

English Verbs + Prepositions Dictionary

Why study verbs + prepositions?

Prepositions are one of the most difficult things to master in the English language. They provide the “links” between the main words (nouns, verbs, and adjectives), but many English students have a hard time knowing **which preposition to use** in each situation.

This uncertainty can lead to lack of confidence and being afraid to speak – or speaking with lots of pauses as you try to think of the correct preposition.

Unfortunately, it’s not easy to give specific **rules** for when to use each preposition – but most verbs have a preposition that usually goes together. Some verbs can go with multiple prepositions, and sometimes the preposition makes a difference in the meaning of the phrase.

You can use this dictionary for **learning typical verb-preposition combinations**, as well as for reference. Each entry has an example sentence and any notes or explanations that could help you understand better.

The best way to remember these combinations of verbs and prepositions is not only to study the list... but also to **create your own example sentences!** Putting the verb + preposition combination into practice immediately helps you memorize it more easily.

If you have questions, please send me an e-mail at help@espressoenglish.net

Good luck with your English studies!

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Verb + Preposition	Example Sentence	Notes
account for	How do you account for the differences between the two financial reports?	To "account for" is to explain or provide a reason
accuse (someone) of (something)	Dan accused Henry of stealing money from the company.	To "accuse" is to say that someone did something bad
adapt to	When I moved to a different country, it was hard for me to adapt to the new culture.	
add (something) to (something)	I added some salt to the soup to give it more flavor.	
adjust to	After I got divorced, I had to adjust to life as a single man.	
admire (someone) for (something)	I admire Joanne for her dedication.	
agree on (topic)	My teacher and I agree on the importance of listening practice.	You agree ON a noun: We agree on politics. We don't agree on religion.
agree to (do something)	She agreed to make cookies for the party.	You agree TO a verb
agree with (someone)	I agree with you.	You agree WITH a person
apologize to (someone) for (doing something)	Barbara apologized to her boss for being late to the meeting.	
apply to (a university / program)	I applied to the top university in the country - but I didn't get in.	
apply for (a job / scholarship)	Sandra applied for a marketing job at a multinational company.	
approve of	My parents don't approve of my new boyfriend.	
argue with (someone) about (something)	I argued with my business partner about how much to invest in advertising.	To argue is to have a verbal conflict. The noun form is "argument" and we also say "have an argument with (someone)"
arrange for (someone) (to do something)	We'll arrange for a babysitter to take care of the kids.	
arrest (someone) for (something)	Pat was arrested for driving without a license.	To "arrest" is when the police take a person into the police station because they are suspected of some crime.

This is often in the passive voice: "(Someone) was arrested for..."		
arrive at (a place)	By the time we arrived at the train station, our train had already left.	
arrive in (a city, country)	I'll be arriving in Berlin on Thursday.	
ask (someone) about (someone/topic)	She asked them about their plans for the holiday.	You ask someone ABOUT (a topic)
ask (someone) for (something)	I asked my classmate for a pencil.	You ask someone FOR (a noun)
ask (someone) to (do something)	The teacher asked me to make copies of the worksheet.	You ask someone TO (a verb). Never say "I asked to him..."
base on	Our conclusions are based on scientific research.	
be accustomed to	I'm from Ecuador, so I'm not accustomed to the cold weather!	"I'm accustomed to" is the same as "I'm used to"
be/get acquainted with	At the conference, I got acquainted with various leaders in the industry.	
be addicted to (something)	The rock star was addicted to heroin.	You can also say you're "addicted to" interests (like music or sports) - it's not only for drugs and alcohol!
be afraid of	My 5-year-old daughter is afraid of the dark.	"Afraid of" is the same as "scared of"
be angry at/with (someone) for (something)	Bob is angry at his son for driving his car without permission - and crashing it.	
be annoyed at/with (someone) for (something)	I'm annoyed at my husband for forgetting to wash the dishes.	Notice that after "annoyed/angry at someone for..." the verb is in the -ING form.
be anxious about (something)	Everyone in the class is anxious about the final exam.	
be associated with	There are a number of risks associated with the surgery.	
be aware of	I'm not aware of any problems.	
be blessed with	We've been blessed with good health and stable jobs.	To be "blessed with" something is to have received something good / positive, which you're thankful for.
be bored with	I'm bored with the	

	classes I'm currently taking.	
be capable of (something)	This technology is capable of changing the world.	
be cluttered with (something)	The spare room is cluttered with my sister's half-finished art projects.	"Cluttered" means there are too many objects in the space, and it's disorganized.
be committed to	Our organization is committed to improving education in the community.	
be composed of	The group is composed of doctors and lawyers.	
be concerned about	I'm concerned about the increasing violence in this neighborhood.	
be connected to/with	Less education is connected with higher unemployment.	
be content with	The employees weren't content with the salary adjustments - they wanted a bigger raise.	
be dedicated to	Veronica is very dedicated to her job. She always does her best work.	
be devoted to	Frank is a great father; he's so devoted to his family.	
be disappointed in/with (someone/something)	We were disappointed in our son when he failed three classes.	
be discouraged by	I'm discouraged by the poor results of the marketing campaign.	
be done with (something)	I'm done with my work - time to go home.	
be dressed in	The robbers were dressed in black.	
be engaged in (something)	The company is engaged in a legal battle with one of their competitors.	"Engaged in" is like "involved in"
be engaged to (someone)	My brother is engaged to a woman he met while traveling. They're getting married next month.	If you are "engaged to" someone, it means you are going to get married to that person
be envious of	I'm envious of my sister's success.	

be equipped with (something)	This building is equipped with a solar power system.	
be excited about	We're excited about our upcoming trip around the world.	
be exposed to	The children of smokers are exposed to secondhand smoke.	
be faced with (problem / dilemma / decision)	My family didn't have health insurance, and we were faced with enormous medical bills after my father got sick.	
be faithful to	He's faithful to his wife - he wouldn't get involved with another woman.	
be familiar with	Sorry, I'm not familiar with that computer program. I've only used it once.	
be famous for	That musician is famous for her poetic song lyrics.	
be filled with	The stores were filled with shoppers during the week before Christmas.	
be finished with	Don't throw away the newspaper - I'm not finished with it yet.	
be fond of	I'm quite fond of peppermint tea. I drink it almost every day.	To be "fond of" something means you especially like it, you have an emotional connection to it.
be frightened by	My dog was frightened by the fireworks, and hid under the bed.	
be frightened of	Alex never talks to women because he's too frightened of rejection.	
be grateful to (someone) for (something)	I'm grateful to Sally for helping me find a new apartment.	
be guilty of (a crime)	The director was found guilty of sexual harassment.	"Guilty" is the opposite of "innocent"
be happy about (something)	My family wasn't happy about my decision to drop out of college.	
be innocent of (something)	I believe she's innocent of the charges - she doesn't seem like a criminal.	
be interested in (something)	I'm interested in photography.	
be interested in	Kevin keeps asking me	If you are "interested in" someone, it

(someone)	out to lunch, but I'm not really interested in him.	usually means you have romantic interest in that person
be involved in (something)	Ten politicians were involved in the scandal.	
be involved with	Sorry, I don't have any information - I'm not involved with that project.	
be jealous of	All my colleagues are jealous of me because I have the biggest office.	
be known for (something)	Thailand is known for its beautiful beaches.	
be limited to	This scholarship is limited to applicants from low-income families.	
be made from (something)	Wine is made from grapes.	We use "made from" when there is a transformation in the process of making the final product
be made of (material)	This table is made of wood.	We use "made of" when talking about the material (wood, metal, plastic, etc.)
be married to (someone)	My cousin is married to a dancer.	
be opposed to	Many of the students are opposed to the new school policy.	
be patient with (someone)	The teacher was very patient with me when I couldn't understand the exercise.	
be pleased with	Are you pleased with the results of the project?	
be polite to (someone)	The woman wasn't very polite to me when I asked her for directions.	
be prepared for	I didn't study, so I wasn't prepared for the test.	
be proud of	I'm proud of my daughter - she graduated with the highest grades in her class.	
be relevant to	Why are you talking about that? It's not relevant to this discussion.	
be responsible for	I'm responsible for training new employees.	
be satisfied with	I wasn't satisfied with the quality of that product.	
be scared of	My wife is scared of	

	spiders.	
be terrified of	I'm terrified of enclosed spaces - I can get panic attacks in an elevator.	"Terrified" means EXTREMELY scared or afraid
be thankful for	We're thankful for everyone who volunteered to help with the program.	
be tired of (doing something)	I want to buy a car. I'm tired of taking the bus.	
beg for	My ex-boyfriend begged me for another chance, but I said the relationship was over.	To "beg" is to ask repeatedly with a lot of emotion
believe in	Do you believe in magic?	
belong to	No, that motorcycle's not mine. It belongs to my brother.	
benefit from	The local population will benefit from the new hospital.	
blame (someone) for (something)	He blamed the other driver for the car accident.	
blame (something) on (someone)	She blamed the mistakes in the article on the editors.	
boast about	I hate talking to Ronald because he's always boasting about how much money he makes.	"Boasting" means to talk about something arrogantly
borrow (something) from (someone)	I borrowed a dress from my sister.	"Borrow" is the opposite of "lend" (when you borrow, you receive the object temporarily)
care about (someone / something)	Our company cares about the environment.	
care for (someone)	Rachel is caring for her 95-year-old grandmother.	It's also common to say "taking care of" a person
don't care for (something)	I don't care for Mexican food. It's too spicy for me.	"I don't care for it" means "I don't like it very much."
cater to (group of people)	Most of the restaurants in this area cater to tourists.	"Cater to" means to be specialized towards that group of people
charge (someone) for (something)	The restaurant charged us for the water - I thought it was	In this case, "charge" means to require money for a product or service

	complimentary!	
charge (someone) with (something)	He was charged with assault with a deadly weapon.	In this case, "charge" means when someone is formally accused of a crime
choose between (someone/ something) and (someone/ something)	I'm trying to choose between Australia and New Zealand for my next vacation.	
collide with	Eight people were injured when a bus collided with a car.	
come from	The world's best chocolate comes from Belgium.	
comment on	A number of people commented on my new haircut.	
communicate with (someone)	The company needs to communicate with customers.	
compare (someone/ something) to/with (someone/ something)	Organic food is expensive compared to non-organic food.	
compete with	Pepsi launched a new type of soda to compete with Coca-Cola.	
complain about	We complained about the slow service in the restaurant.	
complain to (someone) about (something)	We complained to the manager about the slow service in the restaurant.	
compliment (someone) on (something)	George complimented Erica on her ability to speak French.	
concentrate on	We're trying to do too many things; we need to concentrate on one project at a time.	
confess to	The scientist confessed to lying about the results of his research.	To "confess" is to admit that you did something wrong, or reveal a secret
confuse (someone/ something) with (someone/ something)	You're confusing a laptop with a netbook - they're two different types of computers.	

something)		
congratulate (someone) for/on ([doing] something)	We congratulated Vanessa on her promotion.	
consent to (something)	The director consented to the employees' proposal.	
consist of	My CD collection consists of jazz and classic rock music.	
contribute to (something)	Stress can contribute to various health problems.	
convict (someone) of (something)	He was convicted of child abuse.	When someone is "convicted," it means they are found guilty of a crime
convince (someone) to	My wife convinced me to take dance lessons.	
cope with	Psychologists can help people cope with tragedies.	"Cope with" means to deal with something and emotionally process it - usually a negative thing
count on	I'm counting on you to finish the work by tomorrow.	"Count on" is like "depend on"
cover in/with	The mountains are covered with snow.	
crash into	A drunk driver crashed into a tree near my house.	
cure (someone) of (something)	The antibiotics cured her of the infection.	"Cure of" is used with diseases, but can also be used with bad habits - "Working as a journalist cured me of my tendency to procrastinate."
deal with	How do you deal with an annoying co-worker?	
decide against	When I needed money, I considered selling my car, but in the end I decided against it.	If you "decide against" something, you decide NOT to do it
decide between (someone/ something) and (someone/ something)	I'm trying to decide between buying a motorcycle and saving up the money for a car.	
decide on	The government is going to decide on the proposed new law next week.	

dedicate (something) to (someone)	I'd like to dedicate this performance to my mother, who has always helped and inspired me.	
depend on	I'll be there in 20-30 minutes, depending on the traffic.	Avoid the common error of saying "depend in" or "depend of" - it's always "depend on"!
derive (something) from (something)	Many medicines are derived from natural products like plants.	
deter (someone) from (something)	Difficulties with organic chemistry class deterred me from becoming a doctor.	
differ from	New Year's traditions differ from country to country.	
disagree with (someone / something)	I disagree with the decision to close down the program.	
disapprove of	Religious groups disapprove of that TV show; they say it's offensive.	
discourage (someone) from (something)	They discouraged us from visiting Paris, saying it was extremely expensive.	
discriminate against	He's racist - he discriminates against black and Hispanic people.	
discuss (something) with (someone)	We need to discuss these problems with the boss.	
distinguish between (someone/ something) and (someone/ something)	Cashiers need to know how to distinguish between real and counterfeit bills.	
distract (someone) from (something)	The loud music distracted me from my work.	
dream about/of	I dream about becoming a famous singer someday.	If talking about dreams (hopes) for the future, you can say "dream about" or "dream of." If talking about a dream you had when you were sleeping, use only "dream about"
elaborate on (something)	Could you elaborate on that last point? I'd like to know more.	
escape from (a place)	Three prisoners escaped from the jail last night.	

exchange (something) for (something)	I exchanged the small shirt for a medium.	
exclude (someone) from (something)	He excluded them from the meeting.	
excuse (someone) for (something)	Please excuse me for interrupting.	
expel (someone) from (a place)	He was expelled from university for using drugs.	"Expel" means someone was forced to leave a group, school, or company - usually because they did something bad
experiment on	Scientists are experimenting on monkeys to develop new medicines.	
explain (something) to (someone)	The doctor explained the procedure to me in detail.	Never say "He explained me the procedure."
feel about	How do you feel about the new company policy?	
feel like	I don't feel like going out to a nightclub. I'd rather relax at home tonight.	"I don't feel like doing it" means "I don't want to do it; I'm not in the mood for doing it"
fight about	My kids are fighting about whose turn it is to use the computer.	You "fight about" the topic of the conflict
fight against	This organization is fighting against discrimination and injustice.	You "fight against" your opponent (when it's a person or an idea/thing/etc.)
fight for	After the accident, he was fighting for his life.	You "fight for" something you approve of, or you want to have
fight with	The protestors are fighting with the police.	You "fight with" your opponent (only when it's a person)
forget about (something)	Oh no! I forgot about the meeting - now I'm going to be late.	You "forget about" a noun
forget to (do something)	I'm cold - I forgot to bring my jacket.	You "forget to" a verb
forgive (someone) for (something)	I forgave him for taking my camera without asking permission.	
gaze at	She sat on the beach, gazing at the ocean.	"Gaze" means to look at something for a long time and in a contemplative way
get back from (a place)	I just got back from the gym - I need to take a	"Get back from" is the same as "return from"

	shower	
get rid of	I got rid of some old clothes that I don't wear anymore.	"Get rid of" means to throw away or give away
get used to	I'm a relaxed person, so it was hard for me to get used to the fast pace of New York City.	
give (something) to (someone)	I gave the keys to Pamela.	You can also say "I gave Pamela the keys."
glare at	Rita glared at her husband when he started chatting with a beautiful woman at the club.	"Glare" means to look at someone/something angrily
graduate from (a place)	He graduated from Harvard University in 1986.	
grieve for	He's grieving for his mother, who died just a few days ago.	"Grieve" means to be sad about a loss - usually a death
grumble about (something)	My husband is grumbling about how early we need to get up to catch our 6 AM flight.	"Grumble" is like "complain"
happen to	What happened to your car? Did you get in an accident?	
harp on	The salesman was harping on all the wonderful benefits of the product.	"Harp on" means to emphasize something strongly (and rather annoyingly)
hear about	Did you hear about the bank robbery that happened last night?	"Hear about" is used for knowing about the details of a situation
hear from (someone)	My cousin is traveling and doesn't have much internet access, so I haven't heard from her lately.	
hear of	I've never heard of that movie.	"Hear of" is used for hearing just a mention of something (no details)
help (someone) with (something)	She really helped me with the problem.	
hide (something) from (someone)	I hid the cookies from my kids so they wouldn't eat them before dinner.	
hinge on	The success of this project hinges on teamwork and collaboration.	"Hinge on" is like "depend on" - it means teamwork and collaboration are ESSENTIAL to the success
hope for (noun)	I'm hoping for good	

hope to (verb)	weather this weekend. My husband and I are hoping to go camping.	
insist on	I thought the company website was great, but my boss insisted on redesigning it.	
insure against	My car is insured against theft.	
interfere in (something)	Don't interfere in the situation if you don't know all the facts.	"Interfere in" means to get involved in something that you shouldn't
interfere with (something)	The flight delay interfered with our travel plans.	"Interfere with" means to add an obstacle that delays or prevents something from happening
introduce (someone/ something) to (someone/ something)	I'd like to introduce you to a friend of mine from college.	
invest in	The city is investing thousands of dollars in improving public transportation.	
invite (someone) to	She invited me to her birthday party.	
joke about	Chris is always joking about how bad he is at sports.	"Joke about" is to talk about it with humor, in a funny/comedic way
jot down (something)	I jotted down a few notes during the presentation	"Jot down" is the same as "write down" - jot means "to write quickly"
keep (someone/ something) from (doing something)	A password keeps people from accessing your account.	"Keep someone from doing something" is the same as "prevent someone from doing something"
know about	He knows a lot about computers.	
laugh about	Our travel disaster was annoying at the time, but we laughed about it later.	You "laugh about" a situation
laugh at	When I said something stupid, everyone laughed at me.	You typically "laugh at" a person (although sometimes "laugh at" is used for a situation - "I laughed at her reaction to the news."
learn about	I like learning about other cultures.	
lend (something) to (someone)	I lent a book to my friend six months ago, and he hasn't given it back yet.	"Lend" is the opposite of "borrow." When you lend something, you give it to someone else temporarily

listen to	I usually listen to music on my mp3 player while I exercise.	
long for	I long for a job in which I have more flexible hours!	To "long for" something means you REALLY want something
look at	I looked at the pictures from Jason's vacation.	
look forward to	I'm looking forward to having lunch with you next week.	"Look forward to" means you are happy or excited for something in the future.
matter to (someone)	We can take the 8 AM or the 11 AM train - it doesn't matter to me.	
meet with (someone)	I met with the department manager to discuss the project.	
mistake (someone/ something) for (someone/ something)	My sister looks like a famous actress, so people always mistake her for a celebrity.	
object to	I object to the idea that stay-at-home moms are lazy. They work really hard!	If you "object to" something, it means you oppose it or strongly disagree with it
participate in (something)	Representatives from 15 countries will participate in the conference.	
pay for	I paid \$100 for this perfume.	
plan on	We plan on attending the party.	"Plan on" is followed by the -ING form of the verb
praise (someone) for (something)	He praised me for my creative solution to the problem.	
pray for	I'm praying for you to feel better soon.	
prefer (something) to (something)	I prefer swimming to biking.	
prepare for	The sports team is preparing for the tournament next month.	
present (someone) with (something)	The company presented Randy with an award for excellent service.	
prevent (someone/ something) from	Computer problems prevented me from finishing my work yesterday.	

(doing something)		
prohibit (someone) from (doing something)	Employees are prohibited from smoking inside the office.	
protect (someone) from (something)	Wearing a bicycle helmet can protect you from serious head injuries.	
provide (someone) with (something)	We provided all the children with computers.	
punish (someone) for (something)	I punished my teenage daughter for going to a party without my permission.	
quarrel with (someone) about/over (something)	We quarreled with the hotel receptionist about the extra charges on our bill.	"Quarrel" is the same as "argue" (have a verbal conflict)
react to	Environmental groups are reacting to the city's plans to build a new shopping center in the middle of the park.	
recover from (something)	She stayed home from work because she's still recovering from pneumonia.	
refer to (something)	Please refer to the diagram on page 15.	
related to	The website has information on various topics related to pregnancy.	"Related to" is also used for family members - "I'm related to a famous actor. He's my cousin."
rely on	You can't rely on other people to make you happy.	"Rely on" is like "depend on"
remind (someone) of (something)	You remind me of my sister - you have a similar personality.	
remind (someone) to (do something)	I reminded my husband to buy some milk at the store on the way home from work.	
reply to	I'll reply to your e-mail later today.	
rescue (someone) from (something)	The coast guard rescued the fisherman from the sinking boat.	
respond to	The film director responded to the criticisms about his latest movie.	
result in (something)	The advertising campaign resulted in hundreds of new customers for the company.	
save (someone) from (something)	The fireman saved the child from the burning building.	
scold (someone) for	The teacher scolded the	To "scold" is to reprimand or criticize

([doing] something)	student for coming to class late.	someone for doing something wrong
search for	I'm searching for a two-bedroom apartment in the city center.	You can use "searching for" or "looking for"
separate (something) from (something)	I separated last year's documents from this year's documents.	
share (something) with (someone)	I shared the food with my brother.	
shout at	My mother shouted at me when I left a big mess in the kitchen.	To "shout" is to yell, to speak very loudly. You can also say "yell at"
show (something) to (someone)	I showed my new cell phone to all my friends.	
smile at (someone)	She smiled at me.	
speak to/with (someone) about (someone / something)	I spoke with my son's teacher about his behavior in school.	Both "to" and "with" can be used after "speak," but "with" implies more of a two-way conversation. If the conversation is only one way, use "to" - "The president spoke to an audience of 5,000."
specialize in (something)	I'm a biologist. I specialize in the study of tropical plants.	
spend (money/time) on	I spent \$300 on this backpack because I wanted one that was really high-quality.	
stand for	NATO stands for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.	
stare at	When I dyed my hair bright green, a lot of children stared at me.	"Stare" means to look at something intensely for a long time
stem from	The current health crisis stems from lack of nutritional education.	"Stem from" is like "originate in"
stop (someone) from (doing something)	I stopped the child from playing with the scissors.	
subject (someone) to (something)	I was subjected to verbal abuse from my boss in my previous job - that's why I quit.	
subscribe to	I don't subscribe to any magazines - I just read them online.	
substitute (something) for	You can substitute chicken for beef in this	

(something)	recipe.	
succeed in (doing something)	She succeeded in running a marathon in under 4 hours.	
suffer from	My aunt suffers from arthritis.	
suspect (someone) of (something)	He is suspected of planning a terrorist attack.	
take advantage of (someone/ something/ situation)	With low interest rates, many people took advantage of the opportunity to buy a house.	If you "take advantage of" someone, it has a negative connotation - you are using that person for your own benefit. If you "take advantage of" a situation, it can be negative, but it can also be neutral - as in the example sentence.
take care of	I'm taking care of my neighbors' dog while they're traveling this weekend.	
talk to/with (someone) about (topic)	I need to talk with you about plans for next year.	Similar to "speak to/with"
tell (someone) about (something)	Caroline told us about her trip to South Africa.	
thank (someone) for (something)	Thank you for helping me with my homework.	
think about	I'm thinking about taking piano lessons.	
think of	He thought of a great way to increase sales.	
translate (something) into (a language)	We need to translate this document into Italian.	
travel to (somewhere)	We're traveling to Moscow by train.	
trust (someone) with (something)	I trust her with my car - she's a careful driver.	
turn into	The city is going to turn this old church into a museum.	"Turn into" means to transform
use (something) for (-ING) / to (infinitive)	I use vitamins to give me more energy.	
vote against	That senator voted against a law proposing stricter measures for gun control.	"Vote against" means you oppose it, you vote NO

vote for	I'm going to vote for Janet for president.	"Vote for" means you support it, you vote YES
vouch for (someone / something)	I can vouch for him - he's an honest and dependable guy.	If you "vouch for" someone/something, it means you recommend it because you have experience with it
wait for (someone/something)	I can't leave yet because I'm waiting for my wife to finish putting on her makeup.	
warn about	They warned us about the poisonous snakes in the forest.	
waste (money/time) on	I wasted \$10 on a flashlight that didn't even work.	
work for (a company / person)	I work for a car dealership.	
work on (a project / task)	We're working on a new project.	
worry about	My grandmother always worries about my safety.	
write about	The journalist wrote about the election.	
write to (someone)	Make sure to write to your grandparents and thank them for the gift.	
yap about	The secretaries were yapping about the newest episode of the TV show.	To "yap" is to talk or chat in an annoying way
yearn for	The poor children are yearning for a better life.	"Yearn for" is like "long for" - it means you really want something, with a lot of emotion