

MODULE 1: Preposition

Introduction

Prepositions are usually used before nouns and pronouns, and act as Adverbials, Postmodifiers, Verb complements, complements of Adjectives and sometimes as Subjects as well.

- a. My brother works in an insurance company. (Adverbials)
- b. The people on the bus are singing. (Postmodifiers)
- c. I want to congratulate you on your exam. (Verb Compliments)
- d. I am terribly bad at mathematics. (Adjective-compliment)
- e. Before breakfast is when it is best to study. (Subject)

Sometimes we can use it with a verb, but the verb must be in gerund form.

They succeeded in escaping.

USAGE OF PREPOSITIONS

RULES REGARDING TIME AND DATE -

A. at/on

At a time - at midnight

At an age- She got married at twenty. On a day/date - On Monday, On Christmas Day

Exception - At Christmas, At Easter, At Holi, At Diwali, At Eid (Where it refers to a period)

On the morning/afternoon/evening/night of a certain date-

We arrived on the morning of the sixth.

B. by/before

By - at the time or before

The train begins at 6.10, so you had better be at the station by 6.00. Before - *can be preposition, conjunction, adverb*

Before signing this, kindly sign that one. (preposition)

Before you sign this, let me tell you something about the agreement. (conjunction) I've seen him somewhere before. (adverb)

C. on time/in time/ in good time

The 8.15 train started on time. (It started at 8.15)

Passengers should be in time for their train. (They must come before its departure)

I arrived at the University in good time (for the program). (The program was from 8.30 and I was able to arrive at 8.10.)

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D. on arrival/ arriving/ reaching/ getting to/ on + verbs of information

On arriving, he immediately took his seat.

On hearing/ Hearing that the plane had been diverted, they left the airport.

In the last type, *on* can be omitted.

E. at the beginning/end, in the beginning/end, at first/ at last

At the beginning of a book there is often a table of contents.

In the beginning/ At first we used hand tools. Later we had machines.

F. from, since and for

From : used with 'to' for time

Most people work *from* nine to

five. **From**: used singularly for

place Where do you come *from* ?

Since : used to mark the beginning time and usually covers till the present moment. He has been here *since* Monday.

For: used for a known period of

time Bake it *for* two minutes.

I rented a house *for* my holidays.

During: used for either whole or an unknown part of a known period.

It rained all Monday but stopped raining *during* the night.

He was ill for a week, and *during* that week, he ate nothing.

A. To, till/untill, after, afterwards

They worked from five to ten.

Let's start now and work till dark. (Without from)

We didn't get home till 2 AM. (Negative connotation)

Don't bathe immediately after a meal. (After followed by a noun)

Don't have a meal and bathe immediately afterwards .

RULES REGARDING TRAVEL AND MOVEMENT

A. from...to/ to

They walked *from* Paris *to* Rome.

When are you coming back *to* England?

B. Arrive in/at, get to, reach

Arrive in/ at - town, country, village, any other destination. They arrived *in* Spain.

Get to/ reach- any

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destination. He got there *in* no time.

I *reached* the end of the alley but couldn't find his house.

C. by, on, get in, into, on, onto, off, out of.

- on/by

We can go on foot or by a car.

- We get into a public or private vehicle.

He quickly got into the car.

- We get on/onto a public vehicle.

I helped him get onto the bus.

- We go on board a boat or a ship.

He perished at sea on board a steamboat which was totally consumed by fire.

- We get on/onto a horse/camel/bicycle.

- We get out of a public vehicle or private vehicle.

- We get off a public vehicle, a horse, bicycle, etc.

*** We also use get in/into/out/out of when there is some difficulty in entering or exiting a building or institution.**

I have lost my keys! How are we going to get in ?

D. At/In

At is used for smaller area and many times with a specific location in mind.

We met at the bridge.

In is used for area or place which has boundaries, like country, state, locality, room, forest, etc.

We talked for a long time in my drawing room.

E. In/Into, On/Onto

In and On describe location, while Into and Onto describe movement in and out of a space, respectively.

He was in the office when I saw him talking to someone. He barged into my chamber without any prior notice.

F. Above/Over

Above and Over both mean 'higher than'

-The helicopter hovered above/over us.

But Over is also used for - 'covering' , 'on the other side of' , 'across' and 'from one side to the other'

We put a rug over him.

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He lives over the mountains.

There is a bridge over the river.

G. Below/ Under/ Beneath

Below and Under can both mean 'lower than' however under indicates contact. They live below us. (We live on the 2nd floor and they live on the 1st floor)

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The ice cracked under his feet.

Beneath - used for abstract meanings but can be deployed as a substitute to under. She married beneath her. (Into a lower social class)

H. Beside/Besides

Beside means at the side of while besides means in addition to. We camped beside a lake.

Besides making breakfast she also cleans the house.

I. Between and Among

Between when we know the definite number -
Luxembourg lies between Belgium, Germany and
France. Among - for more than two
He was happy to be among friends again.

SOME ADDITIONAL RULES-

Alternative position of Prepositions -

Sometimes the Prepositions occur at the end of the sentence -

A. Whom/Which/ What/Whose/ Where

To whom were you
talking? Who were you
talking *to* ?

B. Relative clauses with whom or

which The people with whom I was
traveling The people I was traveling
with ...

Omission of *to* and *for* before indirect objects - With certain verbs like bring, give, hand, lend, offer, pass, pay, play, promise, sell, send, show, sing, take, tell, book, build, buy, cook, fetch, find, get, keep, knit, leave, make, order, reserve, etc.

I gave the book to Tom.

I gave Tom the book.

I'll get a drink for
you. *I'll get you a
drink.*

However,

She made them for Bill. (Remains unchanged)

Sentence having *It* or *Them* as a direct object cannot be changed.

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Omission of *to* with verbs of communication - Verbs of command, request, invitation and advice can drop 'to' before the addressed person.
They advised **to** him to wait.

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They advised him to wait.

With verbs like complain, describe, shout, speak, suggest, etc. the use of to is necessary before mentioning the addressed person. However, the mention of addressed person is not important and can be skipped altogether.

He spoke English **to them** .

He spoke English.

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J.

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