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Year: First

Course: English Language

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# PREPOSITIONS



**What are PREPOSITIONS?**

**Prepositions of TIME & PLACE**

**Prepositions: by & until; between & among; for & during**

**Noun + preposition; Adjective + preposition;  
Verb + preposition**

**Expressions beginning with Prepositions**

**Tips for Learning Prepositions**

# What are **PREPOSITIONS**?

A **preposition** is a word or group of words used to link nouns, pronouns and phrases to other words in a sentence. Some examples of prepositions are single words like *in*, *at*, *on*, *of*, *to*, *by* and *with* or phrases such as *in front of*, *next to*, *instead of*.

**Prepositions** are short words that show the relationship between a noun or pronoun and another word in the sentence. They often indicate *location*, *direction*, *time*, or *possession*.

For example, in the sentence *'The cat is on the mat,'* the preposition "on" tells us where the cat is located.



# List of **PREPOSITIONS**

*above*      *across*      *against*      *along*      *at*  
*behind*      *between*      *by*      *down*      *during*  
*for*      *from*      *in*      *in front of*      *into*      *near*  
*off*      *on*      *opposite*      *out of*      *over*      *past*  
*round*      *through*      *to*      *under*      *until/till*  
*up*

# Prepositions – Time (at / on / in)

## ► At: (for a PRECISE TIME)

clock time or particular time, weekend, public holiday

### Examples:

- *at six o'clock*
- *at midnight*
- *at New Year*
- *at the weekend*
- *at noon*
- *at night*
- *at lunchtime*
- *at sunset*

# Prepositions – Time (at / on / in)

## ► On: (for DAYS and DATES)

### Examples:

- *on Saturday*
- *on Monday morning*
- *on New Year's Day*
- *on January 18*
- *on Friday / on Fridays*
- *on my birthday*

# Prepositions – Time (at / on / in)

## ► In: (for LONGER PERIODS)

Months, Years, Seasons, Centuries, and part of a day

### Examples:

- *in the morning / afternoon / evening*
- *in two weeks' time*
- *in December*
- *in 1995*
- *in the 20th century*
- *in the past*
- *in summer*

# Prepositions – Time (at / on / in)

- ▶ Before expressions of time beginning with: *this*, *next*, *every*, *one*, and *what*, we usually have NO preposition.

## Examples:

- *I went to London **last June**.* (Not ~~*in last June*~~)
- *He's coming back **next Tuesday**.* (Not ~~*on next Tuesday*~~)
- *I go home **every Easter**.* (Not ~~*at every Easter*~~)
- *We'll call you **this evening**.* (Not ~~*in this evening*~~)
- *I don't know **what time** it starts.*

- ▶ Also NO preposition is used before these expressions:

- *yesterday*
- *today*
- *tomorrow*
- *the day after tomorrow*
- *the day before yesterday*
- *two weeks ago*
- *yesterday evening*
- *tomorrow evening*
- *tonight*

# Prepositions – Place & Movement

- ▶ We use **AT** for a Specific POINT or place.
  - located at a specific place (a point)
  - for events
  - place where you are to do something typical (watch a movie, study, work)



**at** the bus stop



**at** the door



**at** the roundabout



**at** her desk

- *Who is that man standing **at the bus stop** / **at the door** / **at the window**?*
- *Turn left **at the traffic lights** / **at the next junction** / **at the roundabout** / **at the church**.*
- *We have to get off the bus **at the next stop**.*
- *When you leave the hotel, please leave your key **at reception**. (= at the reception desk)*

# Prepositions – Place & Movement

- We use **ON** for a SURFACE
  - being on a surface (not enclosed)
  - for a certain side (left, right)
  - for a floor in a building
  - for public transport
  - for television, radio

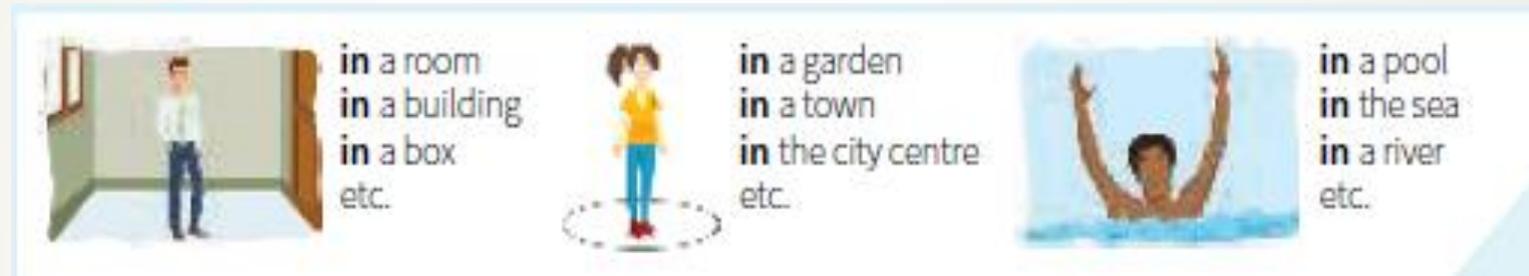


- *I sat **on the floor** / **on the ground** / **on the grass** / **on the beach** / **on a chair**.*
- *There's a dirty mark **on the ceiling** / **on your nose** / **on your shirt**.*
- *Did you see the notice **on the wall** / **on the door**?*
- *You'll find details of TV programmes **on page seven** of the newspaper.*
- *The hotel is **on a small island** in the middle of a lake.*

# Prepositions – Place & Movement

- ▶ We use **IN** for an ENCLOSED SPACE / a large place with boundaries

When something is in a place, it is inside it (enclosed within limits)



- *There's no-one **in the room** / **in the building** / **in the garden**.*
- *What do you have **in your hand** / **in your mouth**?*
- *When we were **in Italy**, we spent a few days **in Venice**.*
- *I have a friend who lives **in a small village in the mountains**.*
- *There were some people swimming **in the pool** / **in the sea** / **in the river**.*

# Prepositions – Time & Place

## ▶ Place:

▶ **FROM:** for the origin or starting point

- *I used carrots **from my garden**.*
- *I received a suspicious email **from my bank**.*

▶ **TO:** moving toward a specific place (the goal or end point of movement)

- *Every morning, I take the bus **to campus**.*

## ▶ Time:

**FROM ... TO ...** : the beginning and end of a period of time

- *My appointment is **from 13:30 to 14:00**.*
- *I will be on vacation **from July 31** for a week.*

# Prepositions – By & Until

- ▶ We use “**UNTIL**” to say that a **situation will continue up to a certain moment**.
- ▶ We use “**BY**” to say that **something will happen at or before a certain moment**.
- ▶ **Examples:**
  - 1) ‘Can you repair my watch if I leave it **until** Saturday?’ ‘No, but we can do it **by** next Tuesday.’
  - 2) You can have the car **until** this evening. But you must bring it back **by** 6 o’clock at the latest.
- ▶ In an informal style we often use **till** instead of **until**.
- ▶ Before a **subject and verb**, we can use **by the time**:
  - He’ll be gone **by the time we get home**.

# Prepositions – Between & Among

- ▶ We say **among** a group, crowd or mass of things that are not seen separately.
- ▶ We say **between** two or more clearly separate people or things.
- ▶ We say **between** things on both sides.
- ▶ **Examples:**
  - *She was standing **between** Alice and Mary.*
  - *Our house is **between** the woods, the river and the village.*
  - *His house is hidden **among** the trees.*
  - *We were in a little valley **between** high mountains.*



# Prepositions – For & During

- ▶ **During** tells you *when something happened*. It means at some point in a period of time.
- ▶ **For** tells you *how long something lasts*.
- ▶ **Examples:**
  - 1) *My father was in hospital **for** six weeks **during** the summer.*
  - 2) *It rained **during** the night **for** two or three hours.*
  - 3) *They met **during** the war.*
  - 4) *She studied in America **for** two years.*

# Noun + Preposition

- ▶ Some nouns are followed by **particular prepositions**:
  - *I felt stupid because of **lack of** sleep.*
  - ***Congratulations on** your promotion.*
- ▶ **Noun + of**: *an example of ; cost of ; the hope of ; the cause of ; details of ; proof of ; knowledge of ; opinion of ; idea of ; thought of ; price of*
- ▶ **Noun + for**: *the reason for ; respect for ; demand for ; substitute for*
- ▶ **Noun + on**: *attack on ; tax on*
- ▶ **Noun + to**: *contribution to ; answer to ; damage to ; invitation to ; solution to ; the key to ; way to*
- ▶ **Noun + in**: *increase in ; belief in ; success in*
- ▶ **Noun + with**: *trouble/difficulty with ; matter with ; connection/relationship with*
- ▶ **Noun + between**: *connection/relationship between*

# Adjective + Preposition

- ▶ Some adjectives are used with **particular prepositions**: *I'm **full of** energy today.*
- ▶ **Adjective + at**: *good at ; bad at ; surprised at ; shocked at ; clever at*
- ▶ **Adjective + to**: *kind to ; married to ; polite/rude to ; accustomed to ; similar to ; used to ; nice to ; different to*
- ▶ **Adjective + of**: *typical of ; tired of ; afraid of ; proud of ; aware of ; guilty of ; ashamed of ; jealous of ; sweet of ; sure/certain of ; frightened of ; fond of ; capable of ; independent of*
- ▶ **Adjective + with**: *bored with ; pleased with ; wrong with ; angry with ; crowded with ; satisfied with ; happy with ; disappointed with ; fed up with*
- ▶ **Adjective + in**: *interested in ; dressed in*
- ▶ **Adjective + about**: *excited about ; worried about ; optimistic about ; sorry about ; sure/certain about ; happy about ; disappointed about ; angry about*
- ▶ **Adjective + for**: *prepared for ; responsible for ; famous for ; ready for ; sorry for ; fit for*
- ▶ **Adjective + from**: *different from*
- ▶ **Adjective + on**: *dependent on ; keen on*

# Verb + Preposition

- ▶ **Verb + to**: *talk/speak to ; listen to ; apologize to ; explain to ; describe to ; shout to ; throw to ; refuse to ; reply to ; happen to ; invite to ; prefer to ; belong to ; apply to*
- ▶ **Verb + at**: *look/glare/stare at ; laugh at ; aim/point at ; shoot/fire at ; shout at ; throw at ; arrive at*
- ▶ **Verb + about**: *talk/read/know about ; tell about ; do something about ; care about ; hear about ; think about ; dream about ; complain about*
- ▶ **Verb + for**: *ask for ; apply for ; wait for ; search for ; leave for ; care for ; look for ; pay for ; blame for ; thank for ; wait for*
- ▶ **Verb + of**: *hear of ; think of ; accuse/suspect of ; approve/disapprove of ; die of ; consist of ; remind of*
- ▶ **Verb + from**: *suffer from ; protect from*
- ▶ **Verb + on**: *depend/rely on ; live on ; congratulate on ; compliment on ; concentrate on ; insist on ; spend (money/time) on ; blame on*
- ▶ **Verb + in**: *believe in ; specialize in ; succeed in ; take part in*
- ▶ **Verb + into**: *break into ; crash/drive into ; run into ; divide/cut/split into ; get into ; translate into*
- ▶ **Verb + with**: *collide with ; fill with ; provide/supply with ; fight with ; speak with*

# Expressions beginning with Prepositions

➤ Some fixed expressions **begin** with a **particular preposition**:

- *I met my friend **at a party**.*
- *Is this car **for sale**?*
- *We went there **by car**.*
- *Please give me your report **in writing**.*

➤ *In my opinion ; in the picture ; in the rain ; in a loud voice ; in a raincoat ; in a hat ; in ink/pencil ; in cash ; in general ; in time ; in the way ; in the end*

➤ *On the phone ; on the radio ; on TV ; on the screen ; on the internet ; on the left/right ; on business ; on a journey/trip ; on page 22 ; on holiday ; on purpose ; on the market ; on time ; on the way*

➤ *At the back ; at the side of the road ; at the front ; at the cinema/theatre ; at the end*

➤ *By cheque/credit card ; by chance ; by mistake/accident*

➤ *Up to date ; Out of date*

➤ *Point of view*

# On time & In time

- **On time = at exactly the right time, punctual, not late**
- If something happens on time, it happens at the time that was planned:
  - *The 11.45 train left **on time**. (= it left at 11.45)*
  - *Please be **on time**. Don't be late.*
  - *The conference was well-organized. Everything began and finished **on time**.*
- The opposite of **on time** is **late**:
  - *Be **on time**. Don't be **late**.*
- **In time (for something / to do something) = soon enough, with time to spare**
  - *Will you be home **in time** for dinner? (= soon enough for dinner)*
  - *I sent Amy a birthday present. I hope it arrives **in time**. (= on or before her birthday)*
  - *I'm in a hurry. I want to get home **in time** to watch the game on TV. (= soon enough to see the game)*
- The opposite of **in time** is **too late**:
  - *I got home **too late** to watch the game on TV.*

# At the end & In the end

- ▶ **At the end (of something) = at the time when something ends or after everything else.** For example:

*at the end of the month*

*at the end of January*

*at the end of the game*

*at the end of the film*

*at the end of the course*

*at the end of the concert*

- *I'm going away **at the end of January** / **at the end of the month.***
- ***At the end of the concert,** everyone applauded.*
- *The players shook hands **at the end of the game.***

- ▶ **In the end = finally; after a long time or a lot of trouble.**

We use *in the end* when we say what the final result of a situation was:

- *We had a lot of problems with our car. We sold it **in the end.** (= finally we sold it)*
- *He got more and more angry. **In the end** he just walked out of the room.*
- *Alan couldn't decide where to go for his holidays. He didn't go anywhere **in the end.** (Not at the end)*

# In the way & On the way

➤ **In the way** = ‘in an inconvenient place’.

➤ **For example:**

- *Can you move your bike out of the passage? It's **in the way**.*

➤ **On the way** = ‘during the journey’.

➤ **For example:**

- *We stopped for a coffee **on the way**.*

# Tips for Learning Prepositions

1. Some prepositions are difficult because they have more than one meaning, English learners should not directly translate prepositions from their first language, as a preposition in one language often has several different translations into another language. A good way to learn which preposition to use is to consult an English learner's dictionary.
2. Reading texts in English is also helpful to learn prepositional phrases and their usage in context.
3. Listening attentively to speakers' use of prepositions in conversations, movies, songs and presentations will help you to extend your preposition vocabulary. In turn, practice using prepositions in everyday conversations with classmates and friends.

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