

PREPOSITIONS

Prepositions are short words (on, in, to) that usually stand in front of nouns (sometimes also in front of gerund verbs).

Even advanced learners of English find prepositions difficult, as a 1:1 translation is usually not possible. One preposition in your native language might have several translations depending on the situation.

There are hardly any rules as to when to use which preposition. The only way to learn prepositions is looking them up in a [dictionary](#), reading a lot in English ([literature](#)) and learning useful phrases off by heart ([study tips](#)).

The following table contains rules for some of the most frequently used prepositions in English:

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 (<i>when?</i>)	in August / in winter in the morning in 2006 in an hour
▪ at	for <i>night</i> for <i>weekend</i> a certain point of time (<i>when?</i>)	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

English	Usage	Example
till / until	in the sense of <i>how long something is going to last</i>	He is on holiday until Friday.
by	in the sense of <i>at the latest</i> 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 <i>next to, by an object</i> for <i>table</i> for events place where you are to do something typical (watch a film, study, work)	at the door, at the station 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 <i>television, radio</i>	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.

English	Usage	Example
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 <i>more than</i> getting to the other side (also <i>across</i>) 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 <i>over</i>) 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 <i>bed</i>	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 <i>where from</i>	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	a page of the book

English	Usage	Example
	what does it show	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 <i>age</i>	she learned Russian at 45
about	for topics, meaning <i>what about</i>	we were talking about you

Multiple words

Prepositions comprising of two words

1. [according to](#)
2. [adjacent to](#)
3. [ahead of](#)
4. [apart from](#)
5. [as for](#)
6. [as of](#)
7. [as per](#)
8. [as regards](#)
9. [aside from](#)
10. [astern of](#)
11. [back to](#)
12. [because of](#)
13. [close to](#)
14. [due to](#)
15. [except for](#)
16. [far from](#)
17. [inside of](#)
18. [instead of](#)
19. [left of](#)
20. [near to](#)
21. [next to](#)

22. [opposite of](#)
23. [opposite to](#)
24. [out from](#)
25. [out of](#)
26. [outside of](#)
27. [owing to](#)
28. [prior to](#)
29. [pursuant to](#)
30. [rather than](#)
31. [regardless of](#)
32. [right of](#)
33. [subsequent to](#)
34. [such as](#)
35. [thanks to](#)
36. [up to](#)

prepositions comprising of three words

1. [as far as](#) is one example of the many expressions which can be analyzed as *as*+adjective+*as* rather than a multiword preposition
2. [as opposed to](#)
3. [as soon as](#)
4. [as well as](#)

Preposition + (article) + noun + preposition

English has many idiomatic expressions that act as prepositions that can be analyzed as a preposition followed by a noun (sometimes preceded by the definite or, occasionally, indefinite article) followed by another preposition.^[1] Common examples include:

1. [at the behest of](#)
2. [by means of](#)
3. [by virtue of](#)
4. [for the sake of](#)
5. [in accordance with](#)
6. [in addition to](#)
7. [in case of](#)
8. [in front of](#)
9. [in lieu of](#)
10. [in order to](#)
11. [in place of](#)
12. [in point of](#)
13. [in spite of](#)
14. [on account of](#)
15. [on behalf of](#)
16. [on top of](#)
17. [with regard to](#) (sometimes written as "w/r/t")
18. [with respect to](#)
19. [with a view to](#)

PREPOSITIONS, MEANINGS AND EXAMPLES IN SENTENCES

<u>Preposition</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Examples</u>
above	higher than, or over	The sun is above the clouds.
across	from one side to the other	It's dangerous to run across the road.
after	- following something - later than	- The boy ran after the ball. - I'll phone you after lunch.
against	- in opposition to - in contact with	- Stealing is against the law. - The sofa is against the wall.
along	from one end to the other	They are walking along the street.
among	surrounded by	Peter was among the spectators.
around	- in a circle - near, approximately	- He walked around the table. - It costs around 50 euros.
before	- earlier than - in front of	- The day before yesterday. - He bowed before the king.
behind	at the back of	Passengers sit behind the driver.
below	lower than	His shorts are below his knees.
beneath	under	The pen was beneath the books.
beside	next to	The bank is beside the cinema.
between	in the space separating two things	Mary sat between Tom and Jane.
by	near, at the side of	The restaurant is by the river.
close to	near	The school is near the church.
down	from higher to lower	She pulled down the blind.
for	what is intended	I bought this book for you.
from	where something starts or originates	The wind is blowing from the north.
in	at a point within an area	The pen is in the drawer.
in front of	directly before	The child ran out in front of the bus.
inside	on the inner part of	The bird is inside the cage.
into	enter a closed space	He went into the shop.
near	close to	The school is near the church.
next to	beside	The bank is next to the cinema.

off	down or away from	He fell off the horse.
on	in a position touching a surface	The plate is on the table.
onto	move to a position on a surface	The cat jumped onto the roof of the car.
opposite	facing, on the other side	Eva sat opposite Tom at the table.
out of	- move from a closed space - without	- He got out of the taxi. - She's out of work.
outside	opposite of inside, on the outer side	The garden is outside the house.
over	- above/across - on the surface of	- The plane flew over the Atlantic. - She put a sheet over the furniture.
past	beyond	She drove past the supermarket.
round	in a circular movement	The earth moves round the sun.
through	from one side to the other	The Seine flows through Paris.
throughout	in every part of	The virus spread throughout the country.
to	in the direct of / towards	On the way to the station.
towards	in the direction of	The child ran towards her father.
under	beneath, below	Water flows under the bridge.
underneath	beneath	There was dust underneath the rug.
up	towards or in a higher position	She walked up the stairs.