

EINFACH GELERNT PRÄPOSITIONEN

Prepositions are a word class like nouns, verbs and adjectives. There are more than 100 prepositions in English. Although many prepositions have several functions, all of them link parts of sentences, and most have a simple, basic meaning that has to do with a relationship in time or space.

Prepositions of time: When?

Prepositions that express points in time and periods of time are very regular in their meaning and use.



2011 (years)
the spring (seasons)
May (months)
the morning (times of day)

on

Monday (days)
Tuesday morning (day + time of day)
15 May (dates)
my birthday (special dates)
the weekend (US)

at



Easter (festivals)
one o'clock (specific times of day)
teatime (mealtimes)
the weekend (UK)
night

at one o'clock



Lunch is **at** one o'clock.

about one o'clock



Can you be there **about** one o'clock?

before one o'clock



I have to ring her **before** one o'clock.

after one o'clock



You can come round **after** one o'clock.

by one o'clock



I need to finish **by** one o'clock.

until one o'clock



I'll be out **until** one o'clock.

since one o'clock



I've been here **since** one o'clock.

from one o'clock



You can ring me **from** one o'clock.

Periods of time: "for", "during" and "in"

Remember that **for** is used to talk about general periods of time in the past, present and future.

I worked here **for six months**.



I have worked here **for six months**.



I am working here **for six months**.



I'll be working here **for six months**.



The preposition **during** is used when something happens within a certain period of time. Don't say **during six months**.

- It rained a lot **during the night**.
- He worked in a bar **during the summer**.

In both the above sentences, you could use **in** instead of **during** to talk about the period of time. But you must use **during** if the focus is on an activity or experience, rather than a general time period:

- He met Louise **during his internship**.
- We visited Leeds Castle **during our holiday in England**.



Remember that many time expressions do not need a preposition. Here are some examples:

- She'll phone **this afternoon**.
- I saw her **last week**.
- Let's go out **one evening soon**.

Prepositions of place: Where?

Prepositions that express relations in space are very regular and can be shown simply using diagrams like those below.



in



on



at



under



behind (1)
in front of (2)



beside /
next to



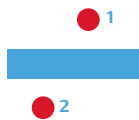
between



among



opposite



above (1) below (2)



by/near



not far from (1)
a long way from (2)



in

She lives **in** Scotland.
He works **in** Bristol.
The house is **in** Rose Lane. (UK)
I saw her **in** the restaurant.
There's a pen **in** the drawer.

(countries)
(cities, etc.)
(streets)
(buildings)
(containers)

on

I met her **on** the plane.
We live **on** the sixth floor.
The house is **on** Newman Road. (US)

(public transport)

at



He lives **at** 42 Old Street.
I'll meet you **at** the cinema.

(an exact point or place)

under
behind
in front of
beside
next to
between
among
opposite
above
below
by
near
not far from
a long way from

I keep it **under** the bed.
There's a cupboard **behind** the door.
There's a garden **in front of** the house.
Let's have a picnic **beside** the lake.
We live **next to** the church.
The girl stood **between** her mother and father.
The cat was asleep **among** the papers on the desk.
The office is **opposite** the bank.
Our office is **above** a coffee shop.
The coffee shop is **below** our office.
I met her **by** the fountain.
We live **near** a school.
We live **not far from** the church.
The village is **a long way from** the train station.



The prepositions **at**, **by**, **for**, **in**, **of**, **on** and **with** are among the 20 most commonly used words in English.

Prepositions of movement: Where to?

Prepositions that express movement to or from a point in space are shown in the diagrams and examples below.



up



down



over



under



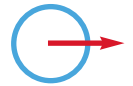
on to (onto)



off



into



out of



back to



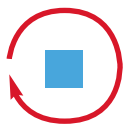
past



through



along



round / around



to



towards



across

up

down

over

under

on to

off

into

out of

back to

past

through

along

round / around

to

towards

across

Walk **up** the stairs to the second floor.

I nearly fell **down** a hole in the garden.

On my last flight, we flew right **over** the mountains.

I think the ball has just rolled **under** the sofa.

The girl climbed **on to** the chair.

The photograph fell **off** the shelf.

The man got **into** the car and drove off.

I need to get something **out of** my bag.

You'll have to go **back to** the shop and buy one.

We drove **past** the new supermarket.

I like driving **through** the city on Sundays.

We walked **along** the beach looking for shells.

The class ran **around** the field four times.

The dog ran **to** the gate to greet the visitor.

The man walked slowly **towards** the door.

I'll just walk **across** the road to the bakery.



Metaphorical senses

Many prepositions, especially prepositions of place and movement, also express more abstract or metaphorical meanings.

- Her height is **above average** for her age.
- Just do your best. You know we're all **behind** you.
- Are you **in love**?
- Is he **out of his mind**?
- He's great. She's definitely **on to a good thing** with him.
- I hope that coffee will help me **get through** my exams.

Preposition power!

As well as their basic meanings, most prepositions have many different functions and often combine with other structures. On this page, we present prepositions and their partners.

Complex prepositions



For exercises on complex prepositions, see *Spotlight plus* 5/11

Most prepositions are single words. Some pairs and groups of words, however, function like single prepositions. We have already met a number of them as prepositions of place and movement; for example: **back to** and **in front of**. Here are ten more:

apart from

I've done all the packing **apart from** my hand luggage.

as well as

Are we going to visit the castle **as well as** the museum?

because of

We were late **because of** an accident on the motorway.

except for

I think we're all here **except for** Justin.

in exchange for

I'll help you in the garden **in exchange for** a back massage.

in favour of

We're not really **in favour of** the new building plans.

in spite of

She came to work **in spite of** a bad cold.

instead of

Why don't we have potatoes **instead of** rice?

such as

Try to eat lots of green vegetables **such as** broccoli and spinach.

thanks to

Thanks to his fitness programme, Ben has lost a lot of weight.

Prepositions in partnership

Many prepositions combine with nouns, verbs and other word classes. These combinations are often different from the German and simply have to be learned:

afraid of

I'm **afraid of** heights, so skiing's not for me.

divide into

How about **dividing** your talk **into** three parts?

enough of

I've had **enough of** your complaining!

explain to

Can you **explain to** me how the fax machine works?

good / bad at

My son is **good at** maths, but **bad at** languages.

married to

She was **married to** her first husband for six years.

pay for

We'll provide the food, but we ask you to **pay for** your drinks.

When a preposition comes before a noun or noun phrase, it makes a **prepositional phrase**:

- Rosie's chocolate brownies are the best **in the world**.
- I was just listening to a lovely concerto **by Bach**.
- Shall we go **for a swim**?
- Please write your answers **in pencil**.
- The party starts at 4 p.m. I hope we'll be **in time**.
- The talk will start at 1 p.m. Please be **on time**.
- I heard it **on the radio**.

Prepositional verbs consist of a verb and preposition. The direct object always follows the preposition.

belong to

That dress **belongs to** that doll.

deal with

Would you know how to **deal with** an emergency?

depend on

She **depends on** her sister to do her shopping.

get on / off

Get off at the next stop and wait for the number 2 tram.

listen to

I don't like **listening to** music in the morning.

look after

Do you need someone to **look after** your plants?

Prepositions and adverbs

Q: When is a preposition not a preposition? **A:** When it's an adverb.

What's the difference? A preposition always has an object. Many prepositions, such as **around**, **before**, **opposite**, **past**, **out** and **up** also belong to the word class of adverbs, which usually stand alone.

- We drove **around** the town looking at the sights. (preposition)
- I drove **around** looking for a parking space. (adverb)
- Have you looked **in** the fridge? (preposition)
- We stayed **in** last night. (adverb)

We hope that **thanks to** this pull-out, you will no longer need be **afraid of** prepositions. Keep this brochure **beside** you **at work**, stick it **on** the wall, show it **to** your friends, and soon you'll be really **good at** this area of grammar.