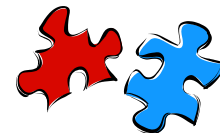


# Prepositions: Definitions and Examples

Below are a list of basic definitions and examples for when and how to use each preposition.



**About:** Shows approximation; describes a topic of discussion.

Ex. The cord should be about three inches long.

Ex. We talked about Susie for an hour.

**Across:** Demonstrates distance between objects. Often useful when giving directions.

Ex. He could not get across the chasm.

Ex. Do you see the building across the street?

**Against:** Shows a lack of distance between objects. Reveals a negative reaction to a situation or person.

Ex. Push the chair against the wall.

Ex. He was against the plan already.

**Alongside:** Shows one object next to another, usually in close proximity.

Ex. The police cruiser pulled alongside my car.

Ex. The gerbil ran alongside the chair.

**Among:** Describes the closeness of objects, usually used with groups; indicates fellowship.

Ex. The dog sat among the tulips.

Ex. He felt welcomed sitting among the students.

**At:** Demonstrates specific location. When describing future locations or goals, often used in place of toward.

Ex. I am at home.

Ex. I am aiming at having a degree in five years.

**Below:** Reveals an object's location underneath another object. When used figuratively, indicates substandard performance.

Ex. Many organisms live below the water's surface.

Ex. The test scores were below average.

**Above:** Illustrates an object in relation to another object. The first item is represented over the second object.

Ex. The picture hangs above the television.

Ex. The shelf sits above the door.

**After:** Suggests the passage of time and prior events. Establishes cause/effect relationships; demonstrates the position of one object behind another object.

Ex. After the movie, I read an exciting book.

Ex. After he failed to appear, I left.

Ex. She trailed after her sister.

**Along:** Illustrates one object following another. Often used in place of with or beside.

Ex. We left the yard, and the dog followed along.

Ex. If you behave, we will take you along (with us).

**Amidst:** Describes a noun's location between two other nouns; refers to the middle of an event or occurrence, often used in place of middle.

Ex. The trophy lay amidst the messy clothes.

Ex. Amidst the meeting, she called.

**Around:** Illustrates movement that bypasses without harming an object. When used figuratively, implies dodging an area of concern or worry.

Ex. I crashed my bike when I did not go around the tree.

Ex. I must find a way around my financial problems.

**Behind:** Shows an object's location in relation to another. The first object precedes the second one. When used figuratively, implies procrastination or delay.

Ex. The magazine fell behind the couch.

Ex. I am behind on my project (because I was sick).

**Beneath:** Suggests the location of one object below another object; often used in place of under.

Ex. The cat raced under the table after his toy mouse.

**Beside:** Shows one object's position next to or alongside another object.

Ex. The trashcan sits beside the desk.

**Between:** Reveals the location of one object in the middle of two others.

Ex. Put the tomato between the lettuce and the meat.

**By:** Demonstrates responsibility of passive actions; illustrates how to complete an action; indicates authorship.

Ex. The riddle was solved by me.

Ex. Cut the rope by using the three-inch blade.

Ex. The book is by Sharon Shinn.

**Down:** Indicates a direction beneath or away from a central position. When used figuratively, suggests a drop in value or price.

Ex. The store is down the street from her house.

Ex. After the rumors, the stock market finished down.

**For:** Reveals intended ownership; shows causal relationships.

Ex. Is that gift for me?

Ex. This step is crucial for our plan to succeed.

**In:** Suggests motion moving toward and inside an object; indicates a moment of time; marks a specific location.

Ex. Place the cereal in the cupboard.

Ex. In the future, cars will run on less gasoline.

Ex. I found my book in the den.

**Into:** Demonstrates motion moving between objects. Figuratively, suggests inner workings of problems.

Ex. Everyone needs to move into the museum.

Ex. We need to delve into his psyche.

**Of:** Shows the relation of one object to another; suggests kinship; indicates possession.

Ex. I am aware of your plans.

Ex. She is from the Kansas part of the Ross family.

Ex. This is the book of the girl.

**Besides:** Illustrates extra information. Often used in place of in addition.

Ex. Besides snacks, he brought music for the party.

**Beyond:** Indicates extended distance between objects; shows an object as out of reach.

Ex. Her house lies beyond the shopping center.

Ex. The shelf is too high. It is beyond my reach.

**Concerning:** Suggests a degree of action. Often used in place of about.

Ex. The letter is concerning your meeting with Charles.

Ex. If reading magazines concerning cars, check that you have a reputable source.

**During:** Shows action taking place in the midst of a particular event; indicates a specific moment in time.

Ex. During the argument, the cat innocently meowed.

Ex. We shall discuss it during lunch.

**From:** Demonstrates prior ownership; reveals causal relationships.

Ex. The gift is from all of us.

Ex. She learned French from the language tapes.

**Inside:** Describes a location within another place. Also, indicates motion toward a specific location.

Ex. The key lies inside the decorative box.

Ex. We will go inside the museum at 2:00.

**Near:** Reveals the proximity of one object to another; also suggests that a desire is within reach.

Ex. The creamer is near the sugar.

Ex. He is near his goal of graduating.

**Off:** Suggests a change in location. Idiomatically, recommends avoidance of a subject or person.

Ex. The cat fell off of the chair.

Ex. Get off the subject already.

**On:** Shows location at a specific place, usually atop something. Idiomatically, indicates preciseness.

Ex. Set the book on the table.  
Ex. Your numbers are dead on!

**Out:** Illustrates movement when exiting a location; indicates a lack of resources.

Ex. She needed to get out of the building.  
Ex. He realized that he was out of paper.

**Over:** Indicates the location of one object above another one.

Ex. The papers fell over the coins.

**Through:** Illustrates motion that moves inside of an object. Idiomatically, indicates finality.

Ex. The train raced through the tunnel.  
Ex. I'm glad that project is through!

**To:** Indicates changes in possession or location.

Ex. I returned the book to the shelf.

**Under:** Shows an object's location below another one. Figuratively, implies a lack of something.

Ex. The ball rolled under the table.  
Ex. The numbers are under the CEO's expectations.

**Up:** Indicates movement of one object over another.

Ex. The car raced up the hill.

**With:** Implies a method of action; suggests association.

Ex. She quickly recorded the number with her pen.  
Ex. He left with Mike and Rachel, not Chris.

**Without:** Shows the importance of a crucial yet lacking object; figuratively, applies to people as well as objects.

Ex. We cannot make the cake without flour.  
Ex. I cannot finish the project without her.

**Onto:** Reveals movement from one location to the top of another locale.

Ex. The cat jumped onto the chair again.

**Outside:** Demonstrates the relationship between objects separated by a wall or partition. Implies a distance between objects or ideas.

Ex. The cat watched the dogs play outside.  
Ex. Your paper is outside the assignment parameters.

**Regarding:** Shows a degree of concern; used in place of about or concerning.

Ex. Send me an email regarding those books.

**Throughout:** Suggests permeation of an object or idea; implies a duration.

Ex. The rumors spread throughout the school.  
Ex. Throughout the project, track your eating habits.

**Toward:** Demonstrates motion coming near an object.

Ex. The ball flew toward my head by mistake.

**Underneath:** Describes the location of an object under another one.

Ex. The cat remained underneath the bed.

**Upon:** Demonstrates location, (archaic) used in place of on; denotes a temporal occurrence.

Ex. The car sat upon the hill.  
Ex. Upon finishing the book, loan it to Rasheeda.

**Within:** Illustrates an object's position inside of another.

Ex. The project fits within the assignment boundaries.

