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how prepositional phrases work

PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES work in three different ways:

1. As **adjectives**
2. As **adverbs**
3. As **nominals**

As adjectives:

An **adjective** describes a **noun**.

A **PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE** is not an **adjective**, but it can work like an **adjective** when it describes a **noun**:

I saw the guy **with the pony tail** you were talking about.

guy = **noun**
 with the pony tail = **prepositional phrase** that describes the **noun** (guy)

I saw the horse **beside the barn**.

horse = **noun**
 beside the barn = **prepositional phrase** that describes the **noun** (horse)

As adverbs:

Adverbs describe **verbs**.

A **PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE** is not an **adverb**, but it can work like an **adverb** when it describes a **verb**:

I played tennis **with my brother**.

played = **verb**
with my brother = **prepositional phrase** that describes the **verb** (played)

The car started **after we used** the jumper cables.

started = **verb**
after we used = **prepositional phrase** that describes the **verb** (started)

As nominals

- What's a **nominal**?

A **nominal** is a word—any word or group of words—that *acts like* a noun.

(A **noun** names a person, place, thing, or idea. So a nominal is any word or group of words that names a person, place, thing, or idea.)

- The **nominal** is a special case of prepositional phrase that we use only with the verb *be*.

A **PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE** is not a **nominal**, but it can work like a **nominal** when we use it with the **verb** *be*, and it takes the place of a **noun**:

The restaurant is on the corner.

The restaurant = **noun**
is = **verb be**
on the corner = **prepositional phrase** that stands for the **noun** (restaurant)

The boy is before the girl in line.

The boy = **noun**
is = **verb be**
before the girl = **prepositional phrase** that stands for the **noun** (boy)