

Preposition



Introduction

Definition: A preposition is a word which shows the relation between a noun or pronoun and some other word in a sentence.

Illustrative EXAMPLE



- ❖ The cat is under the table. ('Under' shows the relation between the table and the cat)
- ❖ The cat ran after the mouse. ('After' shows the relation between the mouse and running)

List of some commonly used Prepositions

About	Until
Across	Up
Around	Upon
Above	From
After	In
Against	into
Along	Near
Among	of
At	Towards
Away	On
Before	Out
Beside	Over
Between	Since
By	To
Down	under
For	with
Without	Through



Preposition of Time

A number of prepositions may be used to denote time; on Monday, before night, during the night, till tomorrow, after lunch, etc. In most cases, it is easy to know which preposition to use. The following prepositions however, need extra attention.



At, on, in

(A) 'At' usually denotes a definite point of time but can also be used for indefinite periods :

Definite points of time

- (i) at 3 o'clock, at midnight
- (ii) at the beginning of the class
- (iii) at the end of the meeting

Indefinite periods of time

- (i) at dawn, at night
- (ii) at Christmas, at Diwali

(B) 'On' is used with days and dates:

- (i) On Monday, on 15th August
- (ii) On the Diwali day, on Christmas eve
- (iii) On the evening of the 6th April

(C) 'In' is used with parts of the days, month, year, season:

- (i) In the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening,
- (ii) In summer, in winter
- (iii) In march, in 1988

(D) 'In' is also used with the future tense to show the period in which an action will happen.

- (i) In two hours, in a few minutes, in a fortnight

Carefully note the difference between 'in' and 'within':

In = at the end of

Within = before the end of

- ❖ I shall be back within a week. (Before a week is over)



By

It denotes the latest time at which an action will be over:

- ❖ The show will be over by 6 p.m. It may be over before it is 6 but the latest time at which it can be over is 6.



From

It denotes the starting point of an action. It is almost always used with to or till/until:

- ❖ The examination will be held from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.
- ❖ He was the Cabinet Minister from 1998 to 2003.



Preposition of Position



At, in

'At' gives idea of an exact point; it is used with villages, small towns.

'In' gives the idea of a larger area and is used while speaking of bigger towns, states, countries:

At Cedar Avenue, in New Delhi, in England

At the end, in the middle; also, in a factory, in a bank.

'At' conveys the idea of general neighborhood;

'In' conveys the idea of something contained.

Illustrative EXAMPLE



- ❖ Pleases it at the table when you eat.
- ❖ I shall meet you at the station.
- ❖ Turn left at the next crossing.
- ❖ The jam bottle is in the refrigerator.
- ❖ The stamps are lying in the drawer.



Between, Among

'Between' is used with two persons or things, 'among' is used with more than two:

Illustrative EXAMPLE



- ❖ He is standing between Steve and Smith.
- ❖ He is the tallest among all the people present here.



On, upon

'On' is used in speaking of things at rest; 'upon' is used with things in motion.

Illustrative EXAMPLE



- ❖ The book that I read yesterday is on the table.
- ❖ The cat sprang upon the table.



Above, over

Both 'above' and 'over' mean higher than. Sometimes we can use either of them.

Illustrative EXAMPLE



- ❖ The flags waved over our heads.
- ❖ The flags waved above our heads.

But over can also mean covering, or vertically above.

Illustrative EXAMPLE



- ❖ My father put a blanket over me.
- ❖ There is a bridge over the stream.
- ❖ There is a fan exactly over the table.



Below, under

Both 'below' and 'under' mean lower than. Sometimes we can use either of them. But under also means vertically below. It also has the idea of contact.

Illustrative EXAMPLE



- ❖ There was a beautiful lake below us in the valley.
- ❖ The traveler was resting under a tree.
- ❖ She puts the book under her pillow.



To, from — to, until

We use **to** when we want to point to an exact time before the stated hour. We use **from — to** to point to a period between the time when an activity or event begins (**from**) and when it ends (**to**). When we use **until**, we are also dealing with a period of time but the focus is on when the activity or event ends.

Illustrative EXAMPLE



- ❖ The annual general meeting ended at a quarter **to** six.
- ❖ The museum is open **from** 10 a.m. **to** 5 p.m.
- ❖ They were playing football until dusk.



At, between — and

We use **at** to point to exact times. We use **between — and** to point out that an action takes place after a stated time and before the second stated time.

Illustrative EXAMPLE



- ❖ The guest will arrive at your house **at** 4 o'clock this evening.
- ❖ The guest will arrive at your house **between** 4 o'clock and 5 o'clock this evening.



For, Since

We use **for** to point out how long an activity, an event or a situation continues or lasts (minutes, hours, days, months, or years). We use **since** with an event or time in the past to point out that the activity, event or situation is going on from that time to now.

Illustrative EXAMPLE



- ❖ Lina stayed with her friend **for** a month before returning home.
- ❖ He has been here **since** April.



At, in, on, against

We use the prepositions **at, in, on** and **against** differently in these ways:

(A) **At** - to show the exact location of a person or thing, or a particular point.

Illustrative EXAMPLE



- ❖ Joe is **at** the helm of the boat.
- ❖ The writer's signature is **at** the bottom of the page.

(B) In - to point to an enclosed area or something which has volumes.

Illustrative EXAMPLE



- ❖ There's a crack in the mirror.
- ❖ There are a lot of beautiful illustrations in this book.

(C) On - to show that a person or thing is in a higher position than something and is touching or covering its surface.

Illustrative EXAMPLE



- ❖ The acrobat is standing on the tightrope.
- ❖ The chairman's report is on page 5.

(D) Against -to show someone or something is next to and touching the surface or something or being supported by it.

Illustrative EXAMPLE



- ❖ Prefer to have my desk against the wall.
- ❖ John is leaning against his car.



Before, after, on the left/right, to the left/ right

We use 'before' and 'after' to show which person or thing is closer to us and which is farther from us. We use 'to the left' and 'to the right' to show on which side of a person or thing another person or thing is.

Illustrative EXAMPLE



- ❖ The railway station is before the public library.
- ❖ The public library is after the railway station.
- ❖ The railway station is to the left of the public library.
- ❖ The post office is to the right of the public library.

NOTE:

If we are standing in front of the public library and facing the road, we would describe the position of the railway station and the post office in this way:

- (i) The railway station is on my right.
- (ii) The post office is on my left.



Across, along

We use the prepositions 'across', 'along' and 'opposite' in the following ways:

(A) Across - to point to the other side of a line or space. Serena lives across the road from me.

(B) Along: to point to someone or something located beside or at a particular point or something which has a long thin shape, for example a road or a river.

James lives along Park Street.

We use preposition of direction (or movement) with active verbs such as walk, climb, jump, etc. We usually use prepositions of position with the verb 'to be' and verbs such as live, sit, stand, etc. Some prepositions of position can also behave as prepositions of direction when used with active verbs.

- ❖ Vijay drove to the port.
- ❖ Smith ran across the road to his house.
- ❖ Rita is at the bus stand.
- ❖ Farhan lives across the road.



Into, off, onto, out of

We use the prepositions 'into' and 'out of' for things with volume, and 'onto' and 'off' for surfaces.

Into:

(A) To show someone or something outside defined space entering it.

- ❖ The students hurried into their classes when the bell rang.
- ❖ We turned right into Park Avenue.

(B) To show something being placed inside something else.

- ❖ I poured the soup into a large bowl.

Out of:

To show someone or something inside a defined space leaving it.

- ❖ She stepped out of the hotel and was looking for a friend.

On to:

To show someone or something getting on a surface or object.

- ❖ The speaker stepped onto the podium to address the audience.
- ❖ The monkey climbed onto the roof to save itself.

Off:

To show someone or something moving away from a surface or object, or something being removed from where it is.

- ❖ He got off the bus at the last stand.
- ❖ I took off my jacket because it was hot.



Past, Through

The preposition 'past' points to someone or something moving up to a point and then proceeding farther than it. The preposition 'through' points to someone or something moving from one end to the other of a hole or an opening.

**Illustrative
EXAMPLE**



- ❖ We drove past our old house yesterday.
- ❖ Please go through that gate and turn right.



Round

When we want to describe movement in a circular manner, or show that someone or something is moving about within the boundaries of a given space, we use the Preposition 'round'.

Illustrative EXAMPLE



- ❖ They circled round the roundabout into the first road on their left.
- ❖ He walked round the garden looking for snails.



Preposition of direction: to, towards, into, at, for, against.

(A) 'To' has the sense of destination, 'towards' of direction.

- ❖ We went to the school. (reached the school)
- ❖ We went towards the school. (reached the school)

(B) 'Into' denotes movement towards the interior of something.

- ❖ The dog jumped into the pond.
- ❖ She quietly walked into the room.

(C) 'At' has the idea of hitting.

- ❖ She threw the stone at the dog.

(D) 'For' suggests the beginning of a movement.

- ❖ The workers left for the factory.
- ❖ The child leaves for the school early in the morning.

(E) 'Against' shows pressure or contact.

- ❖ He threw the bag against the wall.



Prepositions of direction from: from, off, out of

(A) 'From' is used with the point of departure.

- ❖ She has already gone from the office.

(B) 'Off' shows separation. It is used in the sense of from the surface of, down from.

- ❖ He fell off the cycle.
- ❖ The ball rolled off the table.

(C) 'Out' of is the opposite of into. It means from the interior of.

- ❖ The bird flew out of the cage.

Other prepositions showing movement are:

Through	Over	Along	Across
Round	Up	Down	We ride on horseback

Car	We travel by	By bus	By train
By air	By boat	By sea	We walk on foot
We go on a bicycle.			



Correct Use of certain Prepositions



By, with

'By' is used to express the agent or doer of an action; 'with' relates to the instrument with which the action is done.

- ❖ The old man was beaten by some strangers with a stick.
- ❖ The lawn was mown by the gardener with a mower.



After, in

'After' is used to denote some period of time in the past; 'in' is used to show some period of time in the future:

- ❖ She came back home after an hour.
- ❖ We will come back home in an hour.



Beside, Besides

Beside means by the side of; besides means in addition to:

- ❖ Please put this bag beside the box.
- ❖ Besides giving me books, he gave me his notes.

NOTE:

The verbs like command, request, invite, advise, ask, beg normally do not take the preposition 'to' after them.

- ❖ I advised him to wait. (and not advised to him —)
- ❖ I requested my friend to explain the reason for misbehaviour.
- ❖ Vikram invited all his friends to his sister's wedding.



On Time, in Time

On time = at the arranged time; not before, not after

In time = not late, with a comfortable margin:

- ❖ We reached the station in time for the train.
- ❖ The train started on time.



Adjectives and Participles followed by Prepositions.

- ❖ Accused of – some crime
- ❖ Accustomed to – something or action
- ❖ Acquainted with – a person or thing
- ❖ Addicted to – some wrong habit or evil deeds
- ❖ Accompanied by - some person
- ❖ Affectionate to - a person

- ❖ Angry with – a person
- ❖ Anxious about – a person
- ❖ Angry at – something
- ❖ Anxious for – something
- ❖ Ashamed of – something
- ❖ Astonished at – something new or uncommon
- ❖ Bend on (upon) – doing something
- ❖ Blessed with / in – something good / in some person
- ❖ Careful of – one's money
- ❖ Careful about – one's dress
- ❖ Confident of – success
- ❖ Deprived of – something
- ❖ Displeased with – someone
- ❖ Faithful to – some person
- ❖ Familiar to – something
- ❖ Fond of – something or some person
- ❖ Ill with-fever
- ❖ Indebted to – a person
- ❖ Indebted for – something
- ❖ Informed of – something
- ❖ Moved to – tears
- ❖ Moved with – pity
- ❖ Moved at – a sight
- ❖ Obedient to – someone
- ❖ Obligated to – someone
- ❖ Parallel to/with – something
- ❖ Proud of – one's position / possession
- ❖ Respectable to – a person
- ❖ Sure of – success / failure
- ❖ Suitable to - the occasion
- ❖ Suitable for – something or some work
- ❖ Sympathetic with – someone
- ❖ Tired of – some work
- ❖ Tired with – some work
- ❖ True to – someone or one's work
- ❖ Wanting in – something
- ❖ Welcome in – something
- ❖ Welcome to – one's place
- ❖ Worthy of – praise



Below are some important Verbs followed by Prepositions?

- ❖ Abide by - a promise, rule
- ❖ Abstain from - (something) e.g. wine, evil, etc.
- ❖ Accepts of - a favour

- ❖ Account for-something
- ❖ Agree to - a proposal with some person
- ❖ Apologies to - a person for bad action
- ❖ Ask for-a thing of, or from a person
- ❖ Beg for-something
- ❖ Break into - a house or place of living
- ❖ Case for - a person
- ❖ Cling to — a person or thing
- ❖ Compare with - similar or dissimilar thing
- ❖ Complain to - a person
- ❖ Con5/5t5 of - something in facts
- ❖ Decide on - something against something
- ❖ Delight in-something
- ❖ Depend on-a person or thing
- ❖ Differ with- a person
- ❖ Differ on - something
- ❖ Differ from – a person in feature or anything else
- ❖ Dwell on- something
- ❖ Escape from - some place or accident
- ❖ Fly into – anger
- ❖ Grave for-person
- ❖ Guard against- a bad habit
- ❖ Hope for-something
- ❖ Inquire of-a person
- ❖ Inquire about-(into)-something
- ❖ Jump at-something
- ❖ Jump to-a conclusion
- ❖ Knock at-a door
- ❖ Know of - a person
- ❖ Laugh at - a person
- ❖ Listen to - a person
- ❖ Long for-something
- ❖ Object to -something
- ❖ Part from - a person
- ❖ Part with - a thing
- ❖ Preside over - a meeting
- ❖ Pray for-something
- ❖ Quarrel with-someone
- ❖ Rejoice at - something
- ❖ Search for-something
- ❖ Seek after-something
- ❖ Send for-someone
- ❖ Stare at - a person
- ❖ Stick to-a point
- ❖ Talk of or about-something or thing

- ❖ Talk over- a matter
- ❖ Sit at- table
- ❖ Wait for- a person
- ❖ Vote for or against - a thing or person
- ❖ Yield to-someone or something

PRACTICE EXERCISE

Fill in the blanks with appropriate preposition:



He was accused _____ theft.

Answer: of



Silkworms feed _____ mulberry leaves.

Answer: on



This apple tastes _____ a mango.

Answer: of



Do not laugh _____ others.

Answer: At

Commonly Asked



QUESTIONS

Fill in the blanks with suitable Preposition.



We should prefer milk _____ tea.

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------|
| (A) With | (B) On |
| (C) To | (D) Under |
| (E) None of these | |

Answer: (c)

Explanation: We should prefer milk to tea.



He is afraid _____ wild animals.

- (A) To (B) With
(C) On (D) Of
(E) Under

Answer: (d)

Explanation: He is afraid of wild animals.

SUMMARY



- ❖ A Preposition is a word which comes before a noun or a pronoun and shows its relation to other words in the sentence.
 - ❖ The preposition 'before' can also be used to mean in front of.
 - ❖ In the expression **the opposite of**, **the opposite** is a noun, not a preposition. **The opposite of** is used to show that someone or something is very different from the person or thing compared with.
 - ❖ Other preposition that can be used to indicate position as well as a direction include the following :

above	along	below	beside
between	in	on	under
 - ❖ Past is a preposition and passed is the past tense of the verb pass. We passed an old mill on our way to uncle Sam's farm.
 - ❖ Do not confuse the preposition 'round' with the verb 'round' (which means 'to turn')
 - ❖ **Till** and **up to** have the same meaning as until. Till is more common in conversations. Until and up to are used in conversation and in formal contexts.

Up to 1990, our club won the debating championship every year. In 1991, however, we lost to another team.
 - ❖ **Until** can also be used with verbs in their negative forms meaning 'not before the time stated'.
 - ❖ The preposition **at**, **in** and **on** cannot be used before **each**, **every**, **next one** and **last**.
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Self Evaluation TEST



Duration
10 Minutes

Fill the blanks with suitable prepositions.



He is _____ the room.

- | | |
|---------|------------|
| (A) In | (B) From |
| (C) For | (D) Inside |
| (E) At | |



The police caught me _____ the collar.

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| (A) To | (B) With |
| (C) Upon | (D) After |
| (E) By | |



My father divided the mangoes _____ me and my sister.

- | | |
|-------------|---------|
| (A) To | (B) For |
| (C) From | (D) In |
| (E) Between | |



My mother has been sick _____ three days.

- | | |
|-----------|----------|
| (A) To | (B) With |
| (C) Under | (D) From |
| (E) For | |



What is _____ the pot?

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| (A) In | (B) Among |
| (C) To | (D) For |
| (E) From | |



The river falls _____ the ocean.

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| (A) To | (B) Into |
| (C) From | (D) For |
| (E) in | |



Here is the book which you asked _____ .

- | | |
|----------|---------|
| (A) For | (B) To |
| (C) Of | (D) For |
| (E) With | |



My friend Steve met me _____ 9 o'clock in the morning.

- | | |
|----------|---------|
| (A) From | (B) For |
| (C) With | (D) At |
| (E) To | |



The policeman beat the protester _____ a cane

- | | |
|-----------|----------|
| (A) For | (B) From |
| (C) With | (D) To |
| (E) Under | |



My brother has been sick _____ Monday

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| (A) In | (B) To |
| (C) From | (D) Since |
| (E) For | |
-

Self Evaluation Test

SOLUTIONS



Explanation for selected Questions

1. He is in the room. (already resting in the room, 'in' is used showing that the thing or person is already there)
2. The police caught by the collar. ('by' is used to indicate the subjects or objects or rather the doer of the action)
3. My father divided the mangoes between me and my sister. ('between' is used for two objects or persons)
4. My mother has been sick for three days. ('For' is used showing definite time or the period to time)
5. What is in the pot. ('In' is used showing that the thing or person is already there)
6. The rivers falls into the ocean. ('Into' shows something which was not there already, but now has been brought into)
7. Here is the book which you asked for. ('for' is used for Relative Pronoun)
8. My friend Steve met me at 9 o'clock in the morning. ('at' is used for a word which shows a small place or time)
9. The policeman be at the protester .with a cane. ('with' is used for some weapon or instrument)
10. My brother has been sick since Monday.

Answer

1.	A	2.	E	3.	E	4.	E	5.	A	6.	B	7.	A	8.	D	9.	C	10.	D
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