

A

We use **by** in many expressions to say how we do something. For example, you can:

- send something **by post** contact somebody **by phone** / **by email**
do something **by hand** pay **by credit card** / **by cheque**

- ☐ Can I pay **by credit card**?
☐ You can contact me **by phone** or **by email**.

But we say **pay cash** or **pay in cash** (*not usually by cash*).

We also say that something happens **by mistake** / **by accident** / **by chance**:

- ☐ We hadn't arranged to meet. We met **by chance**.

But we say 'do something **on purpose**' (= you mean to do it):

- ☐ I didn't do it **on purpose**. It was an accident.

Note that we say **by chance**, **by credit card** etc. (*not by the chance* / *by a credit card*). In these expressions we use **by** + *noun* without **the** or **a**.

B

In the same way we use **by** ... to say how somebody travels:

- by car** / **by train** / **by plane** / **by boat** / **by ship** / **by bus** / **by bike** etc.
by road / **by rail** / **by air** / **by sea**

- ☐ Jess usually goes to work **by bus**.

But we say **on foot**:

- ☐ Did you come here **by car** or **on foot**?

You cannot use **by** if you say **my car** / **the train** / **a taxi** etc. We say:

- by car** *but* **in my car** (*not by my car*)
by train *but* **on the train** (*not by the train*)

We use **in** for cars and taxis:

- ☐ They didn't come **in their car**. They came **in a taxi**.

We use **on** for bikes and public transport (buses, trains etc.):

- ☐ We travelled **on the 6.45 train**.

C

We say that 'something is done **by** somebody/something' (*passive*):

- ☐ Have you ever been bitten **by a dog**?
☐ The programme was watched **by millions of people**.

Compare **by** and **with**:

- ☐ The door must have been opened **with a key**. (*not by a key*)
(= somebody used a key to open it)
☐ The door must have been opened **by somebody** with a key.

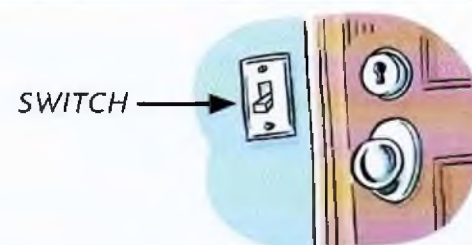
We say 'a play **by Shakespeare**' / 'a painting **by Rembrandt**' / 'a novel **by Tolstoy**' etc.:

- ☐ Have you read anything **by Ernest Hemingway**?

D

By also means 'next to / beside':

- ☐ Come and sit **by me**. (= next to me)
☐ 'Where's the light switch?' '**By the door**.'



E

Note the following use of **by**:

- ☐ Clare's salary has just gone up **from** £2,500 a month **to** £2,750. So it has increased **by £250** / **by ten per cent**.
☐ Carl and Mike had a race over 200 metres. Carl won **by** about **three metres**.

