

by¹ S1 W1
 /baɪ/
 preposition

1 | who/what does something used especially with a PASSIVE verb to say who or what does something or makes something happen:

I was attacked by a dog.

a church designed by the famous architect, Sir Christopher Wren

We are all alarmed by the rise in violent crime.

interference by the state in the affairs of the Church

his appointment by the BBC as a producer

2 WAY/METHOD **| means/method** used to say what means or method someone uses to do something:

You can reserve the tickets by phone.

Send it by airmail.

Some customers prefer to pay by cheque.

by car/train/bus/taxi etc

They travelled to Chicago by train.

by air/sea/land/road/rail etc

All supplies are transported by air.

by doing something

She earns her living by selling insurance.

He was taken from his home by force.

3 | road/door used to say which road, entrance, door etc someone uses to get to a place:

They came in by the back door.

It's quicker to go by the country route.

4 | taking hold used to say which part of an object or of a person's body someone takes hold of:

He took Elaine by the arm and led her across the road.

She grabbed the hammer by the handle.

- 5** COME FROM/ORIGINATE **writer/composer etc** used to give the name of someone who wrote a book, produced a film, wrote a piece of music etc:

the 'New World Symphony' by Dvorak

a short story by Charles Dickens

Who's it by?

- 6** NEXT TO **beside** beside or near something:

She stood by the window.

Jane went and sat by Patrick.

- 7** NEXT TO **past** past someone or something without stopping:

He walked right by me without even saying hello.

I pass by the farm every day on my way to work.

- 8** BEFORE **before** before or not later than a particular time:

The documents need to be ready by next Friday.

I reckon the film should be over by 9.30.

By the end of the day we had sold over 2,000 tickets.

By the time we got home we were tired and hungry.

- 9** DEPEND/IT DEPENDS **according to** according to a particular rule, method, or way of doing things:

You've got to play by the rules.

Profits were £6 million, but by our standards this is low.

- 10** **change/difference** used to say how great a change or difference is:

The price of oil fell by a further \$2 a barrel.

I was overcharged by £3.

*Godard's first film was better **by far** (= by a large amount or degree) .*

- 11** SIZE **measurements** used to give the measurements of a room, container etc:

a room 15 metres by 23 metres

- 12** **quantity** used to show what unit of measurement or quantity is involved

in selling, paying for, producing etc something:

Eggs are sold by the dozen.

We're paid by the hour.

She wanted to tear his hair out by the handful.

13 **gradual change** used to say that something happens gradually:

Day by day, he grew weaker.

Little by little, I was beginning to discover the truth about Garfield.

One by one, the men stepped forward.

14 **quick change** used to say that something or someone is quickly becoming worse, better etc:

The financial crisis was growing more serious by the hour.

15 **DURING light** used to say that something happens in a particular kind of light:

We walked through the palace gardens by moonlight.

16 **by day/night** DURING

during the day or the night:

a tour of Paris by night

17 **job/nature etc** used when you are giving information about someone's character, job, origin etc:

George I and George II were Germans by birth.

Cautious by nature, Simpkin was reluctant to interfere.

Robert Key was a teacher by profession.

18 **VISIT visiting** in order to visit a person or place for a short time:

On the way, I stopped by the post office.

19 **(all) by yourself**

a) ALONE

completely alone:

Dave spent Christmas all by himself.

b)

without help from anyone:

You can't move the furniture all by yourself.

20 COUNT/CALCULATE **multiplying/dividing** used between two numbers when talking about multiplying or dividing:

What's 48 divided by 4?

21 **emphasis** used when expressing strong feelings or making serious promises:

By God, I'll kill that boy when I see him!

22 BABY/HAVE A BABY **father** if a woman has children by a particular man, that man is the children's father:

She's got two children by her previous husband.

23 **by the by** (spoken) MENTION

used when mentioning something that may be interesting but is not particularly important:

By the by, Ian said he might call round tonight.

→ **by the way** AT WAY

Grammar

by, with

By is used, especially after passive verbs, to say who or what does something:

The article was written by a university professor.

She was hit by a truck.

With is used after verbs that describe a state rather than an action:

The books were covered with dust (NOT by dust).

Her house is always filled with music.

By is used to say what means or method someone uses to do something:

He replied by email.

With is used to say what tool is used to do something:

Clean the surface thoroughly with a wire brush (NOT by a wire brush).

Word origin

Language: Old English

Origin: *be*, *bi*