

# before<sup>2</sup>

S1 W1

## preposition

**1** BEFORE earlier than something or someone

### OPP

*The new road should be completed before the end of the year.*

*Let's meet at our house before the show.*

*Larry arrived home before me.*

**five minutes/two hours etc before something**

*Hugh arrived just five minutes before the ceremony.*

**before doing something**

*I usually take a shower before having my breakfast.*

*We only got back from Scotland **the day before yesterday** (= two days ago) .*

*Other students joined in the protest, and **before long** (= soon) there was a crowd of 200 or so.*

**2** BEFORE ahead of someone or something else in a list or order

### OPP

*You were before me in the queue.*

*The files are in alphabetical order, so B1 comes before C1.*

**3** FRONT used to say that something happens where it can be watched by people

**SYN** in front of

*Italy will face Brazil this afternoon before a crowd of 100,000 spectators.*

*an actor who had performed before the Queen*

**4** SHOW/LET SOMEBODY SEE SOMETHING used to say that someone or something comes to be judged or considered by a person or group of people:

*The proposal was put before the planning committee.*

- 5** **IMPORTANT** used to say that one thing or person is considered more important than another:

*I put my wife and kids before anyone else.*

*In the air transport business, safety must always come before profit.*

- 6** **(formal)** **FRONT** in front of something or someone:

*The priest stood before the altar.*

*The sea stretched out before them.*

- 7** **FRONT** if one place is before another place on a road or journey, the first place is nearer to you than the second, so you will reach it first

**OPP**

*The pub is 100 m before the church on the right.*

*the last station before the Simplon Tunnel*

- 8** **(formal)** **DO** if there is a job or situation before you, you will have to do the job or face the situation

**SYN** ahead of

*The task of emptying the house lay before us.*

- 9** **(formal)** **BEFORE** if a period of time is before you, it is about to start and you can do what you want during it

**SYN** in front of

*We had a glorious summer afternoon before us to do as we pleased.*

*You have your whole life before you.*

## THESAURUS

**before** earlier than something or someone: *She could read before she started school. | Do you want to have a shower before me?*

**prior to** (formal) before something happens: *Please arrive at the airport two hours prior to departure.*

**by** no later than a particular time or date: *The children are usually in bed by 9 o'clock. | We have to be out of our hotel room by 10 o'clock.*

**earlier** before now, or before the time you are talking about: *I saw her earlier. | I had sent the letter earlier in the week.*

**previously** before now, or before a time in the past: *He previously worked as an electrician. | The show starred a previously unknown actress called Jennifer Aniston.*

**in advance** before something happens – used especially when talking about the arrangements for something: *Let me know in advance if you are going to be late. | The landlord wants three months' rent in advance.*

**beforehand** (also **ahead of time**) before something happens, especially so that you are ready: *I wish we had known about all this beforehand. | It's always best to decide beforehand how much you want to pay.*

### Word origin

**Language:** Old English

**Origin:** *beforan*, from *foran* 'before', from *fore*; → [FORE-](#)