

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 for time

English	Usage	Example
in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> months/seasons years time of day centuries and historical periods after a certain period of time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> in August/in the summer in 1985 in the evening in the 19th century Mystic Market closes in two hours.
at	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> time of days noon, night, and midnight names of mealtime age 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> at 2:30 at night at breakfast I learned how to use a computer at 12.
on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> days of the week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> on Friday
since	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> from a period of time up to the present (when it started) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have been a student since 2004.
for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how long a period of time has been 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have been a student here for 2 years.
from...to...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the beginning and end of a period of time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> My appointment is from 13:30 to 14:00.
until	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a period of time up to a specific point in time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I cannot go dancing until I finish reading this chapter.
by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> in the sense of "at the latest" due date 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You must return your book by April 21st. My essay is due by the end of the week.

Prepositions location and direction

English	Usage	Example
in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> when something is <i>in</i> a place, it is inside it (enclosed within limits) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> in class/in Victoria in the book in the car/in a taxi You look serious in this photo.
at	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> located at a specific place (a point) for events place where you are to do something typical (watch a movie, study, work) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> at the library at a concert/at a party at the cinema/at school/at work
on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> being on a surface (not enclosed) for a certain side (left, right) for a floor in a building for public transport for television, radio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I left the keys on the table. Go down this hall to the end, turn right, and it's the third door on your left. My apartment is on the fourth floor. I forgot my phone on the bus. You can hear my brother on the radio.
to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> moving toward a specific place (the goal or end point of movement) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every morning, I take the bus to campus.
from	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> for the origin or starting point 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I used carrots from my garden. I received a suspicious email from my bank. I will be on vacation from July 31 for a week.
towards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> movement in direction of something 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I suddenly saw a dog running towards me.
across	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> movement from one side to another 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a coffee shop across the street. I swam across the lake.
through	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> movement from one side to another but "in something" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I entered the room through an open window. You have to go through the kitchen to get to the bathroom.

between	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a place "in the middle" of two or more separate people or things 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I was standing between my friend and his parents. The gap between the rich and poor keeps growing.
among	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a place "surrounded" by more than two people or things together as a group (in the sense of "included in") 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> France is among the countries of Western Europe. Among the advantages of exercising regularly are lower risks of depression and a better quality of life.

Prepositions – Connections

English	Usage	Example
of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> between two noun phrases to show that the first belongs to or is part of the second to say how people are related 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The keyboard of my computer is pink. Richard is the son of Audrey/He is a good friend of mine.
with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Between two noun phrases when the second is a particular feature of the first to say that people or things are together for the specific thing used to perform an action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I spilled coffee on the computer with a pink keyboard. I think Sarah is studying with Tara/I went to a workshop with my friend. My roommate killed a spider with a book.
by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> when we want to describe an action in a more general way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> My roommate saved my live by killing the spider.

Prepositions in Academic Writing

English	Usage	Example
about	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For topics (in the sense of "with regard to/concerned with") 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> She was the author of many books about the history of ancient Egypt.
for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> with a purpose/giving a reason (associated with an action; shortened form of "for the purpose of") 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The concept of class is important for understanding how society works. Theories about strategies for linking nouns and verbs
from	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the origin, cause or agent of something 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The meaning is often hard to guess from the individual words.
in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> inclusion, location or position within a time period or limits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can see this in works by contemporary authors.
on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the basis for something 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many engineers proceed on the assumption that the digital age is unique.
of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> belonging to, relating to, or connected with describe a relation/causation the origin, cause, motive or reason of something 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The results of the investigation are still relevant. The root of the problem is the absence of any evidence supporting our thesis. Henderson discovered that the king died of poisoning by analyzing blood samples.
by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe a direct cause or agent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to folklore, he was killed by strangulation by the Mad King when he protested the new tax.

Practice

Complete this text using these prepositions: In, on, at, for, of, with, between, before, about

Student: Excuse me, when are your office hours?

Instructor: I am available to meet _____ you _____ Thursday _____ 13:30 and 15:30.

Student: I have class _____ that time. Can we meet _____ lunch?

Instructor: Is it urgent?

Student: Yes, I have some questions to ask you _____ the mid-term exam.

Instructor: You can come _____ my office _____ 11:00. Does that work _____ you?

Student: Yes, thank you. Can you remind me where is your office?

Instructor: My office is _____ the third floor _____ room A321 _____ the David Turpin Building.

Student : Thank you very much! See you then.