

# Adjectives and Prepositions: Reactions, Behavior, and Feelings

INTERMEDIATE

**Focus: nice/kind/polite of someone, nice/rude/friendly to someone, behavioral qualities, prepositional objects, angry/annoyed about something, furious/upset with someone, surprised/shocked at or by, excited/worried about, afraid/scared/terrified of, proud/ashamed/jealous of**

Certain adjectives in English are followed by specific prepositions. Choosing the correct preposition often depends on whether you are talking about a person, an action, or a situation.

## 1. Personal Behavior: *of* vs. *to*

We use **of** when we are judging a person's character based on their action (subjective opinion).

- **Structure:** *It was [adjective] of [someone] to [do something].*
- **Adjectives:** nice, kind, good, generous, polite, stupid, silly, rude.
  - *Example:* It was very kind **of** you to help me.
  - *Example:* It was silly **of** him to go out in the rain.

We use **to** when describing how someone interacts with others.

- **Structure:** *[Someone] is [adjective] to [someone else].*
- **Adjectives:** nice, kind, good, polite, rude, friendly, unfriendly, cruel.
  - *Example:* She has always been very nice **to** me.
  - *Example:* Why were you so rude **to** the waiter?

## 2. Emotional Reactions: *about*, *with*, *at*, *by*

### Angry, Annoyed, Furious, Upset:

- Use **about** for a situation or thing.
  - *Example:* I'm annoyed **about** the delay.
- Use **with** for a person.
  - *Example:* Are you angry **with** me?

### Excited, Worried, Nervous, Happy:

- Use **about** for a situation.
  - *Example:* She is worried **about** her exam. / We are excited **about** the holiday.

### Surprised, Shocked, Amazed, Astonished:

- Use **at** or **by** (they are interchangeable).
  - *Example:* I was shocked **at** the price. / We were surprised **by** the news.

## 3. Fear, Awareness, and Connection: *of*

Many adjectives describing fear, pride, or specific feelings towards something take **of**.

- **Adjectives:** afraid, scared, frightened, terrified, proud, ashamed, jealous, envious, suspicious.
  - *Example:* Are you afraid **of** spiders?
  - *Example:* I am very proud **of** my daughter.
  - *Example:* He is jealous **of** his brother.

## 4. Apologizing: *about* vs. *for*

- **Sorry about:** Used for a general situation or something that happened.
  - *Example:* I'm sorry **about** the mess.
- **Sorry for:** Used for an action you did (often followed by -ing).
  - *Example:* I'm sorry **for** being late.

## Practice Exercises

**Instruction:** Complete the sentences with the correct preposition (**of, to, about, with, at, by, for**). Pay close attention to whether the sentence refers to a person, an action, or a situation.

1. It was very generous \_\_\_\_\_ him to pay for everyone's dinner.
2. ( ? ) Are you worried \_\_\_\_\_ the math exam tomorrow?
3. ( - ) The shop assistant wasn't very polite \_\_\_\_\_ me when I asked for a refund.
4. I was absolutely furious \_\_\_\_\_ my brother for borrowing my car without asking.
5. ( ? ) Why are they so excited \_\_\_\_\_ moving to a new house?
6. ( - ) Don't be scared \_\_\_\_\_ the dog; he is very friendly.
7. She is very jealous \_\_\_\_\_ her sister's success.
8. ( ? ) Was it silly \_\_\_\_\_ me to quit my job without having another one?
9. ( - ) We aren't angry \_\_\_\_\_ the change of plans; we understand.
10. Everyone was completely shocked \_\_\_\_\_ the sudden news.
11. ( ? ) Are you sorry \_\_\_\_\_ losing the keys, or just sorry you got caught?
12. ( - ) He is not ashamed \_\_\_\_\_ his background; in fact, he speaks about it openly.
13. It was incredibly rude \_\_\_\_\_ them to leave the party without saying goodbye.
14. ( ? ) Is she still upset \_\_\_\_\_ her boyfriend for forgetting her birthday?
15. ( - ) I am not surprised \_\_\_\_\_ his behavior anymore; he always acts like this.

## Answer Key

1. **of** (It was generous *of* him...)
2. **about** (Worried *about* a situation...)
3. **to** (Polite *to* someone...)
4. **with** (Furious *with* a person...)
5. **about** (Excited *about* a situation...)
6. **of** (Scared *of* something...)
7. **of** (Jealous *of* someone...)
8. **of** (Was it silly *of* me...)
9. **about** (Angry *about* a situation...)
10. **at / by** (Shocked *at/by* something...)
11. **for** (Sorry *for* an action...)
12. **of** (Ashamed *of* something...)
13. **of** (Rude *of* them [judgment of action]...)
14. **with** (Upset *with* a person...)
15. **at / by** (Surprised *at/by* something...)