

Prepositions play a vital role to relate two nouns or pronouns, a noun with a pronoun etc. So, a sound knowledge of prepositions and their rules are must to have good command over English.

USE OF PREPOSITIONS

Prepositions are the part of speech that show the relationship of a noun or pronoun with other words in a sentence. e.g. on, in, to, after, with etc.

- e.g. (i) There is a painting on the wall.
(ii) Shilpa is very smart at her work.
(iii) Geeta lives in New Zealand.

Classification of Preposition

Prepositions can be broadly classified into two main categories as:

1. Simple Preposition

Simple prepositions are the basic (or fundamental) words which are not formed from any other words and which are used to denote place, time etc of the actions.

at	by	for
from	in	into
of	off	on
out	over	till
to	up	upon
with	under	down

2. Compound Preposition

These are generally formed by adding prefixes (such as 'a' which means 'not', 'be' which means 'by') to simple prepositions.

above	about	across
along	among	against
after	around	between
beyond	before	behind
beside	besides	beneath
towards	since	inside
outside	within	without

Uses of Preposition

Preposition of Time

They are used with the words expressing time to denote when an action took place.

In

It is used with larger periods of time such as month, year, century, era etc.

- e.g. (i) In April.
 (ii) In the month of June.
 (iii) In 1997.
 (iv) In the 20th century.

It is used with seasons.

- (i) In summer. (ii) In winter etc.

It is also used with parts of a day.

- e.g. (i) In the morning.
 (ii) In the afternoon.

Except night, dawn, dusk which take 'at'.

On

It is used with

- (i) Days
 e.g. On Monday, On Friday etc.
 (ii) Dates
 e.g. On 1st March.
 (iii) Days followed by parts of days.
 e.g. On Monday morning.

At

It is used with point of time.

- e.g. (i) At 6 pm. (ii) At 9 o'clock.

From and To

It is used when 'start time' and 'end time' are known.

- e.g. (i) The guest lecture is from 2 pm to 3 pm.
 (ii) Ritu organised the cultural events in the college from her second year to the final year.

Note No preposition is used when the nouns of time are preceded by 'last, next or this'.
 e.g. last week, this month, next year etc.

Since

It is generally used in 'Perfect tense' and 'Perfect Continuous tense', with the point of time (i.e. When the action started).

- e.g. (i) Annie has been waiting for the bus since 9 o'clock.
 (ii) We have been living here since 2002.

For

It is also used in 'Perfect tense' and 'Perfect Continuous tense', with the period of time (i.e. the total duration for which the action continued).

- e.g. (i) Annie has been waiting for the bus for half an hour.
 (ii) We have lived here for 13 years.

By

It is used to express the deadline.

- e.g. (i) You must complete your work by this evening.
 (ii) My students will have got a government job by the end of this year.

Preposition of Place

They are used with the names of places to denote where an action took place or where a thing is located.

In

- It is used with cities, towns, states, countries, continents etc.
- e.g. (i) I live in Madhya Pradesh.
 (ii) The headquarter of SAARC is in Kathmandu.
 (iii) The temperature is too low in Antarctica.

- It is used with street, road etc.
e.g. Some people are standing in the street.
- It is used with directions.
e.g. His house is in the North.

At

- It is used with parts of bigger places.
e.g. (i) Shishir lives at Nehru Nagar.
(ii) I will wait at the airport.
- It is used for parts of road, street etc.
e.g. (i) Some people are standing at the corner of the street.
(ii) My house is at the end of this lane.

Preposition of Position

In

When the things are inside something.

- e.g. (i) There is a diamond in her ring.
(ii) In this room, there are 7 items of furniture.

Into

When the things are going (or being kept) inside from outside.

- e.g. (i) The boy jumped into the river.
(ii) Sara is keeping her mobile into the bag.

On

Used to denote position of thing with respect to surface (touching the surface).

- e.g. (i) There is a beautiful vase on her table.
(ii) The artist carved a nice picture on the wall.

Upon

To show the continuous action (of keeping a thing on a surface).

- e.g. (i) Their marketing team are hanging the banners upon the poles.
(ii) Sanu was keeping the bottle upon the table, when I saw her.

Over

When a thing is exactly upwards some other i.e. the thing is above something and not touching it.

- e.g. (i) There is a bridge over the river.
(ii) There is a chandelier over the table.

Above (higher in level)

When something is at a higher level than some other thing.

- e.g. (i) Her level of intelligence is above all.
(ii) There are two shelves above the study table.

Under

When something is exactly below some other thing and the two things are not touching each other.

- e.g. (i) The man sat under the tree.
(ii) A pen is lying under your chair.

Beneath

When a thing is under some other thing and it is touching its surface.

- e.g. There are many minerals beneath the Earth.

Below (At a lower level with respect to something)

- e.g. (i) Their office is located below our office.
(ii) A river is flowing below the mountain, in that picture.

By (Prepositions used with vehicles)

We use 'by' with all kinds of vehicles.

- e.g. (i) I usually go to office by bus.
(ii) Rinnie goes to school by bicycle.

Some Other Important Prepositions

To

Used for denoting movement between the places.

- e.g. Nadira went to Bhopal last week.

Towards

Denotes direction

- e.g. (i) This road goes towards his home.
(ii) Bangladesh is towards the East of India.

Across

Denotes expansion

- e.g. Their business is spread across the country.

Behind

At the back of something (someone).

e.g. We don't know what there is behind that door.

In front of

At the face of something.

e.g. There is an ice-cream parlour in front of my house.

Between

Used for two persons/things.

e.g. (i) Chintu is sitting between Vibhuti and Pushkar.

(ii) There is a red box between the blue and the orange one.

Among

Used for more than two persons/things.

e.g. (i) Saniya is the tallest among all girls.

(ii) This is one wrong sentence among these sentences.

For

Used for purpose and reason.

e.g. (i) All these toys are for you.

(ii) I am leaving for Manipur tomorrow.

With

Used to show relation of tools with action.

e.g. (i) She cuts clothes with scissors.

(ii) He is writing a letter with a pen.

PRACTICE EXERCISE

Directions (Q.Nos 1-20) Choose the correct preposition given in the options to complete the following sentences.

1. This is a comfortable house to live

- (a) by (b) on
(c) at (d) in

2. We should not spend money luxuries.

- (a) at (b) for
(c) on (d) with

3. I gave him a chair to sit

- (a) to (b) on
(c) at (d) in

4. The new term begins 1st June.

- (a) at (b) on
(c) in (d) from

5. He poured the tea the mug.

- (a) to (b) into
(c) on (d) in

6. Shiva is good Biology.

- (a) on (b) in
(c) at (d) for

7. Zeba writes night.

- (a) to (b) at
(c) in (d) on

8. Geeta went the room.

- (a) from (b) in
(c) into (d) for

9. He said that he was very pleased my work.

- (a) by (b) with
(c) on (d) at

10. He is not satisfied your performance.

- (a) in (b) with (c) at (d) from

11. You should explain this them.

- (a) on (b) to (c) at (d) with

12. My father taught Mathematics me.

- (a) of (b) for
(c) to (d) towards

13. He has been absent Monday.

- (a) in (b) since
(c) for (d) from

21. The woodcutter was cutting the branches from his axe.
(a) The woodcutter (b) was cutting
(c) the branches (d) from his axe
22. After a few minutes Ramesh jumped in the river from the bridge.
(a) After a few minutes (b) Ramesh jumped
(c) in the river (d) from the bridge
23. From ten years my father has been teaching in this school.
(a) From ten years (b) my father
(c) has been teaching (d) in this school
24. I wanted to talk them so I was ringing them.
(a) I wanted to (b) talk them
(c) so I was (d) ringing them
25. It is raining heavily so she will stand in that tree.
(a) It is raining (b) heavily so she
(c) will stand (d) in that tree

[illegible]