

a·bout¹

S1 W1

/ə'baʊt/

preposition

1 ABOUT concerning or relating to a particular subject:

a book about politics

She said something about leaving town.

He lied about his age.

About that car of yours. How much are you selling it for?

What's he on about? (= talking about)

***It's about** Tommy, doctor. He's been sick again.*

*Naturally, my mother wanted to know **all about** it* (= all the details relating to it).

2 used to show why someone is angry, happy, upset etc:

I'm really worried about Jack.

She's upset about missing the party.

3 ABOUT in many different directions within a particular place, or in different parts of a place

SYN around,
round

We spent the whole afternoon walking about town.

Books were scattered about the room.

4 ABOUT in the nature or character of a person or thing:

***There's something** really strange **about** Liza.*

***What I like about** the job is that it's never boring.*

5 what/how about somebody/something (spoken)

a) ASK FOR SOMETHING/ASK SOMEBODY TO DO SOMETHING

used to ask a question that directs attention to another person or thing:

*What about Jack? We can't just leave him here.
I'm feeling hungry. How about you?*

b) SUGGEST

used to make a suggestion:

How about a salad for lunch?

6 do something about something STOP SOMETHING THAT IS HAPPENING

to do something to solve a problem or stop a bad situation:

If we don't do something about it, the problem is going to get worse.

What can be done about the rising levels of pollution?

7 PURPOSE if an organization, a job, an activity etc is about something, that is its basic purpose:

*Leadership is **all about** getting your team to co-operate.*

8 it's all about somebody/something

used to say who or what is important in a situation:

It's all about money, and who's got the most.

9 while you're about it (spoken)

used to tell someone to do something while they are doing something else because it would be easier to do both things at the same time:

Go and see what's the matter, and while you're about it you can fetch me my sweater.

10 what was all that about? (spoken)

used to ask the reason for something that has just happened, especially someone's angry behaviour

11 (literary) surrounding a person or thing:

Jo sensed fear and jealousy all about her.

→ **be quick about it** AT QUICK¹ (5),

→ **go about your business** AT BUSINESS (12)

THESAURUS

about used when saying what the subject of something is:
She's always talking about you. | In her novels she writes about life in South Africa. | There's something I wanted to ask you about.

ON about a particular subject: *a book on English grammar | a report on poverty in rural areas*

concerning/ regarding (formal) **about:** *Prince Saïd answered questions concerning Kuwait's future. | The report raises a number of questions regarding food safety.*

with regard to (formal) **about** – used especially when you want to start talking or writing about something: *Dear Sir, I'm writing with regard to your advertisement in The Times.*

re used in business letters and in emails to introduce the subject that you are going to write about: *Re: Friday's meeting*