

PREPOSITIONS

What are prepositions?

Prepositions are words such as *in, on, at, by, from* and *to*.

What are prepositions used for?

Prepositions are used to express place, time, agency, manner, cause, movement, measure, contract, concession, motive and source. Many prepositions have multiple meanings. For example, *at* can be used to express time and place.

She's not at home. *She left at ten o'clock.* *She looked at me.*

Where do prepositions come in a sentence?

Prepositions usually come before a noun or a noun phrase or -ing form.

in the park, at home, on the desk, to office, of cooking, of baking

Prepositions can also come immediately after a verb.

They arrived on time. *She stared at him.* *He walked towards the door.*

Some difficulties in learning the use of prepositions

Unlike other parts of speech, there are a few rules that will help you to learn the uses of prepositions. So you must remember them.

- Some adjectives, nouns and verbs with similar or related meanings may require different prepositions. (*angry with/jealous of, at home/in office*)
- Some verbs may require a preposition while other verbs that are similar in meaning may not require one. (*said to/told, look at/see, go into/enter*)
- In the case of some verbs, at times there are exceptions. (*go by taxi/car/bus/bike but go on foot*)
- Some verbs take different prepositions to convey different meanings. (*sleep by/sleep with, stand on/stand with/stand by, write on/write with*)
- Some prepositions when used with certain verbs become phrasal verbs and have meanings different from the words they are constituted of. (*He ran up the hill./He ran up a huge telephone bill.*)
- Different parts of speech of a word may require different prepositions. (*confident of/confidence in, different from/difference between*)

In this section, you will learn about these:

No.	Topic	Focus of the Unit
8.1	Prepositions 1	<i>at, in, on</i> to indicate time
8.2	Prepositions 2	<i>from...to, until; by</i> to indicate time
8.3	Prepositions 3	<i>since, for</i> to indicate point of time and duration of time
8.4	Prepositions 4	<i>before, after, during, while</i> to indicate time
8.5	Prepositions 5	<i>in, at, on</i> to indicate places
8.6	Prepositions 6	<i>below, above, under, over, in front of, behind, opposite</i> to indicate relative position of things
8.7	Prepositions 7	<i>across, along, down, into, off, over, out of, past, round, through, under, up</i> to indicate the direction of movement
8.8	Prepositions 8	<i>on, at, by, with, about</i>

Prepositions: At, In, On

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1 What are prepositions?

Prepositions are words such as *at, for, in* and *on*.
I'll see you at ten o'clock. *Ratna bought some books for her sister.*
Let us meet in the evening. *She works on Saturdays too.*

2 What are the uses of *at*?

a. The preposition *at* has many uses. One of its common uses is to indicate time.
Let's leave at ten. *The train is expected at 12.10 p.m.* *We'll speak at lunchtime.*
b. We also use *at* with Christmas, Diwali, Easter, the weekend and the end of.
I may not be in town at Christmas. *I may be away at Diwali.*
Are you busy at the weekend? *The story has a sudden twist at the end.*

3 What are the uses of *in*?

a. We often use *in* with *the morning, the afternoon, and the evening*.
I usually wake up early in the morning. *There is no flight to Port Blair in the afternoon.*
Jyoti goes to work in the evening. *She works at night.*
We do not use *in* with *night*. Instead, we use *at*.
b. We use *in* with names of months, seasons, years and centuries.
Manav is leaving for Germany in January.
He knows that Germany will be very cold in winter.
He first went to Germany in winter in 2013.
He is studying Indo-German relations in the twentieth century.
c. We also use *in* when we refer to a specific week.
I may not be in town in the last week of December.

4 What is the use of *on*?

We use *on* with names of days, specific dates and before phrases such as *Wednesday morning, Saturday evening* and *...the morning of*.
We are meeting the visitors from China on Monday morning.
I think they are leaving on the fourth.
People woke up on the morning of 1 January to see snow all around.

NOTE

We do not use *at, in* or *on* before these:

<i>every day/week/month, etc</i>	<i>I take yoga lessons every week.</i>
<i>last week/month/year/Monday, etc</i>	<i>We had a debate last Monday.</i>
<i>next week/month/year/January, etc</i>	<i>He will be in Shillong next February.</i>
<i>This week/month/year/Friday, etc</i>	<i>The sales have been good this month.</i>



Prepositions: From...To, Until, By

1 When do we use the prepositions from...to/till/until?

We use *from* to indicate the beginning and *to/till/until* to indicate the end of an action.



Children started playing cricket from 4 p.m.



Children stopped playing cricket at 6 p.m. Children played cricket from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.



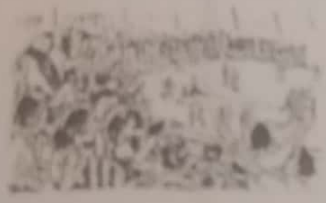
We started swimming in the pool from 4 p.m.



We stopped swimming at sunset. We swam in the pool from 4 p.m. till sunset.

2 When do we use till/until?

We use *till/until* to indicate the end of an action. We use *till* in informal contexts, particularly in spoken contexts and *until* in formal and written contexts.



The crowd cheered until the end of the game.



Goodbye till we meet again.

We usually use *until* and not *till* at the beginning of a sentence.
Until the rainwater receded, the rescue forces kept dropping food packets.

3 When do we use by?

We use *by* to mean not later than the time mentioned.

Can you return the book *by Monday*? By 11 a.m. we had crossed Cochin.

Common error

Some users use *till* in the sense of *by* and say sentences such as these. This is to be avoided.

Can you return the book *till Monday*? X I can drop in *till 10am*. X

Sometimes such incorrect use may send wrong messages. Notice the difference between the two sentences.

I'll be there *till 12*. (=will remain) I'll be there *by 12*. (=will arrive)

1 Write a sentence about each ruler using from ...to/till/until.

- a. 1526 – 1530 Babur Babur ruled from 1526 to 1530.
b. 1530 – 1540 Humayun
c. 1556 – 1605 Akbar
d. 1605 – 1627 Jenangir
e. 1628 – 1658 Shah Jahan
f. 1658 – 1707 Aurangzeb

2 Make sentences about Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, the former President of India.

- a. 1955 – 1960 Studied aerospace engineering at MIT, Madras
b. 1960 – 1969 Scientist at DRDO
c. 1969 – 1992 Worked with ISRO in various capacities
d. 1992 – 1999 Was Chief Scientific Advisor to the Prime Minister of India
e. 2002 – 2007 Served as President of India

3 Complete the sentences using until or by.

- a. Can you mail the report to me By Monday morning?
b. Let's wait until Dad comes back home.
c. Would you like to wait in this cabin until the manager is in?
d. I don't think I can reach you by 8 p.m.. I'm still 200 kms away from the city.
e. Can we have another round of discussion by the end of the month?
f. I don't want to take any medicine until a doctor examines me.
g. Can we expect the exam results until the end of May?
h. We won't be able to send any fresh stock until we receive the outstanding payments.

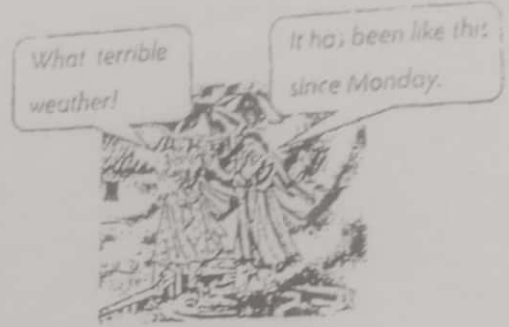
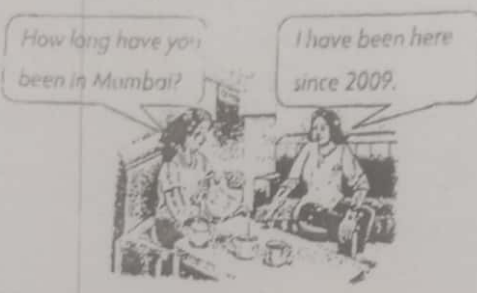
4 Correct the mistakes.

- a. Can you try and get to the venue until 6 p.m.? by
b. Ask for time this weekend to submit the project report.
c. The movie may be released until the end of January.
d. Do you think we can go to bed until midnight?
e. Are you asking me to hold the payment by the end of this week?
f. She won't retire by next year.
g. The power supply will be restored until 10 p.m.
h. Your credit card account will be reactivated until this afternoon.

Prepositions: Since, For

1 What is the use of *since*?

One of the common uses of *since* is to mean from a point of time in the past until a later point of time in the past or until now.



2 When is *since* used?

We use *since* after the present perfect tense or the present perfect continuous tense. After *since*, we always use a specific point of time such as 10 p.m., Sunday, July, 2010 and 15th century.
 Our Managing Director has been in town since Monday.
 It has been raining since ten this morning. Schools have been closed since last Friday.

3 What is the use of *for*?

One of the common uses of *for* is to indicate a period of time during which something happened. It tells us how long an action lasted.



Deepika has been living in Mumbai for five years. It has been raining for five hours.
 She is going to Delhi for five days. My grandparents were with us for five days during Diwali.
 We will visit them for a week in December.

Note that *for* is used after any tense.

Common error

Some users use *since* with a period of time. This is wrong.
 She has been with us since a week. X
 I have lived here since three years. X
 She has been with us for a week. ✓
 I have lived here for three years. ✓

- 1 Put in since or for.
- a. ... 1989.
 - b. ... a month.
 - c. ... New Year.

- b. ... a week.
- c. ... 10 o'clock.
- d. ... five days.

- 2 Put in since or for.

- a. He has been away March.
- b. We haven't spoken to each other over two weeks.
- c. We have known each other two years.
- d. The road has been closed for traffic last Tuesday.
- e. The repair work will last a week.

- 3 Write sentences using since.

- a. He met with an accident. His fever started then.
He has had fever since he met with an accident.
- b. I moved to this town in 2009. I have lived in this house then onwards
.....
- c. He left for Dubai in January. We have not heard from him after that.
.....
- d. They moved to a new house in August. They haven't had any problems since
.....
- e. He had a fracture two months ago. He hasn't driven his car after that.
.....
- f. He bought a new computer. He has not been going out after that.
.....

- 4 Correct the mistakes.

- a. It has not rained since a week. for
- b. He has been on a fast. He hasn't eaten anything since ten days.
- c. I haven't slept well since two days.
- d. She hasn't seen a movie since five months.
- e. I haven't read a novel since five years.

Prepositions: Before, After, During, While

① How are before, after and during used?

- a. We use *before* to mean earlier than somebody or something.
Always wait for people to exit an area *before* you enter.
In case of fire, exit the building *before* you SMS your friends about it!
- b. We use *after* to mean later than something.
They left soon *after* dinner. We met again *after* nine years.
- c. We use *during* to mean all through or at some point in a period of time.
Please do not use your mobile phones *during* the lecture.
I met him *during* my summer internship.

NOTE

The prepositions *before*, *after* and *during* are always followed by a noun phrase: *before Christmas*, *after the flood*, *during the journey*

② How do we use while?

We use *while* to connect two sentences. So, it is also a conjunction. We use *while* to mean during the time that something is happening.

I was watching TV. The power went off. *The power went off while I was watching TV.*

The prepositions *before* and *after* and the conjunction *while* can be followed by an -ing form of a verb.

Before leaving the aircraft, please check your belongings.

After speaking to the doctor, she went and bought the medicines.

He talked to the doctor while cooking lunch.



Common error

Some users use the -ing form of a verb after *during*. This is wrong.

During my staying in the hotel, I ate there only once. X

During my stay in the hotel, I ate there only once. ✓

1 Put in before, after or during.

- a. The lecture was boring. Everyone was busy on their phone the session.
- b. Call me the meeting and let me know the decision.
- c. I was calm the interview. I think it went off well.
- d. Consult a doctor you take any medicine on your own.
- e. We have planned a trip to Manali summer.
- f. My flight was cancelled. So, I got home only Diwali.

2 Make sentences using while.

- a. Would you like something to read? You are waiting for the doctor.
.....
Would you like something to read while you are waiting for the doctor?
- b. I was browsing the Internet. I came across an interesting website.
.....
- c. She twisted her foot and hurt herself. She was climbing down the steps.
.....
- d. I was at school. My teachers branded me a dud.
.....
- e. I was reading an article. I came across this quote.
.....
- f. She found her lost ring. She was searching for her wallet in the cupboard.
.....

3 Complete each sentence using before, after or while and a verb from the box.

before after while

leaving home
parking the car
sleeping

skiing
entering the bank
while turning at the sharp curve

doing
taking

- a. The road is slippery. Be careful while turning at the sharp curves.
- b., we went into the mall.
- c., I checked all the doors and windows.
- d. He snores loudly
- e. He met with an accident
- f. She went to have a shower
- g., I checked my wallet.
- h., the photographer checked the intensity of light.

Prepositions: In, At, On

1 When do we use *in*?

We usually use *in* with spaces that have three dimensions – length, breadth and depth.

A: Have you seen my phone?

A: Where's Anju?

A: Where does he work?

A: Is there an ATM around here?

B: I think you have left it in the car.

B: She's in the bath.

B: He is an engineer in Muscat.

B: There might be one in the City Centre Mall.

2 When do we use *on*?

We use *on* with surfaces that have only two dimensions – length and breadth.

I think I left the keys on my desk.

A loud knock on the door woke me up.

How come there are so few vehicles on the road?

Children are flying kites on the terrace.

Who dropped these coins on the floor?

3 When do we use *at*?

a. We use *at* to say where something or somebody is or where something happens.

Mum is not at home. She's already at work.

We had to change at Nagpur.

Turn left at the roundabout.

Manasa is at Deshpande's. (=Deshpande's house)

b. We also use *at* to say where a person works or studies.

She's been at TCS for three years.

He's at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

c. We use *at* with words that describe specific events or places where the events happen.

Everyone was quiet at breakfast.

We had breakfast at the new restaurant.

There was a huge crowd at the stadium.

d. We use *at* with *the beginning*, *the end*, *the top*, *the bottom* and *the side*.

At the beginning of the ceremony, everyone stood up to say a prayer.

At the end of the programme, the spectators gave a standing ovation to the dancers.

Look at the numbers written at the top of the page.

My name was at the bottom of the list.

1 Put in in or on.



..... the pool



..... the wall



..... the floor



..... a jar



..... the forehead



..... the arm

2 Put in in or on.

- a. A: Where's George?
- b. A: Have you seen Meera?
- c. A: Is there a bottle opener?
- d. A: What's the latest your office?
- e. Can you get me some juice?
- f. A: Where can I sit?

- B: He's Kerala in the state.
- B: I just saw her the house.
- B: You can find one the table.
- B: We have a new creative design.
- B: Find it the fridge.
- B: Why don't you sit the chair.

3 Put in in, on or at.

- a. When you are the road, obey traffic rules.
- b. Stop traffic junctions when the signal turns red.
- c. Do not touch any unattended baggage the rail or bus stations.
- d. Show basic courtesies to others when you are a lift.
- e. Always drop any trash a bin and not the road.
- f. Always walk the footpath. Cross roads only zebra crossing.

4 Complete the sentences using at and the top of, the bottom of, the beginning of, the side of.

- a. They found the wrecked ship the ocean.
- b. The entry to the building is through the gate the wall.
- c. The prices of vegetables dropped August.
- d. We are going to Bangkok street.
- e. Our office is street.

UNIT 8:0

Prepositions in front

1 What ... the use of ...



2 We use ...



The two ...

c. We use ...

d. We use ...



Prepositions: Below, Above, Under, Over, In front of, Behind, Opposite, Between

What is the use of the prepositions below, above, under, over, in front of, behind, opposite and between?

We use these prepositions to talk about the position of a person or a thing in relation to another person or thing.

We use *below* and *above* to mean to a lower or higher level or position than somebody or something.



water below the knee



water above the knee

We use *opposite* to mean on the other side of somebody or thing, usually facing them.

We use *in front of* to mean outside but not opposite.



The two cars are opposite each other.



The small car is in front of the big car.



The car is in front of the house.

We use *under* to mean a position below something. We use *over* to mean a position higher than but not touching somebody or something.



The mechanic is under the car.



The chandelier is over the dining table.

We use *behind* to mean at the back of somebody or something. We use *between* to mean in the space separating two or more points, objects, people, etc.

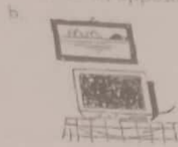


The old man is behind the wall.



The man is standing between two walls.

1 Complete the sentences using above, below, opposite, under, over or between.



- The baby elephant is the two big elephants.
- There is a painting the TV.
- The aircraft is flying the clouds.
- The man is standing the aircraft.
- We made shelves in the space the window.
- The two men are pulling in the direction.

2 Complete the sentences describing the position of each.



- The burger joint is the pizza place.
- The old man and the old lady are sitting the burger joint.
- A little girl is standing the old couple.
- The dog is sitting the table.
- The tall man is standing the two girls.
- The girl the tall man is wearing a black jacket.

Prepositions: Across, Along, Down, into, Off, Over, Out of, Past, Round, Through, Under, Up

LISTEN

1 What are the prepositions *across, along, down, into, off, over, out of, past, round, through, under, up* used for?
 All these prepositions indicate the direction of movement.



walking across the road



walking along the road



bending down



jumping into the water



going off the road



jumping over the fence



coming out of the water



going past a red light



driving round the corner



looking through a keyhole



walking under a ladder



going up the stairs

1 Complete the description using these prepositions:
 through • across • into • out of • round
 down • off • past • over • up • in front of



Jimmy, our dog, was in a crazy mood. Suddenly, he ran the living room and ran straight the stairs, and immediately ran Then he jumped the sofa and I saw him going the bedroom. A minute later, he came the room. Then he ran the carpet in the middle of the room, went the TV and suddenly stopped and looked at me. He knew he had annoyed me. As I got up from the sofa, he ran out the door. I went out to see where he had gone. Seeing me, he ran the corner. He ran so fast that he lost control, went the path and hit the wall and stopped.

2 Complete the sentences using the correct preposition.

a. A monkey walked my living room when I was reading the newspaper. Suddenly the steam from the pressure cooker went The monkey got scared and ran of the room the rear door.

b. Last summer we made a trip to Darjeeling. The journey the hills by the toy train was exciting. A few children got scared when the train went tunnels. The train got slow as it started climbing I could see a few people jumping the train and getting it again at the next curve. It was indeed a sight to see the train going sharp curves.

What do we use about for?

We use about to mean on the subject of somebody or something. This preposition is usually used with verbs such as hear, know, speak, talk, and think.
I knew nothing about it until I reached Bangalore.
Did you hear about the accident?
I want to speak to you about something important. They love to talk about partying all the time.
I think we should think about moving to a better house.

Common error

It is common to hear many learners using about with verbs such as discuss and explain. Neither of these verbs take any preposition after them.
We are going to discuss about interview techniques. X We are going to discuss interview techniques. ✓
They explained about the problem. X They explained the problem. ✓

What do we use at for?

a. We use at to state the age at which somebody does something.
I left my village at the age of 16.
She learnt swimming at 10.
b. We also use at to specify the rate or speed.
The car was going at 100 kms per hour.
The wind blew at a speed of 200 kms per hour.

What do we use by for?

a. We use by to mean near, at the side of or beside somebody or something.
She sat by the phone and waited for the call. He stood by the door.
The little boy slept by his mother. (= beside) An old woman sat by me.
b. We use by to show who or what does, causes or creates something. This is usually done in passive constructions.
The fire was caused by a short circuit. This play is an adaptation of Macbeth by Shakespeare.
c. We use by to show how or in what way something is done.
This part of the building is powered by solar energy.
Can I pay by card? She goes to work by the metro.

What do we use with for?

a. We use with to mean in the company or presence of somebody or something.
She went on a trip with her friends.
b. We use with to mean using something.
I lost my key. I managed to open the lock with a wire.
c. We use with to mean having or carrying something.
I want to buy a jacket with a hood. He looked at me with a sense of guilt.

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1 Put in about, at, by or with.

- a. I learnt driving _____ 14.
- b. Do not stand _____ the door in a running train.
- c. Let us not talk _____ yesterday's event.
- d. Many online shops allow you to pay _____ card or in cash on delivery.
- e. A man _____ a long beard sat _____ me.
- f. On the expressway, we were driving _____ 140 km per hour.

2 Insert at, by, about or with.

- a. Sensitive electronic device inside. Do not open _____ any sharp object.
- b. Payment _____ cheque not accepted.
- c. Thinking _____ changing your job? Call us now.
- d. Start saving _____ 20 and secure your future.
- e. Talk on Indo-US Trade Relations _____ the US Ambassador.
- f. Fragile. Handle _____ care.

3 Complete the sentences with about, at, by or with.

- a. A: Where were you last evening?
B: I was _____ a few of my colleagues.
- b. A: Do you have any news _____ the match?
B: I think we lost it.
- c. A: I'm calling _____ my order No. 1768.
B: We have despatched it _____ courier.
- d. A: Do you know what the dollar price is today?
B: It's selling _____ Rs. 62.50.
- e. A: Do you think he'll be here for the meeting?
B: Yes, he's coming _____ at.
- f. A: Can we talk _____ next week's reception?
B: Maybe _____ 10 o'clock.

4 Choose the right preposition.

- a. We are late. Do you think we should go in/by a taxi?
- b. She is living by/with an old classmate of hers.
- c. Are you looking for a jar by/with a handle?
- d. The dog sat at/by the fireplace.
- e. The water level in the dam rose at/by 2 cms every hour.
- f. Do you know anything of/about their plan?