruce, S. & Rafoth, B. (Eds.), (2009). *ESL writers; A guide for writing center tutors*. (2nd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook.