

*Adapted from http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/prepositions.htm*

A preposition is a word that describes a relationship between other words in a sentence. Prepositions are nearly always combined with other words in prepositional phrases. The usual pattern for a prepositional phrase is a preposition + a determiner + a pronoun or noun (the *object* of the preposition) + any modifiers of the object. This whole phrase acts as a modifier, locating something in time and space, modifying a noun, or telling when or where or under what conditions something happened.

She placed the books (where?) **on** the table (when?) **after** she arrived. They remained there (under what condition?) **until** someone put them (where?) **on** the shelves.

**Common prepositions**

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| about above across after against around at before behind | below beneath beside besides between beyond  by down | during  except for from in inside into like near | of  off on  out  outside over since through | throughout till to toward under until up upon | with  without  according to because of by way of in addition to in front of | in place of in regard to in spite of instead of on account of out of |

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| **Prepositions of Time: *at, on*, and *in***  We use *at* to designate specific times. #The train is due at 12:15 p.m.  We use *on* to designate days and dates. #My brother is coming on Monday. #We're having a party on the Fourth of July.  We use *in* for nonspecific times during a day, a month, a season, or a year. #She likes to jog in the morning. #It's too cold in winter to run outside. #He started the job in 1971. #He's going to quit in August. | **Prepositions of Place: *at, on*, and *in***  We use *at* for specific addresses. #Grammar English lives at 55 Boretz Road in Durham.  We use *on* to designate names of streets, avenues, etc. #Her house is on Boretz Road.  And we use *in* for the names of land-areas (towns, counties, states, countries, and continents). #She lives in Durham. #Durham is in Windham County. #Windham County is in Connecticut. |

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| **Prepositions of Location: *in, at*, and *on* and No Preposition** | | | |
| **IN** (the) bed\* the bedroom the car (the) class\* the library\* school\* | **AT** class\* home the library\* the office school\* work | **ON** the bed\* the ceiling the floor the horse the plane the train | **NO PREPOSITION** downstairs downtown inside outside upstairs uptown |
| \* You may sometimes use different prepositions for these locations. | | | |

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| **Prepositions of Movement: *to* and *No Preposition***  We use *to* in order to express movement toward a place. #They were driving to work together. #She's going to the dentist's office this morning.  *Toward* and *towards* express movement. These are variant spellings of the same word; use whichever sounds better to you. #We're moving toward the light. #This is a big step towards the project's completion.  We use no preposition with the words *home, downtown, uptown, inside, outside, downstairs, upstairs*. #Grandma went upstairs #Grandpa went home. #They both went outside. | **Prepositions of Time: *for* and *since***  We use *for* when we measure time (seconds, minutes, hours, days, months, years). #He held his breath for seven minutes. #She's lived there for seven years. #The British and Irish have been quarreling for seven centuries.  We use *since* with a specific date or time. #He's worked here since 1970. #She's been sitting in the waiting room since two-thirty. |

**Prepositions with Nouns, Adjectives, and Verbs, and Idiomatic expressions:** Prepositions are sometimes so firmly wedded to other words in common usage that they have practically become one word. This occurs in three categories: nouns, adjectives, and verbs. Memorize these combinations if you find you make errors with them!

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| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **NOUNS and PREPOSITIONS** | | | | approval of awareness of belief in concern for confusion about desire for | fondness for grasp of hatred of hope for interest in love of | need for participation in reason for respect for success in understanding of | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **ADJECTIVES and PREPOSITIONS** | | | | afraid of angry at aware of capable of careless about familiar with | fond of happy about interested in jealous of made of married to | proud of similar to sorry for sure of tired of worried about | |
| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **VERBS and PREPOSITIONS** | | | | apologize for ask about ask for belong to bring up care for find out | give up grow up look for look forward to look up make up pay for | prepare for study for talk about think about trust in work for worry about | | **Idiomatic Expressions with Prepositions**  agree *to* a proposal, *with* a person, *on* a price, *in* principle  argue *about* a matter, *with* a person, *for* or *against* a proposition  compare *to* to show likenesses, *with* to show differences (sometimes similarities)  correspond *to* a thing, *with* a person  differ *from* an unlike thing, *with* a person  live *at* an address, *in* a house or city, *on* a street,  *with* other people |