

Prepositions

Prepositions can refer to many things. Since there are a lot of prepositions in the English language and they are used a lot, we have to learn them completely.

What Are Prepositions?

Prepositions are a type of word that typically show the *relationship* between nouns or pronouns and other words in a sentence. They often appear before the object and indicate the **location** of something in space or time, or the **direction** or **manner** of an action.

Prepositions Are Tricky!

We say we are *at* the hospital seeing someone who is *in* the hospital. We lie *in* bed but *on* the couch. We watch a movie *at* the theater but *on* television. So, you need to learn the prepositions by looking them up in a dictionary, reading a lot of texts in English, and learning useful phrases with prepositions.

Prepositions: Types Based on Structure

Prepositions are categorized into **three** main groups based on the *number of words* they are made of:

1. **Simple prepositions**
2. **Compound prepositions**
3. **Complex prepositions**

Simple prepositions are made of only one word, while **compound prepositions** are made of two or more words. And **complex prepositions** are formed when two or more prepositions follow each other. Pay attention to the examples:

The small cat jumped **on** the chair. (simple)

Please do not talk **on behalf of** her. Let her choose please. (compound)

She gazed at us **from beneath** the brim of her hat. (complex)

Prepositions: Types Based on Meaning

There are different types of prepositions in English that are all frequently used. Check out the list:

1. prepositions of direction
2. prepositions of time

3. [prepositions of place](#)

4. [preposition of manner](#)

Prepositions of Direction

If we want to refer to the direction of something, we use a preposition such as '[to](#)', '[in](#)', '[across](#),' '[on](#)', and '[along](#)'.

I'm walking **along** the beach.

Across the bridge, there's a village.

Prepositions of Time

If we want to refer to a point in time, we use prepositions such as '[in](#)', '[at](#)', and '[on](#)'. Furthermore, we can use prepositions like '[since](#),' '[for](#)', '[by](#)', '[during](#)', '[from...to](#)', to refer to a *period* of time. Take a look at the examples:

The bus comes **at** 15:33 p.m.

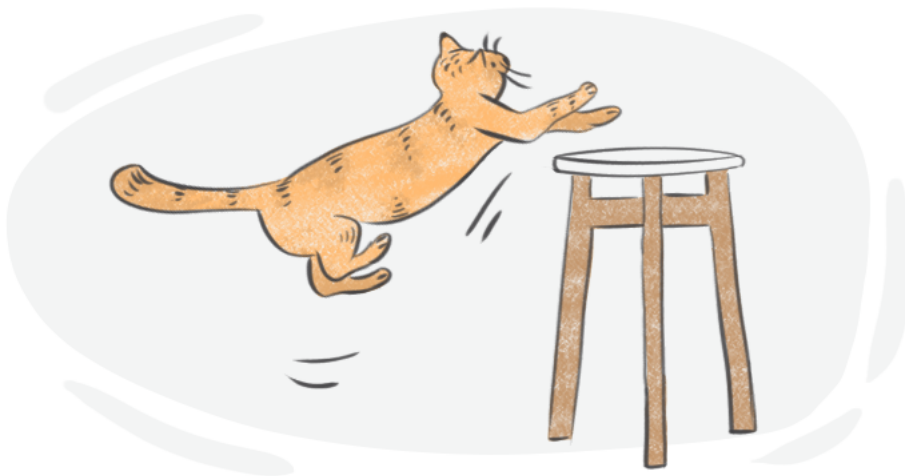
I worked there **from** January **to** June.

Prepositions of Place

Prepositions of place answer the question '[Where?](#)'. They are used to show the **position** or **location** of a thing or person in relation to another thing or person. Prepositions such as '[at](#)', '[in](#)', '[on](#)', '[behind](#)', '[under](#)' and '[above](#)' are some examples of this category. For example:

There's a cat **under** the car.

Look **at** the picture **on** the wall.



The small cat jumped **on** the chair.

using the preposition 'on' to talk about movement

Prepositions of Manner

Prepositions of manner express the way something happens or **how** a certain thing happened or is done. They may express the *method* or *instrument* by which something is done; these prepositions include **by**, with, like, as, and **in**. Check out the examples.

By telling the truth, you may survive.

He works **as** a chef.

Participle Prepositions

Participle prepositions are prepositions that end in '-ed', '-ing', '-en', etc. **Excluding**, **including**, **following**, **considering**, and **regarding** are examples of participle prepositions. Here are a few examples in sentences:

Following his rule, I closed the door slightly.

Considering her illness, she was still beautiful.

Preposition or Adverb?

Some words can function as both adverb and prepositions, meaning they can belong to two different parts of speech but have the same form. Compare the examples:

Sally closed the door **behind** her. (preposition)

The car **behind** was hooting impatiently. (adverb)

Prepositional Phrase

A group of words that consist of a *preposition* and a *noun* or *pronoun* (object of the preposition) is considered a prepositional phrase. As you know, a phrase does not have a *verb* or a *subject*, as a result, it does not form a complete sentence; rather, it is used to complete the meaning of the sentence. Rather than trying to guess which preposition to use with a noun, it can be helpful to memorize common prepositional phrases. Take a look at some examples:

Young people were swimming **into the deep water**.

This is the only thing **at the top of my head**.

Common Error

Be careful not to add an unnecessary 'at' at the end of a question as a preposition. That is not grammatically correct.

Where are you going? (Not 'Where are you going **at**?')

Where is your mother? (Not 'Where is your mother **at**?')

Preposition: Position in a Sentence

While some strict grammarians believe it is incorrect to *end* a sentence with a preposition, it is now generally considered acceptable in modern English. For example:

What are you looking **at**?

Where did you put them **on**?

We are not allowed to use prepositions *before* or *after* certain word classes. Check out the table for more details:

verb + preposition	✓	preposition + verb (gerund)	✓
adjective + preposition	✓	preposition + adjective	✗
preposition + noun	✓	noun + preposition	✓
preposition at the end	✓	preposition + preposition	✗

Review

Prepositions are used before prepositional objects to indicate a particular concept such as time, place, etc. Here are the most important categories of prepositions.

- Prepositions of direction

- Prepositions of time
- Prepositions of place
- Preposition of manner
- Compound prepositions
- Participle prepositions

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Types of Prepositions



Prepositions can indicate different relationships between the elements of the sentence. This lesson will clarify some of their most common functions.

