**Prepositions – Reading Material**

**Overview:**

These functional words make your sentences sound right and show relationships in time and space. Without these words, our sentences sound awkward and the meaning is incomplete.These words are nothing but Prepositions.

**Objectives:**

This reading material is designed to help you:

* Understand the importance of showing the right relationships (direction, place, time, cause, manner and amount) among other words in a sentence.
* Learn the different meanings each preposition gives in various contexts.

**The meanings of prepositions**

The below sentences give the most usual meanings of English prepositions. Each meaning is illustrated by an example.

**About**

1. On the subject of: This is a story **about** elephants.

2. Approximately: He is **about** ten years old.

**Above**

1. Higher than; over: The plane flew **above** the clouds.

2. Earlier on a page: There is a heading **above** each diagram.

**Across**

1. From one side to the other: We walked **across** the field.

2. On the other side of: There is a store **across** the street.

**After**

1. Later in time: **after** ten o'clock; **after** lunch

2. Later in a series: Q comes **after** P in the alphabet.

3. In pursuit of: The dog ran **after** the cat.

**Against**

1. In opposition to: Theft is **against** the law.

2. Touching; supported by: I leaned my bicycle **against** the wall.

**Along**

1. Following the length of: We walked **along** the road.

**Among**

1. Within a group: The money was shared **among** three people.

**Note:** In formal English, **among** is usually used only when referring to more than two persons or things. In contrast, **between** is used when referring to two persons or things.

**Around**

1. Circling something: We walked **around** the block.

2. Surrounding: There is a fence **around** the garden.

3. In different parts of: I looked **around** the house for the keys.

4. In the other direction: We turned **around** and went back home.

5. Approximately: He is **around** six feet tall.

**At**

1. A specific location: **at** 23 Chestnut Street; **at** the park

2. A point in time: **at** 5 o'clock; **at** Christmas

3. A condition: **at** peace; **at** war; **at** rest

4. An activity: **at** work; **at** school; **at** play

5. Towards: Look **at** someone; wave **at** someone

**Note**: When referring to a specific location or to a point in time, **at** is usually used. When referring to a certain street or a certain day, **on** is usually used. When referring to a location as an area, or when referring to a unit of time longer than a day, **in** is usually used.

e.g. **at** Christmas; **on** Christmas day; **in** the Christmas holidays

**Before**

1. Earlier in time: **before** two o'clock; **before** Christmas

2. Earlier in a series: S comes **before** T in the alphabet.

**Behind**

1. At the back of: The little girl hid **behind** her mother.

2. Late: I am **behind** in my work.

3. Cause; origin: Who was **behind** that idea?

**Below**

1. Lower than; under: **below** freezing; **below** sea level

2. Later on a page: Footnotes are provided **below** the text.

**Beneath**

1. Lower than; below: **beneath** the earth

**Beside**

1. Next to; at the side of: I sit **beside** her in class.

**Besides**

1. Also; as well as: We study other languages **besides** English.

**Note** the differing meanings of **beside** and **besides**. **Beside** is usually used with reference to a physical location.

**Between**

1. An intermediate location: Toronto lies **between** Montreal and Vancouver.

2. An intermediate time: **between** Christmas and New Year's Day

3. Intermediate in a series: B comes **between** A and C in the alphabet.

4. An intermediate amount: **between** five and ten people

5. Within a group of two: The money was shared **between** two people.

**Beyond**

1. Farther than: The mountains lie **beyond** the horizon.

2. Further than; exceeding: That was **beyond** my expectations.

**But**

1. Except: I have read all **but** the last chapter.

**Note: But** is used more often as a conjunction than as a preposition.

**By**

1. Near: a house **by** the sea

2. Past: He waved as he drove **by** the house.

3. Not later than: Try to finish the work **by** next week.

4. In units of: cheaper **by** the dozen; sold **by** weight

5. Through the means of: travel **by** plane; written **by** him

**Note: By** is often used in combination with verbs in the Passive Voice.

**Concerning**

1. Connected with; about: He studies everything **concerning** trees.

**Despite**

1. In spite of: We walked downtown **despite** the rain.

**Down**

1. To a lower position: The ball rolled **down** the hill.

2. Further along: He lives **down** the street.

**During**

1. Throughout a period: She works **during** the day.

2. Sometime within a period: An accident occurred **during** the night.

**Except**

1. Not including: I have visited everyone **except** him.

**For**

1. Duration of time: We walked **for** two hours.

2. Distance: I walked **for** five kilometers.

3. Purpose: I bought this jacket **for** you.

4. In the direction of: She left **for** New York.

5. In favor of: We are **for** the proposal.

6. Considering: The boy is clever **for** his age.

**From**

1. Place of origin: We left **from** Boston; he comes **from** Mexico

2. Start of a period of time: **from** now on; **from** yesterday until today

3. Start of a range: **From** 20 to 30 people were present.

4. Cause: He suffers **from** nervousness.

5. Source: I first heard the story **from** you.

**In**

1. Place thought of as an area: **in** London; **in** Europe

2. Within a location: **in** the room; **in** the building

3. Large units of time: That happened **in** March, **in** 1992.

4. Within a certain time: I will return **in** an hour.

5. By means of: write **in** pencil; speak in English

6. Condition: **in** doubt; **in** a hurry; **in** secret

7. A member of: He is **in** the orchestra; **in** the navy

8. Wearing: the boy **in** the blue shirt

9. With reference to: lacking **in** ideas; rich **in** oil

**Inside**

1. Within: They are **inside** the house.

**Into**

1. To the inside of: We stepped **into** the room.

2. Change of condition: The boy changed **into** a man.

**Like**

1. Resembling: That looks **like** him.

2. Appearing possible: It looks **like** rain.

3. Be in a suitable mood for: I feel **like** going swimming.

**Minus**

1. Less: Three **minus** two equals one.

**Near**

1. Close to: **near** the school; **near** the ocean

**Of**

1. Location: east **of** here; the middle **of** the road

2. Possession: a friend **of** mine; the sound **of** music

3. Part of a group: one **of** us; a member **of** the team

4. Measurement: a cup **of** milk; two meters **of** snow

**Off**

1. Not on; away from: Please keep **off** the grass.

2. At some distance from: There are islands **off** the coast.

**On**

1. Touching the surface of: **on** the table; **on** the wall

2. A certain day: That happened **on** Sunday, **on** the 6th of June.

3. A certain street: **on** South Street

4. About: a book **on** engineering

5. A state or condition: **on** strike; **on** fire; **on** holiday

6. By means of: live **on** a pension; shown **on** television

**Onto**

1. To a position on: The child climbed **onto** the table.

**Opposite**

1. Facing: The library is **opposite** the fire station.

**Out of**

1. To the outside of: She went **out of** the room.

2. From among: We won two games **out of** three.

3. Motive: We spoke to them **out of** politeness.

4. Material: The bridge is made **out of** steel.

5. Beyond: **out of** control; **out of** danger

**Outside**

1. On the outer side of: **outside** the house

2. Beyond the limits of: **outside** my experience

**Over**

1. Above; higher than: There are cupboards **over** the sink.

2. Covering: We spread an extra blanket **over** the bed.

3. Across: I jumped **over** a puddle.

4. More than: It cost **over** ten dollars; it took **over** an hour

5. During: I saw him several times **over** the past week.

6. By means of: We made plans **over** the telephone.

**Past**

1. Up to and beyond: I walked **past** the house.

2. After (in time): It was **past** 2 o'clock; half **past** two

3. Beyond: **past** belief

**Per**

1. For each: 60 kilometers **per** hour; price **per** liter

**Plus**

1. With the addition of: Six **plus** four equals ten.

**Since**

1. From a specific time in the past: I had been waiting **since** two o'clock.

2. From a past time until now: I have been waiting here **since** noon.

**Note:** Because of its meaning, the preposition **since** is usually used in combination with a perfect tense. It should be noted that the preposition **for** can also be used with a perfect tense. However, when used with reference to time, **for** is usually followed by a phrase referring to a **period** of time; whereas **since** is usually followed by a phrase referring to a **specific** time.

e.g. I have known him **for** six months.

I have known him **since** January.

In the first example, **for** is followed by **six months**, which refers to a period of time. In the second example, **since** is followed by **January**, which refers to a specific time.

**Through**

1. Across; from end to end of: the main road **through** town

2. For the whole of a period: I slept **through** the night.

3. By means of: Skill improves **through** practice.

**Throughout**

1. In every part of: **throughout** the world

2. For the whole of a period: **throughout** the winter

**Till**

**Note: Till** can be used instead of [**until**](http://www.fortunecity.com/bally/durrus/153/gramch26.html#1ut%231ut). However, at the beginning of a sentence, **until**

is usually used.

**To**

1. In the direction of: Turn **to** the right.

2. Destination: I am going **to** Rome.

3. Until: from Monday **to** Friday; five minutes **to** ten

4. Compared with: They prefer hockey **to** soccer.

5. With indirect object: Please give it **to** me.

6. As part of infinitive: I like **to** ski; he wants **to** help.

7. In order to: We went to the store **to** buy soap.

**Toward** (or **Towards**)

1. In the direction of: We walked **toward** the center of town.

2. Near; just before (time): It rained **towards** evening.

**Under**

1. Beneath: **under** the desk; **under** the trees

2. Less than: **Under** 100 people were present.

3. In circumstances of: **under** repair; **under** way; **under** discussion

**Underneath**

1. Below, under: **underneath** the carpet

**Until**

1. Up to a certain time: She will stay **until** Friday; **until** 5 p.m.

**Upon**

**Note:** [**On**](http://www.fortunecity.com/bally/durrus/153/gramch26.html#1on%231on) and **upon** have similar meanings. **Upon** may be used in certain expressions, as in **once upon a time**, and following certain verbs, as in to **rely upon** someone.

**Up**

1. To a higher place: We went **up** the stairs.

2. In a higher place: She lives **up** the hill.

**Up to**

1. As far as: **up to** now; I have read **up to** page 100.

2. Depending on: The decision is **up to** you.

3. As good as; ready for: His work is **up to** standard.

**Versus**

1. Against (sports, legal): The next game is England **versus** Australia.

**Via**

1. By way of: He went to Los Angeles **via** San Francisco.

**With**

1. Accompanying: He came **with** her; I have my keys **with** me.

2. Having; containing: Here is a book **with** a map of the island.

3. By means of; using: I repaired the shoes **with** glue.

4. Manner: **with** pleasure; **with** ease; **with** difficulty

5. Because of: We were paralyzed **with** fear.

**Within**

1. Inside of: **within** twenty minutes; **within** one kilometer

**Without**

1. Not having: Do not leave **without** your coat; **without** money

**2. Prepositions used in idioms**

Below are examples of idioms consisting of prepositional phrases. The following selection of idioms emphasizes those used in North American English. The meaning of each idiom is indicated after the colon.

**At**

not **at** all**:** not in any way

**at** all times**:** always

**at** any rate**:** whatever happens

keep someone **at** arm's length**:** avoid becoming closely involved with someone

**at** close quarters**:** very near

**at** one's disposal**:** to be used as one wishes

**at** a distance**:** not near

**at** fault**:** causing something wrong

**at** first**:** at the beginning

see **at** a glance**:** see immediately **at** hand**:** near; readily available **at** last**:** finally, after some delay

**at** a loss**:** uncertain what to do or say

**at** the mercy of**:** without defense against

**at** the moment**:** now

**at** once**:** immediately

**at** present**:** now

**at** rest**:** not moving

**at** risk**:** threatened by danger or loss

**at** short notice**:** with little warning

**at** stake**:** to be won or lost

**at** a stretch**:** continuously

**at** that rate**:** under those circumstances

**at** this point**:** at this place; at this moment

**at** the wheel**:** in control

**Behind**

**behind** the scenes**:** (of persons) influencing events secretly; (in a theater) behind the stage

**behind** schedule**:** not on time

**Beside**

be **beside** oneself**:** lose one's self-control

**beside** the point**:** irrelevant

**Between**

read **between** the lines**:** deduce a meaning that is not actually expressed

**Beyond**

**beyond** help**:** unable to be helped

**beyond** a joke**:** too annoying to be amusing

**beyond** reproach**:** perfect; blameless

**By**

**by** accident**:** not deliberately

**by** all means**:** by any possible method bit **by** bit**:** gradually

**by** chance**:** by accident; without planning

**by** courtesy of**:** with the help or permission of

win **by** default**:** win because of lack of competition

**by** degrees**:** gradually

perform **by** ear**:** perform (music) by listening to the sound, without referring to written music

**by** hand**:** without the use of machinery

**by** heart**:** from memory little **by** little**:** gradually **by** means of**:** by using

**by** mistake**:** accidentally **by** no means**:** not at all one **by** one**:** one at a time **by** oneself**:** alone

side **by** side**:** beside one another

**by** the way**:** incidentally (used to introduce an unrelated topic of conversation)

**by** word of mouth**:** orally

**For**

once and **for** all**:** for the last time (e.g. used when giving someone a final warning)

**for** certain**:** definitely; without doubt **for** a change**:** for the sake of variety **for** example**:** as an illustration

**for** fun**:** for the sake of enjoyment

**for** good**:** permanently

**for** good measure**:** in addition to the necessary amount

**for** instance**:** for example; as an illustration

**for** keeps**:** (colloquial) permanently

**for** a living**:** as a profession

**for** now**:** temporarily

run **for** office**:** compete for an elected position

**for** one thing**:** because of one reason (out of several) **for** the sake of**:** for the benefit of; for the purpose of **for** sale**:** intended to be sold

**for** sure**:** definitely (more colloquial than **for certain**)

food **for** thought**:** something which makes one think

play **for** time**:** delay doing something in the hope that the situation will improve

**for** the time being**:** until some other arrangement is made ask **for** trouble**:** act in a dangerous or foolish way

**for** a while**:** for a period of time

word **for** word**:** exactly as said or written

**From**

**from** afar**:** from a distance

**from** all sides**:** from all directions

**from** head to foot**:** (of a person) completely; all over

**from** scratch**:** from the beginning

**from** time to time**:** occasionally

**In**

**in** addition to**:** as well as

**in** advance**:** before

be **in** agreement with**:** have the same opinion as

**in** any case**:** whatever happens

**in** brief**:** in a few words

**in** bulk**:** (of goods) in large amounts; not in packages be **in** charge of**:** have responsibility for

**in** common**:** shared by all members of a group

**in** control**:** having the power to direct something

**in** the course of**:** during

**in** danger**:** likely to be harmed

**in** a daze**:** unable to think clearly; confused

**in** debt**:** owing money

**in** demand**:** (of goods or persons) desired by many people

**in** depth**:** (investigate something) thoroughly

**in** detail**:** (explain something) thoroughly

**in** disgrace**:** regarded with disapproval because of having done something wrong

**in** the distance**:** far away

**in** doubt**:** uncertain

**in** duplicate**:** so that there are two identical copies (of a document)

**in** earnest**:** seriously; in a determined way

**in** effect**:** (of rules) operating

**in** the end**:** finally

**in** fact**:** in reality; really

**in** fashion**:** fashionable; accepted as being the most desirable and up to date

**in** favor of**:** supporting (an idea)

**in** flames**:** burning, with visible flames

**in** a flash**:** very quickly; suddenly **in** full**:** without omitting anything **in** general**:** usually; as a whole

hand **in** hand**:** (of persons) holding hands; (of related situations) occurring

together

**in** a hurry**:** trying to accomplish something quickly

**in** jest**:** as a joke

**in** kind**:** (payment) in goods rather than in money

**in** itself**:** without reference to anything else

**in** league with**:** (of persons) joined together with (usually for a dishonest purpose)

be **in** the limelight**:** be the focus of attention; receive great publicity

**in** the long run**:** in the end; eventually

**in** the long term**:** looking ahead to the distant future

leave someone **in** the lurch**:** abandon someone who is in a difficult situation be **in** the minority**:** be in the smaller of two groups

**in** mint condition**:** (of manufactured goods) perfect; brand-new

**in** a minute**:** soon

**in** a moment**:** soon; quickly

set something **in** motion**:** start something going

nip something **in** the bud**:** put an end to something before it gets properly started

**in** no time**:** very soon; very quickly **in** order of**:** arranged according to **in** order to**:** for the purpose of

**in** part**:** to some degree

**in** particular**:** especially

**in** power**:** (of a political party) holding office

**in** practice**:** able to do something well because of recent practice; in reality

(opposite of **in** theory)

**in** print**:** (of a book) printed and available from the publisher

**in** private**:** not in front of other people

**in** public**:** openly; not in private

**in** reality**:** really

**in** reserve**:** saved for later use

**in** retrospect**:** looking back over past events

**in** return for**:** as repayment for be **in** the right**:** be correct

**in** season**:** (of fruit or vegetables) readily available at that time of year

**in** a second**:** soon; quickly

**in** short supply**:** scarce; not easily obtainable

**in** sight**:** able to be seen

**in** stock**:** (of goods at a store) present and available

**in** that case**:** if that is true

**in** theory**:** ideally; according to theoretical considerations be **in** time**:** not be late

**in** touch with in**:** communication with; informed about

**in** triplicate**:** so that there are three identical copies (of a document)

be **in** trouble**:** be in a difficult situation; be blamed or punished for doing something wrong

**in** tune**:** at the correct pitch act **in** unison**:** act together **in** vain**:** without success

**in** the vicinity of**:** near

once **in** a while**:** occasionally

**in** words of one syllable**:** (explain something) clearly and simply

**in** working order**:** able to function properly

**in** the wrong**:** responsible for an error; guilty

**Inside**

**inside** out**:** with the inner side out; thoroughly

**Into**

paint oneself **into** a corner**:** take a course of action which greatly narrows one's future choices of action

go **into** hiding**:** hide oneself

get **into** a rut**:** get into a fixed and uninteresting way of life

get **into** trouble**:** get into a difficult situation; do something deserving blame or punishment

**Of**

**of** course**:** certainly; as one would expect; as everyone knows hard **of** hearing**:** somewhat deaf

next **of** kin**:** nearest relative or relatives

**of** one's own accord**:** voluntarily; on one's own initiative

**of** one's own free will**:** voluntarily; by choice

one's point **of** view**:** one's opinion about something

right **of** way**:** public right to use a path or road; (of road traffic) right to proceed before others

rule **of** thumb**:** a simple way to calculate what procedure to follow, based on extensive experience, rather than on theoretical considerations

**Off**

go **off** the air**:** (of radio or television) stop broadcasting

**off** duty**:** not engaged in one's regular work

**off** one's hands**:** no longer one's responsibility

**off** and on**:** from time to time

**off** the record**:** say something privately, that is not to be officially recorded

**off** the track**:** following a wrong line of thought or action

**On**

**on** account of**:** because of

be **on** the air**:** (of radio or television) be in the process of broadcasting

**on** the alert**:** ready to act

be **on** all fours**:** (of a person) be on hands and knees

**on** the average**:** usually; normally

**on** behalf of**:** for; in the interests of

**on** board**:** on a ship or airplane

**on** business**:** as part of one's work

**on** condition that**:** only if; provided that

**on** demand**:** when asked for

**on** display**:** being exhibited

**on** duty**:** engaged in one's regular work

**on** fire**:** burning

to go **on** foot**:** to walk

be **on** one's guard**:** be alert and ready to meet an attack

**on** hand**:** available

**on** loan**:** lent and not yet returned

shoot **on** location**:** (of a movie) film in natural surroundings, not in a studio

**on** the lookout**:** watchful

put something **on** the map**:** cause something to become well-known get **on** one's nerves**:** annoy; irritate

**on** no account**:** absolutely not

**on** the one hand**:** (used to introduce one side of an argument)

**on** one's own**:** alone; without help

act **on** one's own initiative**:** act independently, without orders from anyone else

**on** order**:** requested but not yet delivered

**on** the other hand**:** (used to introduce a contrasting side of an argument)

act **on** principle**:** do something to support a policy

**on** purpose**:** deliberately

go **on** record**:** say something which is to be officially recorded

**on** sale**:** being sold at a lower price than usual

**on** schedule**:** at the correct time; as planned or predicted

**on** second thoughts**:** after thinking further about something

**on** a shoestring**:** with a very small amount of money

be **on** the spot**:** be where important events are taking place; be placed in an awkward situation

**on** the spur of the moment**:** on a sudden impulse

go off **on** a tangent**:** change suddenly to a new line of thought or action

**on** time**:** at the correct time

walk **on** tiptoe**:** walk on the toes and balls of the feet

accept something **on** trust**:** accept something without proof

**on** the verge of**:** very close to; about to

**on** the whole**:** taking everything into consideration

**Out of**

**out of** the blue**:** unexpectedly

**out of** breath**:** (after running) panting from a shortage of oxygen

**out of** character**:** unlike a person's known character **out of** control**:** not able to be regulated or guided **out of** danger**:** safe

**out of** date**:** no longer used; old-fashioned; (of news) no longer true

**out of** debt**:** having paid one's debts

be **out of** one's depth**:** be unable to handle a situation because of lack of experience

**out of** doors**:** in the open air; not in a building

**out of** fashion**:** not fashionable; not presently in common use

**out of** hand**:** not under control

**out of** harm's way**:** safe

**out of** line with**:** in disagreement with be **out of** one's mind**:** be insane

**out of** order**:** not functioning properly; (at a formal meeting) not behaving according to the rules

**out of** the ordinary**:** unusual

**out of** place**:** unsuitable

**out of** practice**:** unable to do something as well as one has in past, because of lack of recent practice

**out of** print**:** (of a book) no longer available from the publisher

**out of** proportion**:** too big or too small; not having the appropriate relationship to something

**out of** the question**:** impossible; not to be considered

**out of** season**:** (of fruit or vegetables) not readily available at that time of year

**out of** shape**:** (of persons) not in top condition because of lack of exercise

**out of** sight**:** hidden, not able to be seen

**out of** stock**:** (of goods at a store) temporarily unavailable

**out of** style**:** not fashionable

**out of** touch**:** with not in communication with; not informed about

**out of** town**:** having temporarily left town

**out of** trouble**:** not in trouble

**out of** tune**:** not at the correct pitch

**out of** work**:** no longer having employment

**To**

**to** all intents and purposes**:** in all important ways

**to** a certain extent**:** partly

**to** date**:** so far; until now

up **to** date**:** current; modern

see eye **to** eye with**:** agree entirely with

take something **to** heart**:** be much affected by something

made **to** measure**:** exactly suitable; (of clothes) made for a certain person keep something **to** oneself**:** not tell anyone

**to** the point**:** relevant

**Under**

**under** age**:** below the age of being legally permitted to do something be **under** arrest**:** be held prisoner and charged with wrongdoing **under** the auspices of**:** with the patronage of; supported by

**under** one's breath**:** in a whisper

**under** the circumstances**:** because this is true **under** consideration**:** being thought about **under** control**:** able to be regulated or guided

**under** cover of**:** protected by; undetected because of

**under** fire**:** being shot at; being criticized

**under** the impression that**:** having the idea that be **under** the influence of**:** be affected by

be **under** oath**:** have sworn to tell the truth

**under** observation**:** being watched carefully

**under** restraint**:** prevented from doing something

**Up**

have something **up** one's sleeve**:** have a secret idea or plan in reserve

**With**

**with** impunity**:** without risk of injury or punishment

**with** the naked eye**:** without using a magnifying lens

**with** no strings attached**:** (of help given) with no conditions; to be used freely take **with** a pinch of salt**:** not believe completely

**with** regard to**:** concerning; about

**with** respect to**:** concerning; about

tarred **with** the same brush**:** having the same faults

**with** a vengeance**:** very much; more than usual

**Within**

**within** limits**:** to a certain extent; not too much

**within** living memory**:** within the memory of people now alive

**Without**

go **without** saying**:** be obvious

**3. Nouns followed by prepositions**

The following are examples of nouns which are usually followed by certain prepositions. In the case of phrases which are idioms, the meanings of the phrases are indicated in brackets.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Against** |  |
| take precautions against |  |
|  |  |
| **For** |  |
| have affection for | make allowances for |
| have compassion for | an excuse for |
| a reason for | have a reputation for |
| have respect for | have sympathy for |
| have a talent for | lie in wait for (ambush) |
| pave the way for (prepare for) |  |
|  |  |
| **From** |  |
| absence from |  |
|  |  |
| **In** |  |
| have confidence in | have faith in |
| have an interest in | take part in |
| make progress in |  |
|  |  |
| **Into** |  |
| have insight into |  |
|  |  |
| **Of** |  |
| have an abhorrence of | an acknowledgement of |
| take advantage of | take care of |
| take command of | evidence of |
| an example of | an excess of |
| make a fool of | make fun of (ridicule) |
| have an impression of | a lack of |
| neglect of | a number of |
| a pair of | be part of |
| a possibility of | make a practice of (do often) |
| a proof of | a quantity of |
| recognition of | a recollection of |
| a result of | run the risk of (risk) |
| catch sight of (see suddenly) | a sign of |
| a survey of | a symbol of |
| a symptom of | a token of |
| make use of | a way of |
| wash one's hands of (stop caring |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| about and dealing with) |  |
|  |  |
| **On** |  |
| an attack on | dependence on |
| make an impression on | play a joke on |
| shed light on (explain) | have pity on |
|  |  |
| **To** |  |
| have access to | pay attention to |
| an objection to | a reply to |
| a response to | lay siege to (besiege) |
| shut one's eyes to (deliberately |  |
| ignore a problem) |  |
|  |  |
| **Toward** or **Towards** |  |
| animosity toward(s) | an attitude toward(s) |
|  |  |
| **With** |  |
| have a connection with | find fault with (criticize) |
| fall in love with | change places with |

**Prepositions – Time**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **English** | **Usage** | **Example** |
| On | days of the week | on Monday |
| In | months / seasons time of day  year  after a certain period of time  *(when?)* | in August / in winter in the morning  in 2006  in an hour |
| At | for *night*  for *weekend*  a certain point of time *(when?)* | at night  at the weekend at half past nine |
| since | from a certain point of time (past till now) | since 1980 |
| For | over a certain period of time (past till now) | for 2 years |
| Ago | a certain time in the past | 2 years ago |
| before | earlier than a certain point of time | before 2004 |
| To | telling the time | ten to six (5:50) |
| past | telling the time | ten past six (6:10) |
| to / till / until | marking the beginning and end of a period of time | from Monday to/till Friday |
| till /  until | in the sense of *how long something is going to last* | He is on holiday until Friday. |
|  by | in the sense of *at the latest*  up to a certain time | I will be back by 6 o’clock.  By 11 o'clock, I had read five pages. |

**Prepositions – Place (Position and Direction)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **English** | **Usage** | **Example** |
| In | room, building, street, town, country  book, paper etc. car, taxi  picture, world | in the kitchen, in London in the book  in the car, in a taxi  in the picture, in the world |
| At | meaning next to, by an object | at the door, at the station |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | for table  for events  place where you are to do something typical (watch a film, study, work) | at the table  at a concert, at the party  at the cinema, at school, at work |
| On | attached  for a place with a river being on a surface  for a certain side (left, right)  for a floor in a house for public transport for television, radio | the picture on the wall London lies on the Thames. on the table  on the left  on the first floor  on the bus, on a plane on TV, on the radio |
| by, next to, beside | left or right of somebody or something | Jane is standing by / next to /  beside the car. |
| under | on the ground, lower than (or covered by) something else | the bag is under the table |
| below | lower than something else but above ground | the fish are below the surface |
| over | covered by something else meaning more than  getting to the other side (also across)  overcoming an obstacle | put a jacket over your shirt over 16 years of age  walk over the bridge climb over the wall |
| above | higher than something else, but not directly over it | a path above the lake |
| across | getting to the other side (also over)  getting to the other side | walk across the bridge swim across the lake |
| through | something with limits on top, bottom and the sides | drive through the tunnel |
| to | movement to person or building movement to a place or country for bed | go to the cinema  go to London / Ireland go to bed |
| into | enter a room / a building | go into the kitchen / the house |
| towards | movement in the direction of something (but not directly to it) | go 5 steps towards the house |
| onto | movement to the top of something | jump onto the table |
| from | in the sense of where from | a flower from the garden |

**Other Important Prepositions**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **English** | **Usage** | **Example** |
| from | who gave it | a present from Jane |
| of | who/what does it belong to what does it show | a page of the book  the picture of a palace |
| by | who made it | a book by Mark Twain |
| on | walking or riding on horseback entering a public transport vehicle | on foot, on horseback get on the bus |
| in | entering a car / Taxi | get in the car |
| off | leaving a public transport vehicle | get off the train |
| out of | leaving a car / Taxi | get out of the taxi |
| by | rise or fall of something travelling (other than walking or horseriding) | prices have risen by 10 percent by car, by bus |
| at | for *age* | she learned Russian at 45 |
| about | for topics, meaning *what about* | we were talking about you |

**1 Usage: At, On, In:**

These prepositions are used to show the time and date of events, activities and situations:

e.g. **at** three o'clock. **in** June. **on** Monday.

**2 Structure: At:**

**at + particular time:** dawn, midday, noon, night, midnight, nine o'clock etc.. e.g. at dawn.

**at + the + a particular time in a week/month/year:** start/end of the week/month/year, weekend. e.g. at the start of July.

**at + calendar festival season:** Christmas, New Year, Easter etc.. e.g. at Easter.

**at + meal:** breakfast, lunch, mid-morning, tea, dinner, supper etc.. e.g. at breakfast.

**3 Structure: On:**

**on + day of the week:** Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday etc. e.g. on Thursday.

**on + particular part of a day:** Friday morning, Saturday afternoon. e.g. on Sunday evening.

**on + particular date:** 25 July 2001, 4 January. e.g. on 19 March.

**On *the* nineteenth of March** is how this date is read aloud or said in conversation.

**on + calendar festival day:** Christmas Day, Palm Sunday. e.g. on Easter Sunday.

**4 Structure: In:**

**in + the + a part of a day:** the morning, the afternoon, evening. e.g. in the afternoon.

**in + month:** January, February, March, April, May etc.. e.g. in June.

**in + season of the year:** Spring, Summer, Autumn. e.g. in Winter.

**in + specific year:** 1988, 1989, 1990 etc.. e.g. in 1999.

**in + the + a specific century:** nineteenth century. e. g. in the twentieth century.

**in + historical period of time:** the Dark Ages, Pre-historic Times. e.g. in the Middle Ages. No preposition is used if the day/year has **each, every, last, next, this** before it:

e.g. I go to England **every** Christmas ( ***not*** at every Christmas )

I'll see you **next** Monday afternoon. ( ***not*** on Monday afternoon ) Manoj left home **last** evening. ( ***not*** in the evening **)**

**5 Usage: For and Since:**

These prepositions explain **how long** an event, activity, situation has continued:

e.g. **for** three days **since** last Thursday

**6 Structure: For:**

**for + a period of time:** two days, one week, three months, four years e.g. for the weekend. This phrase can be used with **all** verb tenses.

e.g. Lakshmi went to Singapore last year **for three weeks.** - **past**

I am in Chennai **for ten days. - present**

My cousin will be visiting Thailand **for two months** next February. **- future**

**7 Structure: Since:**

**since + a point of time + past tense:** last week, the war ended, 1990, yesterday. The point of time does not have to be accurate.

e.g. My sister and her husband have worked in India **since 1991**. Ashok has been very ill **since yesterday evening**.

**8 Usage: During and While:**

These prepositions explain **a period of time** in which an event, activity or situation took place:

e.g. **during** the next month **while** I was swimming.

**9 Structure: During:**

**during + a noun or phrase:** the war, the nineteenth century: e.g. during my schooldays. This phrase can be used with **all** verb tenses: past, present, future.

e.g. Megha received many telephone messages **during the last week. - past**

I am seeing Sundar **during the morning. - present**

Amit will return to England **during the Christmas Holiday. - future**

**10 Structure: While:**

**while + subject + verb:** to eat, talk, swim, walk etc.... This clause can be used with **all** verb tenses: past, present, future

e.g. We will take you to the theatre **while we are** in London.

**While James was** in Spain, she didn't go to a bull fight.

**N.B.** In English, **While** can often be replaced by **when** and retain the same meaning.

**while + infinitive + -ing (Present Participle):** thinking, running, driving etc.. e.g. **While swimming** in the sea, Harsha was attacked by a shark.

Smitha met Anthony **while studying** English at Oxford.

**11 Usage: Before and After:**

These prepositions explain accurately the timing of an event, activity or situation:

e.g. **before** the weekend **after** the holiday

**12 Structure: Before:**

**before + a noun:** Monday, Christmas, examinations etc.. e.g. before the weekend. **before + subject + verb:** to eat, study, swim, talk. etc.. **All** verb tenses can be used. e.g. He spoke to his teacher **before the examination began.**

**Before you say** anything, I must explain why I am here.

**before + infinitive + -ing (Present Participle):** to read, write etc.. e.g. before eating.

**13 Structure: After:**

**after + noun:** the lesson, the meal etc. e.g. after the journey

**after + subject + verb:** to draw, sit, read etc.. **All** verb tenses can be used:

e.g. Punitha was very happy **after she won** the tennis match. Why did the Queen smile **after the President shook** her hand? **After she finishes** her studies, Annie will work in Germany.

**after + infinitive + -ing (Present Participle):** to decide, say, report etc.. e.g. after crying.

**14 Usage: By, until, till:**

These prepositions describe a time limit for commencement/completion of an activity. e.g. **by** Sunday **until** April 1995 **till** next week

**By** means **not later than** and can be used with **all** verb tenses.

**Until/till** explains **how long** an activity continues, will continue or has continued and can be used with **all** verb tenses.

**Until/till** have the same meaning: **till** is a short form of **until.**

**15 Structure: By**:

**by + noun describing time/date:** examples: this afternoon, tomorrow, Thursday. e.g. Please pay me **by Friday morning.**

Will you finish your work **by four o'clock**?

**By the end of the year**, Karthik spoke English very well.

**16 Structure: Until, till:**

**until/till + noun describing time/date:** examples: next week, this evening, tomorrow. e.g. Ram's wife will stay here **until/till the end of next week**.

**Until/till the end of the month**, you can use my computer.

The Williams Family lived in Germany **until/till** 1991.

**17 Usage: From - - - - to/until:**

**From . . . . . to/until** defines the beginning and end of a period of time, present, past or future:

e.g. **from** April 1989 **to** July **from** November **until** March

**18 Structure: From - - - - - to/until/till:**

**From + time/day/date/year to + time/day/date/year** and can be used with **all** verb tenses. e.g. **From** 1987 **until** 1991, Mary was at university in Leeds.

Each day, Arjun works in the bank **from** nine **till** five thirty. My shop will be closed **from** 1st July **to** 31st August

**Prepositions of Place – 2**

**1 Usage: At, on, in:**

**At, on and in** are prepositions of place and show the position of people, places and things:

e.g. **at** the cinema **on** the wall **in** the shop

**2 Structure: At:**

**at + the + place:** the cinema, theatre, school, cross roads etc.. e.g. at the bank.

**at + specific place:** Heathrow Airport, Buckingham Palace: e.g. at Notre Dame Cathedral.

**at + specific address including the house number/name**: e.g. at 33 rue de La Fayette, Paris. In English, **at** is not normally used with names of villages, towns and cities.

**3 Structure: On:**

**on + a/the + surface of a place or object**: shelf, wall, floor, ceiling etc.. e.g. on the table.

**on + the directions:** left/right/other side/nearside/far side: e.g. on the left.

**on + levels of a building:** first floor, second floor, top floor etc.. e.g. on the ground floor.

**on + the + parts of a ship:** port side/ starboard side/bow/stern.

**on + parts of the body**: his foot, her leg, our heads etc.. e.g. on his left arm.

**on + a/the + types of transport**: horse, bicycle, train, foot etc.. e.g. on the ferry, on a horse. English people say **in** a car ( ***not* on** a car ).

**4 Structure: In:**

**in + names of countries:** France, England, Poland etc.. e.g. in Belgium.

**in + names of towns, villages, cities:** Warsaw, London etc.. e.g. in Brussels.

**in + named places:** Buckingham Palace, the Louvre etc.. e.g. in Windsor Castle.

**in + the + geographical regions:** Auvergne, Lake District etc.. e.g. in the Alps.

**in + streets, roads, avenues:** Moniuszki, Fish Street etc.. e.g. in Stratford Avenue.

**in + the + rooms and places:** kitchen, bedroom, foyer, auditorium etc.. e.g. in the bathroom.

**in + the + weather:** sun, rain, hail, snow etc.. e.g. in the fog.

**in + parts of the body:** his foot, her leg, our heads etc.. e.g. in his foot.

**in + a/the + types of transport:** car, train, van, lorry, aeroplane, ship e.g. in a train.

**5 Prepositions: Exceptions:**

**A:** In English, certain expressions are different, so must be learnt!

at the moment /on holiday/ in a loud/angry/quiet/low voice at this/that moment /on the radio/ in a good/bad mood

at the same time /on television/ in a bad temper at no time/ on the menu/ in a suit

at present/ on the agenda/ in a new dress

at the end/beginning in clean/dirty/new shoes

**B:** Some expressions are used without a/the, here are some common examples:

at school/ in bed v

at home/ in business in hospital

in prison at work

at university at 37 k.p.h.

**C:** Both **on** and **in** can be used for types of transport and parts of the body:

**On** is used when the part of the body/type of transport is the most important detail.

e.g. Paul travelled to London **on** the train. **- type**

Ritu has a cut **on** her left arm. **- part of the body**

**In** is used when position is the most important piece of information. John sat **in** the last carriage of the London train. - **position**

Anjana has broken a bone **in** her wrist. - **position in the body**

**D: At** and **in** can be used with places which can contain large numbers of people: cinema, theatre, church, stadium etc..

**At** is used when the activity is the most important piece of information. e.g. I will meet you for a meal **at** the usual restaurant.

**In** is used when the place/position is the most important detail.

Rajan and Mangala met **in** the foyer of the Royal Theatre.

**E:** Both **at** and **to** can be used with places:

**At** is used when there is **no** active movement in the phrase/sentence.

e.g. **At** school, there are forty teachers and four hundred pupils. **- no movement**

**To** is used when there **is** movement in the phrase/sentence

Martha is cycling **to** London to visit his friends. - **movement**

**F:** Both **at** and **to** can follow certain verbs: the meaning of the verb is different in each case:

to throw, run, shout.

e.g. Anitha threw a stone **to** me. ( a friendly action )

Anitha threw a stone **at** me. ( a hostile action: intending to hurt someone ) Suganthi ran **to** me. ( a friendly action )

Suganthi ran **at** me ( a hostile action: intending to attack )

Dinesh shouted **to** me. ( a friendly action )

Dinesh shouted **at** me ( a hostile action: intending to express anger )

**G:** The preposition **by** is often used with transport when the type of transport is very important: the common examples are: **by** aeroplane, bicycle, horse, car, ferry, horse, lorry, ship, train

e.g. The businessmen travelled to Africa **by aeroplane** and in Africa, they travelled **by car**. Walking is travel **on foot** ( **not by** foot )