

# Prepositional Phrases

**But for what would you want to boldly end that sentence with a prepositional phrase?**

In the eerily prophetic TV comedy series “Last Man on Earth,” Phil thinks he is the only human survivor after a deadly virus sweeps the world in 2020. (Crazy, right?) But then he runs into Carol, who also thinks she’s the last person on Earth. During their first audible conversation with *anyone* in two years, she demands he speak English “correctly.”

**Phil:** “I promise you there’s nothing to be afraid of.”

**Carol:** “Nothing of which to be afraid!”

**Phil** (*looking confused*): “I just said that.”

**Carol** (*screaming and waving a weapon*): “You can’t end sentences with prepositions! ‘Nothing of which to be afraid’ is the proper grammar!”

Carol was wrong (and frankly, unofficially nominated herself first to be eaten, for displaying such grammar policing during a desperate time). **It’s OK to end a sentence with a prepositional phrase in English.** You might have heard that Winston Churchill declared the alleged incorrectness of ending sentences with prepositional phrases, but the practice actually has Latin-language roots. In Latin, you don’t end a sentence with a preposition. But in English, do it, do it, do it!

Well, maybe not all the time. Try not to end a sentence or question *unnecessarily* with a preposition. For example, don’t say “Where are you **at**?” when “Where are you?” expresses the same message in fewer words. For the same reason, “That’s why they’re there” is better than “That’s what they’re there **for**.”

In spoken English, it doesn’t matter as much. In written English, eliminate unnecessary words—but don’t go overboard trying to write around a preposition. They serve a specific language purpose.