

Prepositions at ends of sentences and clauses

There are a number of common reasons for ending a sentence or clause with a preposition, including *wh*-questions and clauses, passives, infinitives, relative clauses and exclamations. The following examples illustrate how natural it is to end a sentence or clause with a preposition:

What's the weather like?

So that's what she was referring to!

That university's very hard to get into.

In these cases, a preposition becomes separated from the rest of its phrase, sometimes known as the complement of a preposition. In the examples above, the complements are *what*, *that* and *that university* respectively.

6 Fill in the spaces in the sentences below using the words from the box.

about after (x2) at by in on with

- 1 He's very difficult to work _____.
- 2 What are you looking _____?
- 3 The subject I want to talk to you _____ today is ...
- 4 What I would like to focus _____ this morning is ...
- 5 What a terrible situation she's ended up _____!
- 6 I know his work is being looked _____ by a temp while he's away. What I want to know is, who's the temp being looked _____?

7 Now match the sentences in Exercise 6 with the following structures which can have prepositions at the end.

Wh- Questions
 Passive Forms
 Relative Clauses
 Exclamations
Wh- Clauses
To- Clauses

Formal prepositions

8 Make the text slightly more formal by substituting the language in *italics* with words from the box below.

akin to amid barring considering
 notwithstanding pending regarding versus

(1) *Unless there are any* accidents, the Social Advancement Party (SAP) look set to win this week's election in a landmark victory. (2) *Taking into account* their recent buoyancy in the opinion polls and the moribund state of the opposition, SAP are clearly staking their claim to the history books by coming from almost nowhere to win an outright majority. Celebrations, premature perhaps, have already been taking place (3) *in the middle of* feelings of optimism and above all the need for change. Some have billed the contest a classic fight of the establishment (4) *against* the people. (5) *Until we know* the final outcome, though, all predictions remain speculation, warns the SAP leader, Mr Max Fiorini. Yet the battle is arguably (6) *like* one of those sports events where the result is a foregone conclusion: (7) *despite* a stated intention to 'fight to the death', the opposition has scarcely managed to muster much popular support. Now (8) *about* the next five years, who's for a spot of prediction ...?