

Common mistakes in the use of prepositions

Although prepositions are small words, they are very important ones. In this lesson, we will explain some common mistakes in the use of prepositions.

Incorrect: Although he is clever, he lacks of experience.

Correct: Although he is clever, he lacks experience.

Incorrect: The train is now approaching to Boston.

Correct: The train is now approaching Boston.

Incorrect: We were not allowed to enter into the house.

Correct: We were not allowed to enter the house.

Explanations

The verbs lack, approach and enter are directly followed by objects without prepositions. Other verbs that do not normally take prepositions are: discuss, marry and resemble.

Incorrect: See you on next Friday.

Correct: See you next Friday.

Incorrect: I will never forget meeting her on that afternoon.

Correct: I will never forget meeting her that afternoon.

Explanation

Prepositions are not used before a number of common time expressions beginning next, last, this, one etc.

Incorrect: Of what color are her eyes?

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Correct: What color are her eyes?

Incorrect: He is of just the right height to be a good soldier.

Correct: He is just the right height to be a good soldier.

Explanation

Expressions containing words like height, weight, length, size, color, age etc., are usually connected to the subject by the verb be without a preposition.

Incorrect: I am going to home.

Correct: I am going home.

Explanation

We do not use to before home.

Incorrect: To where shall I send it?

Correct: Where shall I send it to?

Explanation

The structures where ...to?, what...like? and what...for? have a fixed word order. It is not possible to move the preposition to the beginning of the clause.