

*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**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| aboutaboveacrossafteragainstaroundatbeforebehind | belowbeneathbesidebesidesbetweenbeyond bydown | during exceptforfromininsideintolikenear | of offon out outsideoversincethrough | throughouttilltotowardunderuntilupupon | with withoutaccording tobecause ofby way ofin addition toin front of | in place ofin regard toin spite ofinstead ofon account ofout of  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **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. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Prepositions of Location: *in, at*, and *on* and No Preposition** |
| **IN**(the) bed\*the bedroomthe car(the) class\*the library\*school\* | **AT**class\*homethe library\*the officeschool\*work | **ON**the bed\*the ceilingthe floorthe horsethe planethe train | **NO PREPOSITION**downstairsdowntowninsideoutsideupstairsuptown |
| \* You may sometimes use different prepositions for these locations. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **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!

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|

|  |
| --- |
| **NOUNS and PREPOSITIONS** |
| approval ofawareness ofbelief inconcern forconfusion aboutdesire for | fondness forgrasp ofhatred ofhope forinterest inlove of | need forparticipation inreason forrespect forsuccess inunderstanding of |

 |

|  |
| --- |
| **ADJECTIVES and PREPOSITIONS** |
| afraid ofangry ataware ofcapable ofcareless aboutfamiliar with | fond ofhappy aboutinterested injealous ofmade ofmarried to | proud ofsimilar tosorry forsure oftired ofworried about |

 |
|

|  |
| --- |
| **VERBS and PREPOSITIONS** |
| apologize forask aboutask forbelong tobring upcare forfind out | give upgrow uplook forlook forward tolook upmake uppay for | prepare forstudy fortalk aboutthink abouttrust inwork forworry 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 propositioncompare *to* to show likenesses, *with* to show differences (sometimes similarities)correspond *to* a thing, *with* a persondiffer *from* an unlike thing, *with* a personlive *at* an address, *in* a house or city, *on* a street,  *with* other people |