

# Level A

## Overview

Objective #1: Students will learn to find all the prepositional phrases in any sentence and will place parentheses around them.

Note to "Grammar Nerds": Don't worry if, at this level, your student occasionally places parentheses around infinitives ("to" plus a verb, such as to run or to fly). Ignore any marked infinitives until Level D, typically 10<sup>th</sup> grade. If you'd like to elaborate further with them, simply tell them that they've marked an infinitive but that you don't expect them to know what an infinitive is at this stage.

Objective #2: Students will learn to find compound prepositional phrases. For instance,

They were playing **(with Bill and Mary)**.

Rationale: As Dr. Vavra explains, prepositional phrases are relatively easy to learn. Research shows that over a third of all words are in prepositional phrases (although this percentage will be smaller in the writing of a typical third grader). If a student's ultimate purpose is to be able to explain the grammatical purpose of every word in every sentence, identifying all the prepositional phrases will have them well on their way! Being able to identify the objects of prepositions will also help prevent annoying errors such as subject/verb agreement. For instance, which sentence is correct?

- A. One of the class members has won an award.
- B. One of the class members have won an award.

If you know that **of the class members** is a prepositional phrase, and if you put it in parentheses like this,

One **(of the class members)** ...

Then you'll easily see that the rest of the sentence should be written like this,

One has won an award.

Doesn't this simplify things? We think so, too!

## Preparation for Level A

Preparation is easy when you use the K.I.S.S. Approach! First, before your school year begins, get some brightly colored paper (8"x11 1/2" size paper, cut in half lengthwise, works well), and write the prepositions listed below on the paper. Letters about 4 inches high are easy to read. If you have several children, laminate these so they can be reused in future years. You'll end up with about 50 preposition cards that you can hang all over a wall (won't your husband be thrilled?). You don't need to require them to memorize a list of these prepositions; simply seeing them plastered on a wall