Prepositions

A preposition is a word or group of words that shows a link or relationship between a noun, pronoun, noun phrase or other part of a sentence.

There are more than 100 prepositions in the English language, which include single word prepositions, two-word prepositions and multiword prepositions.

Prepositions show many different relationships between words within a sentence and can be divided into several different categories:

1. Prepositions for time.
2. Prepositions for place and location.
3. Prepositions for movement and direction.
4. Prepositions for agent.
5. Preposition for device, instrument or machines.
6. Prepositions used after verbs to make a prepositional verb, for example: look at, look after, laugh at, etc.

Prepositions are always placed before a noun or pronoun to show the relation of the noun/pronoun to the other words in the sentence. Study the examples below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT + VERB</th>
<th>PREPOSITION</th>
<th>NOUN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We are going</td>
<td>to</td>
<td>the park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The salt and pepper are</td>
<td>on</td>
<td>the table.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My father lives</td>
<td>in</td>
<td>Belgium.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She is looking</td>
<td>at</td>
<td>the handbag in the shop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am talking</td>
<td>on</td>
<td>the phone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He went</td>
<td>with</td>
<td>his friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am looking</td>
<td>for</td>
<td>my wallet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are driving</td>
<td>through</td>
<td>the forest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They came here</td>
<td>by</td>
<td>car.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Prepositions for Time**

When we are referring to time, we use a limited range of prepositions for specific purposes. Study the table below and look at the examples.

| in...          | Month, year, season: in January... in 1995... in winter...  
|                | Time of day or month: in the morning... in the evening... in the first week of January...  
|                | A period of time in the past, present or future: in the 21st century... in the past... in the future... in the present...  
| on...          | Day: on Monday  
|                | Date: on the 5th of March  
|                | Particular day: on Christmas Day... on my birthday...  
| at...          | A specific time: at 5 o’clock... at 7:30 in the morning... at midnight... at noon... at lunch time... at the moment... at the same time  
| for...         | A duration of time: ...five minutes ...for the day ...for the week.  

**Examples:**

- Muhammad Ali was born **on** the 17th of January **in** 1942.
- The meeting is **in** the morning.
- I don’t like to ride my bike **in** the winter.
- All cars will be electric **in** the future.
- I start my new job **on** Monday.
- I always have a meal with my friends **on** my birthday.
- The concert starts **at** 9 o’clock.
- We are going on holiday **for** two weeks.
- The weather is very bad **at** the moment.
- Can you wait **for** a few more minutes?
Preposition for Place and Location

Some prepositions of time (in, on, at) can also be used as prepositions of place and location, but there are many more prepositions of place. These types of preposition are used to show where something is. Study the table below and look at the examples.

| in... | a glass (inside a container)  
|       | a room (inside a place)  
|       | a car (inside a vehicle)  
|       | the garden (inside a space)  
|       | Germany / Berlin (inside a geographical area)  
| on... | a desk (on a horizontal surface)  
|       | the wall (on a vertical surface)  
|       | on my arm (on any surface)  
|       | a bus (on public transport)  
|       | a motorbike (on a two wheel vehicle)  
| at... | the front / back / end (a beginning or end point of a line or shape)  
|       | the reception desk (near a place)  
|       | home / work / the shops (in a general, physical location)  
|       | a concert / a meeting / a festival (an event)  
| inside... | the bottle / the room / the car (within an enclosed container or space)  
| outside... | the building / the house / the city (not within the borders, walls or sides of a container)  
| behind... | In a position behind something else: ‘There is a car park behind the train station.’  
| in front of... | In a position where something else is at the back: ‘I am standing in front of the entrance.’  
| on top of.. | Placed directly on something: ‘Put the empty bag on top of the wardrobe’  
| under... underneath... | Placed directly under something else: ‘The remote control is under / underneath the sofa.’  

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>above...</th>
<th>Positioned in a position higher than another object: ‘Put the vase on the shelf above the books’.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>below...</td>
<td>Positioned lower than another object: ‘My apartment is on the floor below yours’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beside...</td>
<td>Positioned to the left or right of an object or person: ‘I am standing beside my sister’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>next to...</td>
<td>Positioned to the left or right of an object or person. ‘The bank is next to the post office’ (preferably used when talking about big spaces).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between...</td>
<td>Positioned in the middle of two other objects: ‘The sofa is between two small tables’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beneath...</td>
<td>Positioned in an enclosed space below a surface level: ‘The roots of a tree grow beneath the ground’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples

- She lives in New York.
- I have a tattoo on my shoulder.
- I am getting on the train now.
- Your wallet is on the table.
- We are waiting in the queue.
- My house is at the end of street.
- We are sat at the table.
- It’s cold; let’s wait inside.
- There are reporters waiting outside the hotel.
- Your bag is under the seat.
- We are sat behind you.
- You are standing in front of the television.
- There is a bull standing on top of that hill!
• There is a grocery shop **next to** the post office.
• I put your pyjamas **under** the pillow.
• Look **underneath** the bed.
• There are many strange creatures **beneath** the sea.
• The table is **beside** the sofa.
• Park **between** those two cars.