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Preposition is a word or several words that express place, time, reason and other logical relationships between different parts of the sentence.

There are over 100 prepositions in English. The most common single-word prepositions are:



About	Before	Down	Of	To
Above	Behind	During	Off	Toward
Across	Below	For	On	Under
After	Beneath	From	Onto	Underneath
Against	Beside	In	Out	Until
Along	Between	Inside	Outside	Up
Among	Beyond	Into	Over	Upon
Around	But(Except)	Like	Past	With
At	By	Near	Through	Without

via <https://slideplayer.com/slide/7481149/>

Although most prepositions are single words, some pairs and groups of words operate like single prepositions:

- *They were unable to attend **because of** the bad weather in Ireland.*
- *Jack'll be playing in the team **in place of** me.*

Prepositions are always followed by a [noun](#) or a [pronoun](#) (or sometimes a [gerund](#)).

- *I'll meet you in the cafe **opposite** the cinema.*
- *It was difficult to sleep **during** the flight.*
- *Give that **to** me.*
- *They were talking **about** their trip.*

Types of prepositions

Prepositions show the relationship between the noun or pronoun and other words in a sentence. For example, they describe the position of something, the time when something happens, the way in which something is done, etc.

Prepositions of movement

[Prepositions of movement](#) are used to show the *direction* somebody or something is moving to, towards, from, out of, etc.

- *We walked **across** the park.*
- *The cat jumped **out of** the box.*
- *I took the picture **off** the wall.*
- *The price of food has **gone up** in the past two years.*
- *The boy is running **away from** me.*

Prepositions of place

[Prepositions of place](#) are used to say *where* someone or something is.

- *The ball is **on** the box.*
- *The ball is **between** the box and the bear.*
- *The ball is **behind** the box.*
- *The ball is **in front of** the box.*
- *The ball is **under** the box.*

- The ball is **next to** the box.
- The ball is **in** the box.
- The ball is **near** the box.

Prepositions of time

[Prepositions of time](#) tell us *when* something happens, and for *how long*. They are usually used with clock times, mealtimes, parts of the day, months, years, and other durations.

For example:

- at night
 - at 9.00 / 10.30 / 7.45
 - at the weekend
- etc.

- I start work **at** 9.00 every day.
- He doesn't usually go out **at** night.
- She sometimes works **at** the weekend.

- on Monday
 - on Friday afternoon, on Saturday night
 - on the 20th of January,
- etc.

- I'm meeting Tom **on** Monday.
- I don't usually work **on** Friday afternoon.
- My birthday is **on** November 27th.

- in the morning / the afternoon / the evening
 - in July / September / January
 - in winter / spring / summer / autumn
- etc.

- He usually watches TV **in** the evening.
- They sometimes go **on** holiday **in** July.
- We bought this house **in** 2012.
- It's always cold here **in** winter.

BUT:

- We always exchange presents **at Christmas**.
- We always exchange presents **on Christmas Day**.
- He likes going out **at New Year**.
- He likes going out **on New Year's Eve**.

Prepositions and abstract meanings

Common prepositions that show relationships of space often have abstract as well as concrete meanings.

Compare:

- *There were beautiful mountains **beyond** the hotel.*
- *Learning Japanese in a year was **beyond** them all. (beyond = too difficult for)*

Some common prepositions such as 'at', 'in' and 'on' can have abstract meanings:

- *I think you will both need to discuss the problem **in** private.*
- *All three singers were dressed **in** black.*
- *Our dog stays **on** guard all night, even when he's sleeping!*

Adjectives with prepositions

These are some useful combinations of adjectives and prepositions we should remember:

- *I'm **interested in** cooking.*
- *He's very **good at** playing tennis.*
- *Carrots are **good for** you.*
- *My sister is **afraid of** spiders.*
- *Paris is **famous for** the Eiffel Tower.*
- *We're **worried about** the English test.*

Prepositions at the end of a sentence

There's a popular myth in English that you may not end a sentence with a preposition. However, we sometimes do separate a preposition from the words which follow it. It is common in informal styles.

- *She was someone **to whom** he could talk.* (formal)
- *She was someone **who** he could talk **to**.* (informal)
- **Which** room are they having breakfast **in**? (informal)
- **In which** room are they having breakfast? (formal)

Consider the following examples:

- *Where did you come **from**?* (NOT: ~~From where did you come?~~)
- *That is something I cannot agree **with**.*
- *How many of you can I depend **on**?*

Without these prepositions the meaning would not be clear.

But if the meaning is clear without the preposition, just do not use it.

- *Incorrect: ~~Where is your brother at?~~*
- *Correct: Where is your brother?*

In this video from 7ESL, you'll find many useful phrases with prepositions to improve your vocabulary:

Read more about prepositions:

[Prepositions of Place](#)

[Prepositions of Movement](#)

[Prepositions of Time](#)