

PREPOSITION

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Intermediate Grammar
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A **preposition** is a word used to link nouns, pronouns, or phrases to other words within a sentence. They act to connect the people, objects, time and locations of a sentence.

Prepositions are usually short words, and they are normally placed directly in front of nouns. In some cases, you'll find prepositions in front of gerund verbs.

A nice way to think about prepositions is as the words that help glue a sentence together. They do this by expressing position and movement, possession, time and how an action is completed.

Indeed, several of the most frequently used words in all of English, such as of, to, for, with, on and at, are prepositions. Explaining prepositions can seem complicated, but they are a common part of language and most of us use them naturally without even thinking about it.

In fact, it's interesting to note that prepositions are regarded as a 'closed class' of words in the English language. This means, unlike verbs and nouns, no new words are added to this group over time. In a way, it reflects their role as the functional workhorse of the sentence. They are unassuming and subtle, yet vitally important to the meaning of language.

I. Kinds of Prepositions

As we have learned, Prepositions are words that connect nouns/pronouns/phrases. It's a bit tricky to explain the usage as it really has not many rules. But the wonders of logic will save this one. We will get into complete details of this part in our next chapter but let's get introduced to the different kinds in this chapter:

a. Simple Prepositions:

Usually containing only two syllables, simple prepositions are words like for, by, at, out, in, of, off, through, till, up, to, with.

- The whale dived *into* the water creating a massive splash.
- I am *from* New Jersey.
- Martha is here *till* her brother gets into college.
- The moon does not shine *by* its own light.
- My niece is suffering *from* flu.
- I am working hard *at* Geography.

b. Compound Prepositions

Compound prepositions are those prepositions that are made by prefixing the preposition to a noun, an adjective or an adverb. Say for example, amongst, amidst, above, around, along, across, about, below, beneath, beside, between, beyond, outside, within, without.

Compound Prepositions: Prefix + noun/adjective/adverb

- The cat is jumping *around* the seat.
- *Amidst* all the confusion, Nancy stayed calm and saved the drowning kid.
- *Amongst* all the children, Cindy is the brightest in music.
- The car pulled *along* the driveway.
- There's a metro station *beneath* this ground.
- Our dog stayed *outside* our home in his kennel.
- The children ran *around* the bench.
- There is a friendly mouse *inside* my cupboard.
- Her beauty is *beyond* imagination.
- Once *upon* a time, there was a brave princess.

c. Double Prepositions

When two prepositions are used together, they are called Double Prepositions.

Sometimes a Compound Preposition is formed by joining two words, but unlike that,

Double Prepositions are always two separate words.

Double Prepositions are formed by simple- two prepositions

- My son emerged *from behind* the curtains to scare me.
- *According* to the meteorology department, it is going to rain tonight.
- It is *up* to nature to replenish our renewable resources.
- Zeal is something that comes from *within* a person.

d. Participle Preposition

Verbs that act as a preposition. Usually, end in -ing and -ed.

Particle preposition are verbs in disguise

- *Barring* a few minor mistakes, the play went pretty good.
- Everyone, please keep quiet *during* the class.
- Our teacher sometimes gets *frustrated* with us.
- *Considering* my grandfather's age, we keep our travels less exhausting.

e. Phrase Prepositions

A Phrase preposition includes a preposition, an object and the object's modifier.

Phrase prepositions are – preposition + object + modifier

- My little brother collected my trophy *on behalf of* my sister.
- *In spite of* being the best soccer team, we didn't win.
- The show got canceled *because of* the sudden rain.
- *In course of* time, the wounds on my cat's paws healed.
- *In order to avoid losses*, he withdrew all money to mitigate the risk
- *By virtue of* the power vested upon the prince, he announced a peace treaty.

II. Kinds of Prepositions: According to Functionality

a. Prepositions of Time

These prepositions denote time in the sentence. For example, look at the table below to get an idea of how prepositions of time are used. Please note that these are only 3 examples of prepositions of time. We will deep dive more into these and more separately:

Prepositions of Time	Explanations	Example
In	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Used for years / months / seasons– Used for morning / afternoon / evening– Period of time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– I went backpacking in Europe <i>in</i> 1999/ <i>in</i> May 2017/ <i>in</i> the summertime.– I went for a run in the morning/ afternoon/ evening.– This is my first chocolate <i>in</i> last three years.
On	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Days / period	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– I will go for a haircut <i>on</i> Monday.– I will go shopping <i>on</i> the weekend.
At	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Night– At an exact time of the day	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– The moon shines <i>at</i> night.– We go to the sea coast every day to watch the sunrise <i>at</i> 5:30 am.

Examples:

- We are traveling abroad *in* the summertime.
- Why don't you come home *on* Sunday evening?
- The home-coming is *on* the 7th September.
- My mom gifted me a puppy *on* my birthday.
- We gathered in the assembly hall *at* 7 o' clock.

b. Prepositions of Place

These prepositions denote a place in the sentence. For example, look at the table below to get an idea of how prepositions of place are used. Please note that these are only 3 examples of prepositions of place. We will deep dive more into these and more separately:

Prepositions of Place	Explanations	Example
In	– Used for inside	– Martha is in the car. – Picasso is one of the most famous artists in the world.

Prepositions of Place	Explanations	Example
On	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Placement of a particular thing attached to, or next to something – Something displayed on something 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – She will sing on stage tomorrow. – I will feature in a video on TV today. – There’s a beautiful picture of my family on the wall. – I got on the bus for Goa from Mumbai.
At	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – An exact place where something is situated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – She met me at the North main street. – We go to the sea coast every day to watch the sunrise at 5:30 am.

Examples:

- There’s a shoe rack *in* the lobby.
- There’s a painting *on* the wall.
- There’s a rod *at* the roof edge.
- There’s a mouse *under* my chair.
- Let’s get *under* the umbrella as it’s starting to drizzle.
- There’s a key-holder *behind* the door.

Note: Notice in the two tables above, the words are actually the same but the usage changes their meaning and hence the kind of preposition they make. We will understand this fully when we read about each of these functions individually further on.

c. Prepositions of Direction

These prepositions show the direction of something.

- She dived *into* the river.
- All students walked *towards* the assembly hall.
- *Past* the orchard, you will find my grandmother's house.

d. Prepositions of Agent

These prepositions act as an agent between a noun and usually a verb.

- Harry Potter was written *by* J.K Rowling.
- Some schools are accredited *by* CBSE board.
- She was hit *by* a car while she was going to school.
- Hanah graduated *with* an honors degree.

e. Prepositions of Instruments, Devices or Machines

These prepositions connect instruments, machines or devices in the sentence.

- She came to the wedding party *by* train.
- I made a hole in the wall *with the help* of a drill for the waste-pipe.
- My brother opened the lock *with* a hairpin.

III. Prepositions Diagram

Look at this diagram to understand how to use prepositions well:

