

Grammar

prepositions of time, place and movement

prepositions in time phrases

The following are the main prepositions which we use in time phrases:

preposition	used with	examples
at	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• clock times, points of time in the day• weekends and holiday periods• points in time	<i>at nine o'clock; at 6.35</i> <i>at midnight, at noon, at dawn, at lunch time, at dinner time, at night</i> <i>at the weekend, at weekends, at Christmas, at Easter; at Ramadan, at the beginning, at the end, at last, at the moment, at present, at the time, at times</i>
in	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the main parts of the day• months, years, seasons, centuries• events which will happen at the end of a period• at a point in time during a period	<i>in the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening</i> <i>in March, in 1999, in the autumn, in the twentieth century</i> <i>in an hour, in a couple of minutes, in a week, in a moment</i> <i>✗ I'll be back until in an hour.</i> <i>✓ I'll be back in an hour.</i> <i>in the beginning, in the end</i> <i>in the night, in the evening, in a day</i>
on	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• specific dates and days	<i>on August 8, on Tuesday, on Wednesday, on weekdays, on New Year's Day, on Christmas Day, on the day of departure / arrival, on Wednesday morning, on a fine sunny day</i>

on time or in time?

- *On time* means 'not late, at the time expected':
*The Intercity express always leaves **on time** so it doesn't get there late.*
- We can use *right*, *dead* or *bang* with *on time* to emphasize that it is exactly at the right time:
*The train arrived **right on time**.*
*I finished my essay **dead on time**.*
*Be **bang on time** or we'll have to leave without you.*
- *In time* means 'early enough':
*We got there **in time** to see most of the film but we missed the beginning.*
*Hurry and we'll be there **in time** for lunch.*

at the end or in the end?

- *At the end* is a prepositional phrase usually followed by a noun; it refers to the final point or part:
***At the end** of the book, they get married.*
***At the end** of the century, there were still too many people without food to eat.*
- *At the end* is also an adverb which refers to the point at which something occurs:
*You can check your answers **at the end**.*
- *In the end* is a link phrase and means 'finally, after a long time':
***In the end**, we found a taxi and arrived at the theatre on time.*
*She thought about it for some time and, **in the end**, she decided to go to America.*

prepositions in place phrases

The following are the main prepositions which we use in place phrases:

preposition	meaning / use	examples
at	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shows a point in space where something is happening useful phrases: with verbs that show place: <i>be, wait, sit, stay, live</i> 	<p>There was a huge queue at the bus stop.</p> <p>at the bottom of the pile, at the top of the hill, at the corner of the street, at the crossroads, at home, at Brenda's, at school, at work, at a hotel, at the table, at university, at the wedding, at the funeral ✗ I'm fed up with being in my home all the time. ✓ I'm fed up with being at home all the time.</p> <p>Our house is at the end of the road. We live at number 18 Hill Street. I waited at the door for five minutes.</p>
in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tells us that something taking place is inside rather than outside: it can be used with verbs of movement useful phrases: with <i>arrive</i> when we talk about large cities and countries with verbs which do not involve movement: <i>be, live, wait, sit, stay</i> 	<p>No running is allowed in the building. Come in the office.</p> <p>in a chair, in an armchair, in bed, in a book, in the centre, in the country, in the world, in hospital, in prison, in a hotel, in the middle of the road, in the centre of town, in the newspaper, in the north/south, in the open air, in the park, in the mountains, in a queue, in the sky, in town, in the city, in London, in Europe, in a place/area, etc.</p> <p>We arrived in the United States on Wednesday. I live in the old town. I am in the living-room. Wait for me in the pub. How many people are in the room?</p>
on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> useful phrases: 	<p>She likes lying on the beach. They spent the summer on an island. They have a house on the coast. on the island of Crete, on board, on a cruise, on an excursion, on a trip, on a tour, on Earth, on a stool, on a farm, on a mountain, on the outskirts, on page three, on the pavement, on the radio, on TV, on the screen, on the streets, on top of the box, on the corner of the street</p>

We arrived **in** Loutro
on the island of Crete
and found a small hotel
at the end of the bay.



prepositions in movement phrases

at

We use *at* with *arrive* in sentences such as:

We **arrived at** the airport / **at** our destination.

- We also use *at* to show the person or thing that an action is aimed at:

They **threw** eggs **at** the speaker.

- We use *throw to* when we want someone to catch something:

She **threw** the pencil **to** me.

into

We use *into* with verbs that mean 'to move from outside to inside an area':

When she came **into** the room, they fell silent.

I saw Jim going **into** the paper shop.

She got back **into** bed.

They're moving Stephen **into** a different class.

to

We generally use *to* with verbs of movement including *go, come, travel, run, send, take, return, get, walk*:

I am going **to** Room Three for a seminar.

I returned **to** England last month.

- We also use *to* with nouns that suggest movement, including *welcome, journey, trip, stroll*:

Our **journey to** Tibet was unforgettable.

Welcome to Britain!

- When *been* means 'visited', we use *to*:
I've **been to** Italy several times.
- When *been* means 'stayed or lived' we use *in*:
I've **been in** France for five days now.

towards

Towards means moving or pointing in a particular direction.

He noticed two policemen coming **towards** him.

All the windows face **towards** the river.

- We also use *towards* with nouns to suggest aiming to achieve:
They are working **towards** an agreement.

Practice

Fill in each space in the following sentences with *in, on, at, to* or *into*.

- 1 the morning we went the museum and then had lunch the cafeteria.
- 2 Look! You have mud your shoes. Wipe them the mat before you come the house.
- 3 They went the restaurant and sat down a corner table.
- 4 I've got to go town this morning but we can meet later the morning, John's house.
- 5 It says the newspaper that they're getting married the spring a small church the island of Santorini.
- 6 There I was, sitting the waiting-room when who do you think came the room?
- 7 Tuesday morning, I'm going town to put some money my bank account.
- 8 The coffee's the table and there's some sugar the cupboard if you want some.
- 9 The film starts eight o'clock and I'd like to be the cinema time to see the start of the film.
- 10 Mr Fisher is Boston now but he'll be his way back London a couple of days' time.
- 11 I saw Jessica Oxford Street Friday afternoon and she told me she's still university.
- 12 Is there anything the television this evening? Have a look in the paper – I think the TV guide is the back page.
- 13 She stood up and walked the window. She saw a woman sitting a bench throwing a ball a dog, who caught it and brought it back her.
- 14 She was standing the queue the bus stop, with her back me.
- 15 I had never been the United States before so, when we arrived JFK airport that spring morning in 1989, I felt very excited.

Add the appropriate preposition of time to these phrases.

..... present	..... the beginning
..... arrival	..... a moment
..... 6.30pm	..... last
..... the afternoon	..... the year 2000
..... Wednesday afternoon	..... her birthday
..... an hour	..... midnight
..... weekends	..... March 25
..... weekdays	..... a winter's night
..... a cold day	..... times
..... a week	..... the summer

Add the appropriate preposition of place to these phrases.

..... the corner of the road	..... the streets
..... the back	..... work all day
..... the crossroads	..... the open air
..... the television	..... home
..... a journey	..... the park
..... the bus stop	..... a chair
..... hospital	..... the door
..... Europe	..... a queue
..... Earth	..... the bottom
..... the north	..... top

Read the text and add of the preposition which best fits each space. The first (0) is given as an example.

Going to the zoo

..... (0) Saturday morning, we took the children (1) the zoo because (2) school they are doing a project (3) the moment on zoos – and we thought they should go (4) one and do some research (5) the spot. Later on, when we got home, they looked up some information (6) the encyclopaedia and we found out that the first public zoo (7) the world was opened (8) Paris (9) 1793; this was the famous Jardin des Plantes. (10) it were animals, of course, but there was also a museum and a botanical garden. The next big zoo to be opened was (11) 1829 in Regent's Park (12) London. (13) Britain, there are now many more zoos. (14) Whipsnade Zoo, in Bedfordshire, animals from all parts of the world thrive, free to roam (15) the surrounding countryside.

*Truth lies **at** the bottom of a well.*

DEMOCRITUS

prepositions after verbs and nouns

verb + preposition

Here are summaries of the way common verbs combine with particular prepositions or particles (in the heading):

about	with	to	for	of
agree	agree	agree	apologise	approve
dream	deal	apply	pay	dream
hear	compare	belong	wait	accuse
laugh	discuss	listen	admire	remind
know	cope	go	forgive	die
forget	provide	refer	punish	smell
quarrel	sympathise	speak	work	consist
worry	collide	shout	like	taste

at	in	from	on
arrive	arrive	differ	insist
laugh	succeed	resign	rely
look	believe	suffer	congratulate
shout	include	stop	bet
joke	involve	recover	decide
stare	persist	come	count

noun + preposition

Here are summaries of the way nouns combine with particular prepositions (in the headings):

with	of	to	from	about
relationship	delay	damage	departure	discussion
trouble	description	reaction	protection	information
connection	hope	reply	fall	quarrel
contract	idea	solution	extract	argument
agreement	lack	objection	phone call	debate
harmony	map	thanks		hesitation

between	in	for	on
choice	decrease	excuse	advice
comparison	delay	reason	attack
connection	expert	reputation	book
contact	failure	respect	expert
relationship	increase	responsibility	talk

connect with, connect to, connection between

- **Connect to** means 'to join two or more things':
*First, **connect** the speakers **to** the CD player.*
- **Connect with** means 'to realise that two facts or events are connected':
*The police did not **connect** her **with** the crime.*
- **Connection between** means 'the way two facts, ideas or events are related to each other':
*There is a proven **connection between** smoking and cancer.*

hear of, hear about, hear from

- **Hear of** means 'to know that something or someone exists':
*I've never **heard of** him in my life.*
- **Hear about** means 'to find out a piece of information':
*Did you **hear about** the fire?*
- **Hear from** means 'to receive news from someone e.g. in a letter or by e-mail':
*Have you **heard from** Sarah lately?*

pay by, pay for, pay in

- We **pay for** something when we buy it:
*She **paid** \$200 **for** the use of the room.*
- **Pay by** means 'pay using':
*Can I **pay by** Visa?*
- We **pay in** a particular currency:
*Can I **pay in** euros / English pounds?*

shout at, to, for, in

- **Shout at** somebody means 'to say something very loudly because you are angry':
*I wish you'd stop **shouting at** the children.*
- **Shout to** somebody means 'to shout so they can hear':
*The children **shouted to** each other.*
- **Shout for** means 'to shout in order to get':
*He rushed out of the house, **shouting for** help.*
*I **shouted for** the children to come and eat.*
- **Shout in** + noun means 'to shout because of':
*He **shouted in** pain as the ball hit him.*

Practice

Which preposition goes with the following groups of verbs and nouns?

verbs preposition

- 1 object, refer, manage, explain, compare, invite, talk
- 2 forgive, blame, charge, care, apply, arrest, search
- 3 tell, boast, care, complain, argue, hear
- 4 smile, throw, glance
- 5 switch, concentrate, depend
- 6 charge, communicate, connect, argue, interfere

nouns preposition

- 7 damage, invitation, solution, letter, attitude
- 8 cheque, demand, need, advertisement
- 9 knowledge, experience, opinion, plan, drawing / painting

Fill in each space in the following sentences with the correct preposition.

- 1 I was tired being an accountant – I needed a change.
- 2 The Government have known the scandal for months.
- 3 Why are you staring me like that?
- 4 On Friday we had a nice long discussion the wording of the proposal.
- 5 We'd like to discuss our contract with you and agree new terms, if possible.
- 6 It's hard to see the difference the centre and the liberal party.
- 7 Luke is afraid the dark.
- 8 He's an expert electronic music.
- 9 The twins differed each other in many ways.
- 10 I was ashamed having lied to her.
- 11 I don't think Branson is capable committing murder.

- 12 While he was writing on the blackboard, the kids were shouting each other. It was chaos.
- 13 I don't see any connection the book and the film at all.
- 14 Mother disapproves every boyfriend I bring home.
- 15 Have you ever heard a painter called Tiepolo?

Read the letter below and add the preposition which best fits each space. The first (0) is given as an example.

Dear Ms Jones

I am writing (0) reply to your advertisement (1) secretaries to work (2) your central offices. I had already heard (3) you from a friend of mine, Jenny Mansfield, who worked (4) you a few years ago (5) the sales department. I would be interested (6) applying (7) a full-time post. I am quite experienced (8) secretarial work, and would have little difficulty (9) the duties the current job involves. I think I'm quite skilled (10) word processing. I also have wide experience (11) handling members of the public. I enclose a reference (12) my previous employer and copies (13) my certificates. I would be happy to come for an interview at any time which is convenient for you. I look forward to hearing (14) you.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Dale

*I like **talking to** a brick wall; it's the only thing in the world that never contradicts me.*
OSCAR WILDE

prepositional phrases

We often use prepositions in common phrases where little variation is possible. Some prepositions go with groups of similar words:

at – **at** breakfast, **at** lunch, **at** dinner, **at** supper
for – **for** example, **for** instance
in – **in** a dress, **in** pyjamas, **in** a pair of jeans,
in a skirt, **in** uniform
on – **on** e-mail, **on** the phone

- Prepositions can combine to make compound phrases:
out of date, **out of** fashion

- Words with related meanings often go with different prepositions:

in cash / dollars – **by** credit card
on earth – **in** the world
by accident – **on** purpose
at the bottom – **in** the bottom left-hand corner
at the door – **on** the phone
by car – **on** foot
on holiday – **at** work
in a loud voice – **at** the top of his voice

Here are more common phrases with prepositions:

at	by	for	in	on	out of
at all times	by accident	for a change	in conclusion	on behalf of	out of order
at first sight	by heart	for ages	in the west	on condition that	out of practice
at the moment	by chance	for breakfast	in control	on no account	out of favour
at the age of	by mistake	for fear of	in danger	on my own	out of the woods
at the beginning	by the way	for fun / pleasure	in favour of	on purpose	out of the way
at breakfast	by bus / train	for good	in general	on second thoughts	out of touch
at the bottom of	by sea / land / air	for granted	in other words	on the whole	out of work
at the bus stop	by example	for ever	in time	on business	out of breath
at sea	by sight	for luck	in cash	on a diet	out of control
at the corner	by means of	for life	in a uniform	on arrival	out of danger
at dawn	by no means	for nothing	in a dress	on average	out of date
at last	by cheque	for ever	in haste	on foot	out of doors
at the door	day by day	for sale	in German	on the other hand	out of fashion
at the end	by Beethoven	for short	in pencil	on line	out of luck
at first	by air mail	for a visit	in a group	on duty	out of print
at once	by e-mail	for a walk	in addition (to)	on fire	out of sight
at home	by fax / phone	for a while	in answer (to)	on horseback	out of tune
at arm's length	by far	for now	in future	on the left / right	out of reach
at least	by the rules	for your birthday	in general	on the floor	out of earshot
at the same time	by the arm	for better or worse	in the news	on the phone	out of money
at daybreak	by telepathy	for my sake	in pairs	on the screen	out of time
at work	by hand	for the moment	in a loud voice	on holiday	out of pocket

Practice

Fill in each space with an appropriate preposition.

- 1 The report, which will be ready the beginning of next week, will be sent to you e-mail.
- 2 I agree with you some extent but general I would have put things differently.
- 3 the beginning, I thought the book was interesting but the end of the book the hero gets killed.
- 4 He's been of work for over six months and can't afford to go holiday.
- 5 He thought the chair was made of wood but his surprise it was all plastic.
- 6 the top left corner of the picture I can see a hill; the bottom of the hill there is a bicycle.
- 7 He was driving the middle of the road and seemed to be completely of control.
- 8 my opinion, you can't go to the party a dress like that.
- 9 dessert, we had a lovely cake made chocolate and almonds.
- 10 There's a shop the corner of the street that sells vegetables morning till night.

Choose the correct word in each of the following sentences:

- 1 From my point of *opinion / view*, there's little advantage in buying shares now.
- 2 His health is going from bad to *worse / ill*.
- 3 The kids were really in a silly *mood / behaviour* after the party.
- 4 I don't know whether it's true but that's what it said on the *radio / newspaper*.
- 5 I can get the information to you more quickly if you're on *phone / e-mail*.
- 6 You don't think he would have broken the window on *accident / purpose*, do you?
- 7 He is the officer in *charge / power* of the investigation.

- 8 When Romeo met Juliet, it was love at first *sight / look*.
- 9 Why don't you send the message by *e-mail / phone*?
- 10 After the accident, she was rushed to hospital and is now out of *danger / risk*.

Read the text below and add the word which best fits each space. The first (0) is given as an example.

Living a long time

It is often said that Japanese people,^{on} (0) average, live much longer than Europeans. (1) a large extent this must be due to the food most Japanese people eat since (2) the point of view of lifestyle, life (3) modern Japan is no less stressful than ours (4) the West. The Japanese live (5) a diet largely made up (6) fish and rice. (7) lunch time a typical Japanese family will consume (8) least twice as many vegetables as we do in Europe. (9) comparison with Europeans, the Japanese eat far less meat and fewer potatoes; (10) the same time, they eat seven times more fresh fish than we do which makes their diet much healthier far (11). It would be fair to say that, (12) general, the Japanese consume far less sugar than Europeans, though the modern Japanese – frequent visitors (13) Europe (14) business or (15) pleasure – are discovering the pleasures and dangers of western-style eating habits.

to

to some extent
to the point
to my surprise
to your advantage
to our amazement
to your health
to some degree
to you

up

up to date
up to you
up and down
up till / until
up the hill
up the spout
up to no good
up as far as

from

from A to B
from bad to worse
from place to place
from time to time
from morning to night
from now on
from my point of view
from flour / wood / plastic

in the beginning or at the beginning?

- *In the beginning* (not usually with *of*) means 'near the start of an event':
In the beginning, the South had some success.
- *At the beginning of* means 'at the very start of an event':
At the beginning of the Civil War, the fort was attacked.

at the end or in the end?

- *At the end (of)* refers to the final part (of a period of time, a road, a book, a film, etc.):
 He's leaving **at the end of** October.
 Their house is **at the end of** the road.
- *In the end* means 'finally':
 We waited and waited; **in the end**, we decided to go back home.

by bus or on the bus?

- *By bus* refers to using buses as a means of transport:
 I usually go to work **by bus**.
- We can use *on the bus* for specific journeys to particular destinations:
 I came home **on the bus**.
 If we go there **on the bus**, we'll have more time to chat.

made of, made out of or made from?

- We use *made of* when it is obvious what substance has been used to make something:
 A little doll **made of** wood.
- We use *made out of* when we emphasise the substance from which something is made:
 It's **made out of** wood, not plastic.
- We use *made from* to say what ingredients have been used:
 Bread is **made from** flour, water and yeast.