

PREPOSITIONS

Prepositions: Uses

- We commonly use prepositions to show a relationship in space or time or a logical relationship between two or more people, places or things.
- Prepositions are most commonly followed by a noun phrase or pronoun (underlined):
 - The last time I saw him he was walking **down** the road.
 - I'll meet you in the cafe **opposite** the cinema.
 - It was difficult to sleep **during** the flight.
 - It was the worst storm **since** the 1980s.
 - Give that **to** me.

On

- On (refers to a surface of something) - *I kept the dishes on the dining table.*
- On (specific days and dates) - *I will come on Monday. Radha was born on 15th August.*
- On (refers to TV or other devices) - *She is on the phone. My favorite movie will be on TV now.*
- On (refers to the parts of the body) — *I keep wearing my wedding ring on my finger.*
- On (to refer a state) - *The products available in the store are on sale.*

At

- At (to indicate a place) - *There are a good number of people at the park.*
- At (to refer an email address) - *Please mail in detail @ (at) xyz@xyz.com*
- At (to refer a time) - *Meet me at 5 p.m. tomorrow.*
- At (indicate one's activity) - *John laughed at my acting in the play.*

In

- In (to indicate a location or place) - *I live in Mumbai.*
- In (used while doing something) - *The tagline should be catchy in marketing a product.*
- In (to indicate opinion, belief, feeling, etc.) - *I believe in hardworking.*
- In (specify day, month, season, year) - *I prefer to do Math in the morning. The new academic session will commence in March.*
- In (to indicate color, shape and size) - *This dress comes in four sizes.*



To

- To (to indicate the destination) - *The friends went to the restaurant. I am heading to my college.*
- To (to indicate relationship) - *Do not respond to the annoying persons. Your answer is important to me.*
- To (to indicate a limit) - *The old newspapers were piled up to the roof.*
- To (to refer a period) - *I am here from 10 to 5.*

Of

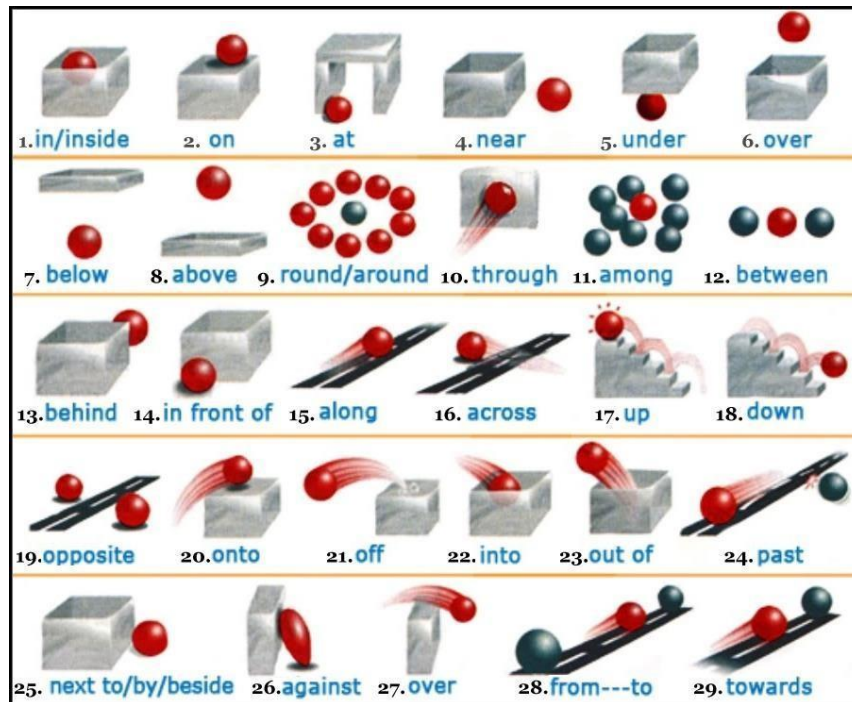
- Of (to indicate relating to, belonging to) - *I always dreamed of being famous.*
- Of (to indicate reference) - *This is a picture of my last birthday.*
- Of (to specify the number or an amount) - *A good number of people understand Hindi.*

For

- For (to indicate the reason or because of) - *I am really happy for you.*
- For (to indicate the duration or time) - *I attended the session for one year only.*
- For (specify the use of something) - *She is preparing for her final exam.*

Prepositions or conjunctions?

- Some words which are prepositions also function as conjunctions.
- When we use a preposition that is followed by a clause, it functions as a conjunction; when we use a preposition that is followed by a noun phrase, it stays as a preposition.
- Among the most common are after, as, before, since, until:
 - **After** I'd met him last night, I texted his sister at once. (conjunction)
 - **After** the meeting last night, I texted his sister at once. (preposition)
 - We'll just have to wait **until** they decide what to do. (conjunction)
 - Okay, we'll wait here **until** six o'clock. (preposition)



Preposition	Meaning	Example
above	higher than, or over	<i>The sun is above the clouds.</i>
across	from one side to the other	<i>It's dangerous to run across the road.</i>
after	- following something - later than	- <i>The boy ran after the ball.</i> - <i>I'll phone you after lunch.</i>
against	- in opposition to - in contact with	- <i>Stealing is against the law.</i> - <i>The sofa is against the wall.</i>
along	from one end to the other	<i>They are walking along the street.</i>
among	surrounded by	<i>Peter was among the spectators.</i>

around	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in a circle - near, approximately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - He walked around the table. - It costs around 50 euros.
before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - earlier than - in front of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The day before yesterday. - He bowed before the king.
behind	at the back of	Passengers sit behind the driver.
below	lower than	His shorts are below his knees.
beneath	under	The pen was beneath the books.
beside	next to	The bank is beside the cinema.
between	in the space separating two things	Mary sat between Tom and Jane.
by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - near, at the side of - not later than 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The restaurant is by the river. - The boss wants the report by Friday.
close to	near	The school is close to the church.
down	from higher to lower	She pulled down the blind.
for	what is intended	I bought this book for you.
from	where something starts or originates	The wind is blowing from the north.
in	at a point within an area	The pen is in the drawer.
in front of	directly before	The child ran out in front of the bus.

inside	on the inner part of	<i>The bird is inside the cage.</i>
into	enter a closed space	<i>He went into the shop.</i>
near	close to	<i>The school is near the church.</i>
next to	beside	<i>The bank is next to the cinema.</i>
off	down or away from	<i>He fell off the horse.</i>
on	in a position touching a surface	<i>The plate is on the table.</i>
onto	move to a position on a surface	<i>The cat jumped onto the roof of the car.</i>
opposite	facing, on the other side	<i>Eva sat opposite Tom at the table.</i>
out of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - move from a closed space - without 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - He got out of the taxi. - She's out of work.
outside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - opposite of inside - on the outer side 	<i>The garden is outside the house.</i>
over	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - above/across - on the surface of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The plane flew over the Atlantic. - She put a sheet over the furniture.
past	beyond	<i>She drove past the supermarket.</i>
round	in a circular movement	<i>The earth moves round the sun.</i>
through	from one side to the other	<i>The Seine flows through Paris.</i>

throughout	in every part of	<i>The virus spread throughout the coun- try.</i>
to	denotes destination	<i>On the way to the station.</i>
towards	in the direction of	<i>The child ran towards her father.</i>
under	beneath, below	<i>Water flows under the bridge.</i>
under- neath	beneath	<i>There was dust underneath the rug.</i>
up	towards or in a higher position	<i>She walked up the stairs.</i>
within	inside	<i>They live within the old city.</i>
without	not have or lack something	<i>I don't like coffee without milk</i>

Prepositions or adverbs?

- Several words which are prepositions also belong to the word class of adverbs.
- These include: about, across, around, before, beyond, in, inside, near, opposite, outside, past, round, through, under, up, within.

Example:

1. There were lots of people waiting for a taxi **outside** the club. (preposition)
2. **A:** Where's your cat?
B: *She's **outside**.* (adverb)
3. The gallery is **opposite** to the Natural History Museum. (preposition)
4. **A:** Can you tell me where the bus station is?
B: It's over there, just **opposite**. (adverb)

Prepositions and abstract meanings

- Common prepositions that show relationships of space often have abstract as well as concrete meanings.

Compare

<i>That map you need is behind the filing cabinet.</i> (basic spatial sense or position)	<i>Everyone is behind the government.</i> (<i>behind</i> = gives support)
<i>Beyond the hotel were beautiful mountains.</i> (basic spatial sense or position)	<i>Learning Chinese in a year was beyond them all.</i> (<i>beyond</i> = too difficult for)

Some common prepositions such as *at*, *in* and *on* can have abstract meanings:

- *I think you will both need to discuss the problem **in** private.*
- *All three singers were dressed **in** black.*
- *You now have the next day **at** leisure and can do whatever you wish.*
- *Our dog stays **on** guard all night, even when he's sleeping!*

Prepositions and adjectives

- We commonly use prepositions after adjectives.
- Here are the most common adjective + preposition patterns.

Adjectives	Preposition	Example
aware, full	of	<i>They weren't aware of the time.</i>
different, separate	from	<i>Is French very different from Spanish?</i>
due, similar	to	<i>This picture is similar to the one in our living room.</i>
familiar, wrong	with	<i>What's wrong with Isabelle?</i>
good, surprised*	at	<i>We were really surprised at the price of food in restaurants on our holiday.</i>
interested	in	<i>Lots of people are interested in Grand Prix racing but I'm not.</i>
responsible, good	for	<i>Exercise is good for everyone.</i>
worried, excited	about	<i>We're really excited about our trip to Argentina.</i>

*We can also say *surprised by*

Prepositions and Nouns

Many nouns have particular prepositions which normally follow them. For example,

- *There's been a large **increase in** the price of petrol.*
- *Does anyone know the **cause of** the fire?*

Many verbs go together with prepositions to make prepositional verbs. These always have an object:

- *I just couldn't **do without** my phone.*
- *Robert **accused** her **of** stealing his idea.*

Phrasal-prepositional verbs contain a verb, an adverb particle and a preposition (underlined). We cannot separate the particle and the preposition:

- *The taxi is due any minute. Can you **listen out** for it?*
- *I can't **put up** with this noise any longer.*

Omission of Preposition

In some conditions we omit the preposition, because there is no need of preposition. There is no use of preposition before the object of transitive verb. For example,

- *I shall meet him yesterday. (No meet with him)*
- *They caught him there. (No caught to him)*
- *She read a book. (No read of a book)*
- *We have done our task. (No we have done of our ...)*

Before the expression of time or place we don't use preposition like (for, from, in, on). For example,

- *My father came here last week (No in last week)*
- *I am going abroad. (No going to abroad)*
- *Please wait a minute. (No wait for a minute)*
- *She is standing outside. (No on outside)*

Don't use preposition if there are any qualifying words like this, that, next, every, last, all, before the time expression words like - day, night, morning, evening year, month ...like

- *She went this morning.*
- *They met him last evening.*
- *He is not coming again next Sunday.*

But we can use preposition with time expression words if they come without qualifying words. For example,

- *She went in the morning.*
- *They met him in the evening.*
- *He is coming again next Sunday.*
- *He is not coming again on Sunday.*

- *She doesn't come in the night.*

Don't use preposition before words like yesterday, today, tomorrow. For example,

- *He will come tomorrow.*
- *He is not coming today.*
- *They came yesterday.*
- *I met him last Sunday. (NOT I met him on last Sunday.)*
- *I met him on Sunday.*
- *We may discuss it next time. (NOT We may discuss it at next time.)*
- *See you next week. (NOT See you in the next week.)*
- *I am free this evening. (NOT I am free in this evening.)*
- *You can come any time. (NOT You can come at any time.)*
- *I worked all day. (NOT I worked on all day.)*
- *Let's meet one day. (NOT Let's meet on one day.)*
- *These prepositions are not used before yesterday, the day before yesterday, tomorrow or the day after tomorrow.*
- *She is coming tomorrow. (NOT She is coming on tomorrow.)*
- *I met him yesterday. (NOT I met him on yesterday.)*

No preposition before home

- *I am going home.*
- *I go home every weekend.*

Practice Questions

Fill in the correct prepositions.

1. Peter is playing tennis _____ Sunday.
2. My brother's birthday is _____ the 5th of November.
3. My birthday is _____ May.
4. We are going to see my parents _____ the weekend.
5. _____ 1666, a great fire broke out in London.
6. I don't like walking alone in the streets _____ night.
7. What are you doing _____ the afternoon?
8. My friend has been living in Canada _____ two years.

Answers

1. Peter is playing tennis **on** Sunday.
2. My brother's birthday is **on** the 5th of November.
3. My birthday is **in** May.
4. We are going to see my parents **at** the weekend.
5. **In** 1666, a great fire broke out in London.
6. I don't like walking alone in the streets **at** night.
7. What are you doing **in** the afternoon?
8. My friend has been living **in** Canada for two years.

Common Mistakes with Prepositions

1. Arrive at or Arrive in

- You always arrive at a specific place: school, a restaurant, the airport, your aunt's house.
- You arrive in a city or a country.

Example:

- *When we arrived at Claudio's house...*
- *The train arrived at Shibuya station thirty seconds late.*
- *On Friday, the president arrived in Poland.*
- *The K-pop band arrived in Phnom Penh last week.*

2. At night

- You can work hard in the morning, relax in the afternoon, eat dinner in the evening, but you go out at night.

Example:

- *We often go out at night.*
- *Mumbai looks beautiful at night.*

3. Look for or Wait for

- If you want to find something or someone, you look for (or search for) them.
- If you stay in one place until something or someone is ready, you wait for them.

Example:

- *I was looking for my glasses.*
- *Lucas is looking for a new job.*
- *Giulia was waiting for me at the bus stop.*
- *Tevy is waiting for her sister to finish class.*

4. For (period of time)

- You use for with periods of time, such as:
 - for a few minutes
 - for three months
 - for twenty years

Since (specific points in time)

- You use since with specific points in time, such as:
 - this morning
 - September
 - the day we met

Example:

- *I've been working here for five years.*
- *She hasn't drunk coffee for years.*
- *Mike's been living in Yokohama since February.*
- *I haven't seen her since yesterday morning.*

5. live/work/study in (cities and countries)

- You **live, work, or study in** a city or a country.
- You **live at** a specific address, **work at** or for a specific organization, or **study at** a specific university.)

Example:

- *I live in Tokyo.*
- *Roberta works in Sassari.*
- *Hector studies in Canada.*
- *Ana lives at 34 Brown Street.*
- *Rahul works for Toyota.*
- *Dara studies at Phnom Penh International University.*

6. It depends on

- Remember, you always say it depends on or depending on something or someone – or you can just say it depends.

Example:

- *It depends on what you want: Italian food or Chinese food.*
- *We'll go to either Disney World or the beach, depending on the weather.*
- *What do you usually have for breakfast – tea or coffee? – It depends!*

7. Welcome to

- You always say welcome to any place: a house, school, organization, city, or country.

Example:

- *Welcome to Peru!*
- *Welcome to Cagliari.*
- *Welcome to Meiji University.*
- *Welcome to the Plaza Hotel. We hope you enjoy your stay.*

8. Married to

- You are always married to – or you get married to – someone. However, you just marry someone.

Example:

- *He's married to Kim.*
- *Alessandro's getting married to Sara next summer.*
- *Haruka is marrying my old school friend.*