

Prepositions of Time

Basic examples of time prepositions include: at, on, in, before and after.

They are used to help indicate when something happened, happens or will happen. It can get a little confusing though, as many different prepositions can be used.

Prepositions of time examples in the following sentences are in bold for easy identification.

For example:

- I was born **on** July 4th, 1982.
- I was born **in** 1982.
- I was born **at** exactly 2am.
- I was born two minutes **before** my twin brother.
- I was born **after** the Great War ended.

For years, months, seasons, centuries and times of day, use the preposition in:

- I first met John in 1987.
- It's always cold in January.

For days, dates and specific holiday days, use the preposition on.

1. We go to school on Mondays, but not on Sunday
2. Christmas is on December 25th

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For times, indicators of exception and festivals, use the preposition at:

- Families often argue at Christmas time.
- I work faster at night.

Other prepositions of time could include: During, about, around, until and throughout.

- The concert will be staged throughout the month of May.
- I learned how to ski during the holidays.
- He usually arrives around 3pm.
- It was about six in the morning when we made it to bed.
- The store is open until midnight.

PREPOSITIONS OF TIME

PREPOSITION	EXPLANATION	EXAMPLE
During	Used to say when something happens.	We stayed at a student hostel during the conference.
For	Used with a period of time.	I'm just going to bed for two hours or so.
Until/Till	Used as a preposition means "up to"	We wait till/until half past six for you.
Since	Refer back to a previous point in time.	Forty years have passed away since they met.
From...to	To show when something begins & ends.	Her visit will extend from Monday to Thursday.
Ago	To talk about past times in reference to the current moment.	He left the house over an hour ago .
Before	Refer to a point in time before a specific time in the past.	She's always up before dawn.
By	"Not later than" or any time until this point.	He had promised to be back by five o'clock.
After	Used when we want to say "later in time than".	I felt fairly easy after taking the medicine.
To	Telling the time, when referring to the number of minutes before the hour.	It's a quarter to two.
Past	Used to tell the time.	It's five past ten.
Between...and	To talk about time that separates two points.	They lived in New York between 1998 and 2004.
Within	Used to talk about during a period of time.	You should receive a reply within seven days.

Time Prepositions

I always wake up---- 7 o'clock.

Let's meet ----Saturday

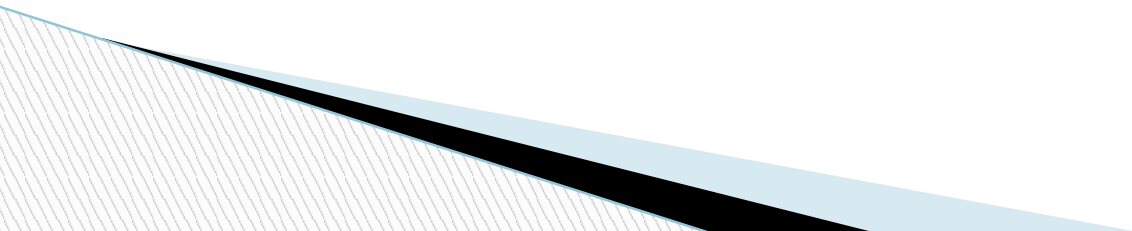
She goes to the gym --- the evening

I have lived here ----I was 15.

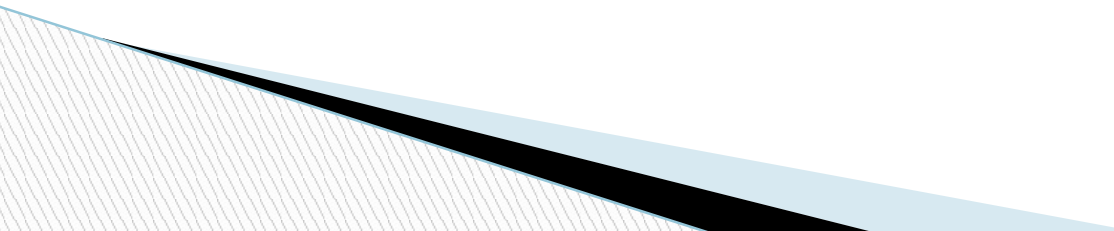
You will have to wait ---- 10 minutes

We stayed there _____ three weeks.

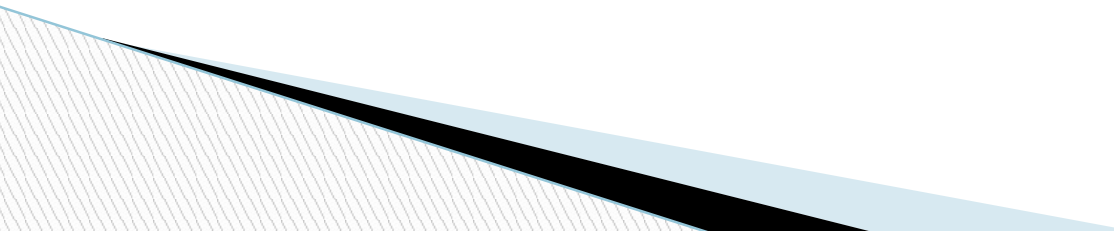
At, on, in, since, for



Fill in at, on, in, for, or since.

1. The course begins ---- 7 January and ends ---- 10 March.
 2. I went to bed ---- midnight.
 3. We arrived---- 5 o'clock----- the morning.
 4. Mozart was born in Salzburg ----- 1756.
 5. Are you doing anything special----- the weekend?
 6. Hurry up! We have to go---- five minutes.
 7. I met Ann ----- Tuesday.
 8. He has lived in India ----- two years.
 9. I'll phone you---- Tuesday morning----- about 10.
 10. Tom's grandmother died in 1987---- the age of 81.
 11. Jack's brother is out of work ---- the moment.
 12. The price of electricity is going up ----- October.
 13. I haven't seen him---- Christmas.
 14. -----Sunday afternoons I usually get up late.
 15. There are usually a lot of parties ----- New Year's Eve.
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Answers

1. On,on
 2. At,
 3. At,in
 4. In
 5. On
 6. In
 7. On
 8. For
 9. On, at
 10. At
 11. At
 12. In
 13. Since
 14. On
 15. on
- 

Preposition of Place

To confuse matters a bit, the most common prepositions to indicate time – **on, at, in** – are also the most common prepositions to indicate position. However, the rules are a little clearer as place prepositions are a more rigid concept than time prepositions.

Prepositions of place examples in the following sentences are in bold for easy identification.

- **The cat is on the table.**
- **The dogs are in the kennel.**
- **We can meet at the crossroads.**

Prepositions



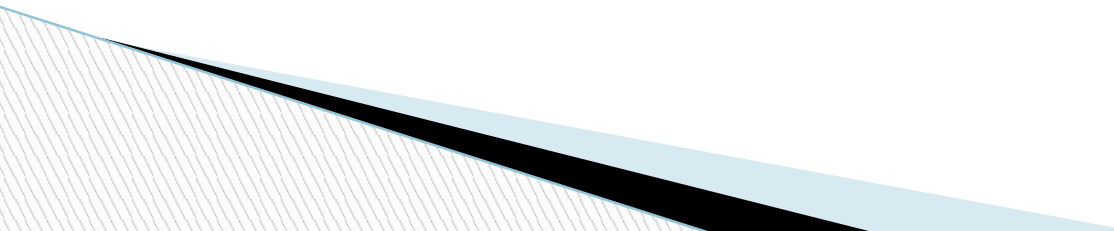
On is used when referring to something with a surface:

- The sculpture hangs on the wall.
- The images are on the page.

In is used when referring to something that is inside or within confined boundaries. This could be anything, even a country:

- Jim is in France, visiting his aunt in the hospital.
- The whiskey is in the jar in the fridge.

At is used when referring to something at a specific point:

- The boys are at the entrance at the movie theater.
 - He stood at the bus stop at the corner of Water and High streets.
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PREPOSITIONS OF PLACE

PREPOSITION	EXPLANATION	EXAMPLE
Above	At or to a higher place or position than something/someone	Our friends in the apartment above us are really noisy.
After	One follows the other	He ran after her with the book.
By	Near or at the side of	The telephone is by the window.
Beneath	Under someone or something	Jaime hid the letter beneath a pile of papers.
Next to /Beside	At the side of someone or something	We lay beside the pool to dry off in the sun.
Near/Close to	A short distance from a person or thing	There is a bush near the school playground.
Between	Something in the middle of two objects (places)	There is a gulf between the two cities.
Among	In the middle of or surrounded by other people or things	The girl quickly disappeared among the crowd.
In front of	Farther forward than someone or something else	They massed in front of the city hall.
Behind	At or towards the back of a thing or person	The horse fell behind in the race.
Across from /Opposite	In a position facing someone or something but on the other side	The hospital is opposite the post office.
Under	Below or at a lower level than something, or covered by something	We slept under the open sky.
Below	In a lower place or position than something else	He dived below the surface of the water.
Over	On something or covering it	She held the umbrella over both of us.

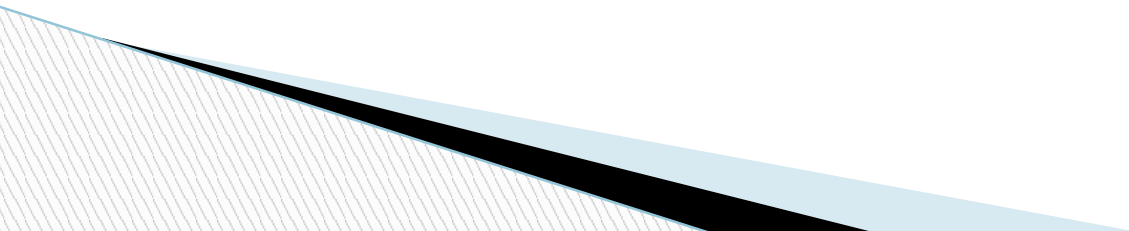
Choose from: at, in, on, under

Your shoes are ---- the table

We hung the painting ---- the wall

The bike is ----the garden

She is waiting ----the bus stop



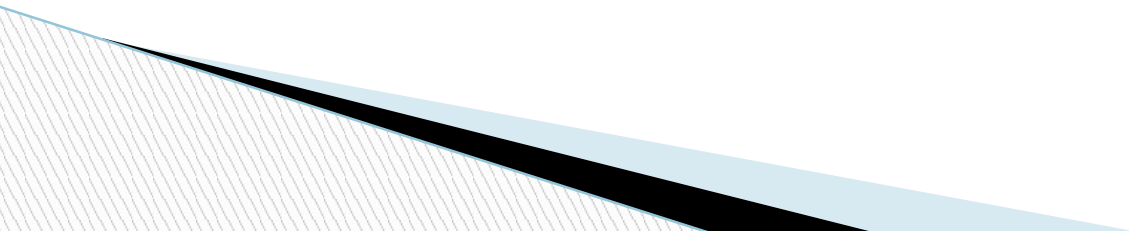
Answers

Under

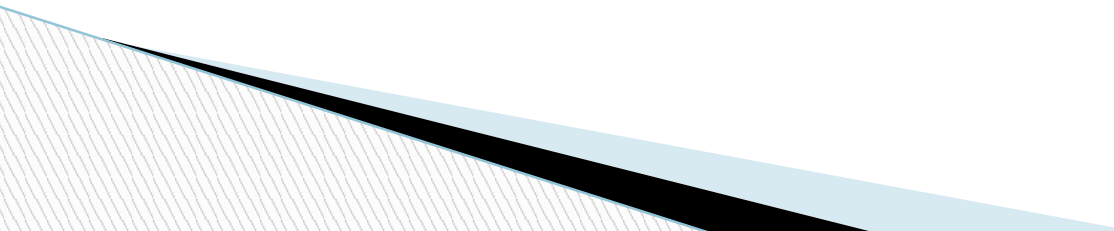
On

In

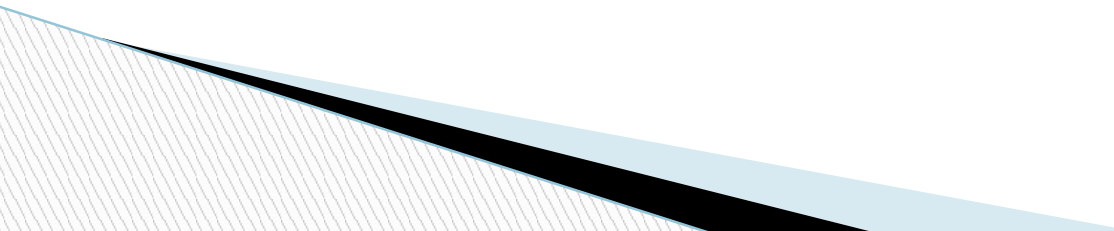
at



Choose from : on, below, beside, in, in front of, at, above, behind

1. Sign your name _____ the dotted line.
 2. When we flew _____ the clouds, we could see the earth's surface.
 3. Can I sit _____ you at the movie theatre?
 4. The kids are playing _____ the backyard.
 5. Your glasses are right _____ you.
 6. You can pick up your keys _____ the front desk.
 7. Let's meet _____ the front door.
 8. There's a helicopter hovering _____ our house.
 9. Didn't you park your car _____ mine?
 10. Please stay _____ the police caution tape.
- 

Answers

1. on
 2. below
 3. beside
 4. in
 5. in front of
 6. at
 7. at
 8. above
 9. behind
 10. behind
- 

Prepositions of movement

Prepositions of movement are quite easy to understand as they are less abstract than prepositions of place and time.

- Essentially, they describe how something or someone moves from one place to another.
- The most commonly used preposition of movement is to, which usually serves to highlight that there is movement towards a specific destination.

Ex:

- He has gone on vacation to France.
 - She went to the bowling alley every Friday last summer.
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PREPOSITIONS OF MOVEMENT

PREPOSITION	EXPLANATION	EXAMPLE
TO	Used to indicate a destination or direction.	The boys go to school in groups.
TOWARDS	In the direction of someone or something.	She pushed her face towards him.
THROUGH	Movement from one side to another but "in something", such as long grass or a forest.	David walked slowly through the woods.
INTO	Movement of something, usually with a verb that expresses movement.	Don't put new wine into old bottles.
OVER	Movement at a higher level than something else	He jumped over the wall.
ACROSS	Movement from one side of something to the opposite side (road, river).	The truck skidded sideways across the road.
ALONG	Movement of something in a line that follows the side of something long.	We went for a walk along the beach at twilight.
FROM	The place where someone or something starts.	What time does the flight from Korea arrive?
AROUND	Movements in circles or from one place to another.	Her hair whipped around her face in the wind.
ONTO	Movement to a position on a surface	I slipped as I stepped onto the platform.
UP	Movement to a higher position.	She doesn't like riding her bike up these hills.
DOWN	indicates a lower position or movement to a lower position.	It's easier to run down the hill than go up.

1. They are jumping ____ into the sky. (on, up, above)
2. They are walking _____ the path in the mountains.(across, along)
3. The man is walking his dog _____ the city.(towards, across, on)
4. Be careful when you go _____ the stairs! (down, across, on)
5. The man is standing ____ the water.(in, on, up)