

## Writing Workshop #9: The 3 Preposition Rule

A preposition is a word that describes the relationship between other words and phrases in a sentence, often locating them in time or place.

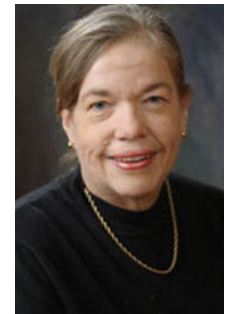
The 25 most common prepositions are: of, in, to, for, with, on, at, from, by, about, as, into, like, through, after, over, between, out, against, during, without, before, under, around, and among.

*“Any sentence containing more than three prepositions is almost guaranteed to be unwieldy, and at least one of the prepositional phrases may be in the wrong place.”*

According to Celia, the three-preposition rule (3PR) stipulates that any sentence containing more than three prepositions should be rewritten for clarity.

Two ways to limit the number of prepositions per sentence:

- (1). Break long sentences into shorter sentences; and
- (2). Change nounified former verbs (i.e., nouns ending in *-tion*, *-ment*, or *-ance*) back into verbs



– Celia Elliott

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**One Solution:** This project studied electro-optical modulation in layered semiconductor structures. Such structures are of interest for ultrafast optical modulators for laser-driven fiber optics communications systems.

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**Original:** A pollution problem **with** diesel engines has historically been their tendency to produce soot and smoke, but oxygen **in** the methyl ester group leads **to** lower soot emissions **from** diesel engines when using biodiesel fuel.

**One Solution:** Air-polluting soot and smoke are produced by diesel engines that burn conventional fuels. The use of biodiesel fuel, which contains oxygen in the methyl ester group, reduces soot emissions