

# Prepositions

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## Introduction to Prepositions

Prepositions are words that join a noun, a pronoun or a group of words acting as a noun with another part of a sentence. **A preposition should always have at least one object** (noun, pronoun or a group of words acting as a noun). This is the object that it joins with the rest of the sentence.

For example:

Reema's house is located **near** the temple.

(Here, 'near' is a preposition that connects the noun 'the temple' with the rest of the sentence. 'The temple' is the object of the preposition, i.e., the prepositional object.)

**[Remember: A preposition will always have an object.]**

## Purpose of Prepositions

*What does a preposition do?*

A preposition **shows the relation between its object and the part of a sentence with which it joins the object**. Consider the following examples to understand the different relations shown by a preposition.

Nalini will return **on** Monday.

Here, 'on' is the preposition that connects 'Monday' with the rest of the sentence. **'Monday' is the prepositional object**.

Without the preposition, the sentence would look as follows:

Nalini will return \_\_\_\_\_ Monday.

Very clearly, 'Monday' has to be linked in some manner with 'Nalini will return'. When 'on' is added to the empty space, one gets to know **WHEN Nalini will**

**return**. She will return **ON Monday**. Hence, in this sentence, the preposition indicates **TIME**.

Kapil is waiting **in** the park.

Here, 'in' is the preposition that connects 'the park' with the rest of the sentence. **'The park' is the prepositional object.**

Without the preposition, the sentence would look as follows:

Kapil is waiting \_\_\_\_\_ the park.

Very clearly, 'the park' has to be linked in some manner with 'Kapil is waiting'. When 'in' is added in the empty space, one gets to know **WHERE Kapil is waiting**. He is waiting **IN the park**. Hence, in this sentence, the preposition indicates **PLACE**.

Unni is going **toward** Raju's house.

Here, 'toward' is the preposition that connects 'Raju's house' with the rest of the sentence. **'Raju's house' is the prepositional object.**

Without the preposition, the sentence would look as follows:

Unni is going \_\_\_\_\_ Raju's house.

Very clearly, 'Raju's house' has to be linked in some manner with 'Unni is going'. When 'toward' is added to the empty space, one gets to know **WHERE Unni is going**. He is going **TOWARD Raju's house**. Hence, in this sentence, the preposition indicates **MOVEMENT**.

One should not learn things **by** rote.

Here, 'by' is the preposition that connects 'rote' with the rest of the sentence. **'Rote' is the prepositional object.**

Without the preposition, the sentence would look as follows:

One should not learn things \_\_\_\_\_ rote.

Very clearly, 'rote' has to be linked in some manner with 'one should not learn things'. When 'by' is added to the empty space, one gets to know **HOW not to learn things**. Things should not be learnt **BY rote**. Hence, in this sentence, the preposition indicates **MANNER**.

Yudhishtir went to Darjeeling **for** a vacation.

Here, 'for' is the preposition that connects 'a vacation' with the rest of the sentence. **'A vacation' is the prepositional object.**

Without the preposition, the sentence would look as follows:

Yudhishtir went to Darjeeling \_\_\_\_\_ a vacation.

Very clearly, 'a vacation' has to be linked in some manner with 'Yudhishtir went to Darjeeling'. When 'for' is added to the empty space, one gets to know **WHY Yudhishtir went to Darjeeling**. He went there **FOR a vacation**. Hence, in this sentence, the preposition indicates **PURPOSE**.

A leg **of** the round table is broken.

Here, 'of' is the preposition that connects 'a leg' with 'the round table'. **'The round table' is the prepositional object.**

Without the preposition, the sentence would look as follows:

A leg \_\_\_\_\_ the round table is broken.

Very clearly, 'a leg' has to be linked in some manner with 'the round table'. When 'of' is added to the empty space, it becomes clear that **one of the legs OF 'the round table'** is broken. Hence, in this sentence, the preposition indicates **POSSESSION**.

Gagan Joseph's new song is just **like** the one Tony Martini had composed for the movie 'A September Evening'.

Here, 'like' is the preposition that connects 'Gagan Joseph's new song' with 'the one Tony Martini had composed'. **'The one' is the prepositional object.**

Without the preposition, the sentence would look as follows:

Gagan Joseph's new song is just \_\_\_\_\_ the one Tony Martini had composed for the movie 'A September Evening'.

Very clearly, 'Gagan Joseph's new song' has to be linked in some manner with 'the one Tony Martini had composed'. When 'like' is added to the empty space, it becomes clear that **the new song composed by Gagan Joseph is very much LIKE the one composed by Tony Martini** for the movie 'A September Evening'. Hence, in this sentence, the preposition indicates **SIMILARITY/COMPARISON**.

The toy was given to the little boy **by** his parents.

Here, 'by' is the preposition that connects 'the toy given to the little boy' with 'his parents'. **'His parents' is the prepositional object.**

Without the preposition, the sentence would look as follows:

The toy was given to the little boy \_\_\_\_\_ his parents.

Very clearly, 'the toy given to the little boy' has to be linked in some manner with 'his parents'. When 'by' is added to the empty space, it becomes clear as to **WHO gave the toy to the little boy**. It was **given to him BY his parents**. Hence, in this sentence, the preposition indicates **SOURCE/AGENCY**.

## The Preposition AT

*AT Indicating PRICE*

The apples are being sold **at** twenty rupees per kilogram.

***AT Indicating MANNER***

Shashi was running **at** top speed to escape the ghost in the white dress.

***AT Indicating DIRECTION***

Ghosh was shouting **at** Mithun for throwing away his wicket after getting a start.

The journalist threw the shoe **at** the minister.

***AT Indicating PLACE/POSITION/LOCATION***

You will find the marriage party **at** the end of this road.

Dinesh is usually found **at** the Hanuman temple on Tuesdays.

Mr. Jones will be staying **at** the Traveller's Paradise hotel for the next three days.

Joginder was an all-rounder **at** school and college.

Regular study is **at** the top of my New Year resolution list.

If you want any movies, then you can call Rubina. She works **at** the video store.

You can find me **at** the Sahitya Academy Library.

The sun is **at** the centre of the solar system.

I saw Disha **at** Jini's birthday party.

Only one issue of importance was discussed **at** the meeting yesterday.

## Standing **at** the door



**[Remember:** Use 'at' with the name of a place when you think of it as a point.]

### **AT Indicating TIME**

Dharam woke up **at** 3:00 A.M. to go to the airport.

The postman brings the daily mail **at** two in the afternoon.

Zeeshan and Anil like studying **at** night.

Rohan got up **at** sunrise and jogged from his house to the National Stadium.

Mr. Subramaniam is busy **at** the moment. Please call after half an hour.



## The Preposition IN

### *IN* Indicating *TIME*



I will see Harsh at this same place **in** five minutes.

Roshan's cousins will be coming to Delhi **in** July.

Zafar's last movie had released **in** the year 2000.

The young and educated of India were leaving for foreign shores **in** the 1990s.

Gini has won several awards **in** the past.

India was a colonised state **in** the nineteenth century.

Patel decided that he will trim the bushes **in** the morning.

### ***IN Indicating PLACE/POSITION/LOCATION***

Jonathan will meet me **in** the afternoon at the Tarana restaurant.

Yash has been **in** the publishing industry for the last five years.

The star was shining brightly **in** the sky.

The children have been playing **in** the field all day long.

The lawyer was sitting **in** the chair, waiting for his client.

The A4-sized sheets are **in** the lower drawer.

Johnny lives **in** a three room apartment all by himself.

Meena has been living **in** this building for years.

I was **in** the lift when the power went off.

Gayatri has been living **in** China for three years.

Ramesh was born **in** Thrissur.

Rosie's name is mentioned **in** the latest issue of Business Everyday.

I read an article **in** yesterday's paper about how to perfect your English.

**[Remember: Use 'in' with the name of a place when you think of it as an area.]**

### ***IN Indicating a SPECIFIC VEHICLE***

All Chintamani wants to do is sit **in** a boat and fish all day long.

The suspect is hiding **in** the red Mercedes.

**[Remember:** Use 'in' when you mean a specific/particular car, taxi, lorry, van or ambulance.]

## The Preposition ON

### **ON** Indicating SUBJECT/TOPIC

Chandu's latest novel is based **on** Gandhi's life.

### **ON** Indicating PLACE/POSITION/LOCATION

Everybody laughed when Ranbir fell **on** the floor.

The umbrella is lying **on** the table.

The address was written **on** a piece of red-coloured paper.

There are absolutely no fruits **on** this tree.

Humpty Dumpty sat **on** a wall.

Siddhant told me that he lives **on** the fourth floor of this building.

My grandparents live **on** a poultry farm.

Jack saw some pirates hiding **on** the ship.

**[Remember:** Use 'on' with the name of a place when you think of it as a surface.]

### **ON Indicating MANNER**

They went to the temple **on** foot.

### **ON Indicating a SPECIFIC VEHICLE**

The police were searching for an escaped convict **on** the bus.

I was sitting **on** a bicycle, while she was sitting in a car.

**[Remember: Use 'on' when you mean a specific/particular bicycle, bus, train, ship or plane.]**

### **ON Indicating TV and RADIO**

I saw Naina **on** the television last night.

The fishermen had heard the warning about the storm **on** the radio.

### **ON Indicating TIME**



I forgot to thank Deepa at the party **on** Friday.

I found this magic wand beside the lake of truth **on** a Wednesday evening.

I had great fun **on** my birthday.

We will be in Goa **on** the first day of the coming New Year.

I will miss the flag hoisting ceremony **on** the Republic Day.

## Other Common Prepositions 1

### **ABOUT**

**(ABOUT Indicating APPROXIMATION)**

The house that Mr. Biswas has bought is **about** twenty years old.

**(ABOUT Indicating POSITION/LOCATION)**

The boys were standing **about** the house waiting for Rohan to come out.

**(ABOUT Indicating MOVEMENT)**

The horse is walking **about** the city looking for its master.

**(ABOUT Indicating SUBJECT/TOPIC)**

I overheard some people talking **about** Karan.

The book was **about** India's long struggle for independence.

### **ABOVE**

**(ABOVE Indicating POSITION/LOCATION)**

The painting was hung **above** the fireplace when I last saw it.

**(ABOVE Indicating MEASUREMENT)**

His IQ is well **above** the average IQ of the children belonging to his age group.

**ACROSS**

**(ACROSS Indicating DIRECTION)**

The wizard jumped **across** the wide river with the help of his magic shoes.

There is a little problem with the bridge **across** the river.

**(ACROSS Indicating POSITION/LOCATION)**

I saw Revathi standing near the tea shop **across** the road.

**(ACROSS Indicating EXTENT)**

All **across** the country people are celebrating India's victory.

**AFTER**

**(AFTER Indicating POSITION/LOCATION)**

On the roll number list, my name comes **after** Mayank's.

**(AFTER Indicating TIME)**

Pulkit has told me to tell you that he will be home **after** ten.

The priest ate his food some time **after** his cat had drunk its milk.

**(AFTER Indicating DIRECTION)**

The gardener broke his slippers running **after** the children.

**AGAINST**

**(AGAINST Indicating POSITION/LOCATION)**

Yashika is talking on her phone, leaning **against** the window of her bedroom.

**(AGAINST Indicating OPPOSITION)**

Tulika will play **against** Manisha in the finals of the school tennis championship.

Urvashi wants to shift to Kottayam. Her brother is **against** this idea.

**ALONG**

**(ALONG Indicating MOVEMENT)**

In the torchlight, I saw my grandfather coming **along** the muddy path.

The children ran **along** the road to greet their cousins.

**AMONG**

**(AMONG Indicating POSITION/LOCATION)**

The cat was **among** the pigeons and still the birds were not scared.

**(AMONG Indicating a GROUP)**

The monkeys were fighting **among** themselves when the turtle came.

The old man wanted to divide his property equally **among** his five children.

**AROUND**

**(AROUND Indicating APPROXIMATION)**

The foundation for the building was laid **around** 1910.

**(AROUND Indicating POSITION/LOCATION)**

The children sat **around** the strange man and waited for him to speak.

**(AROUND Indicating MOVEMENT)**

The players were jumping **around** their coach in celebration of their win.

## Other Common Prepositions 2

### **BEFORE**

**(BEFORE Indicating TIME)**

The boss ordered Ramlal to finish the work **before** five o'clock.

Girish always comes to the office half an hour **before** his colleagues.

The thieves escaped through the window well **before** the alarm was raised.

**(BEFORE Indicating POSITION/LOCATION)**

I couldn't see a single thing as you sat **before** me.

### **BEHIND**

**(BEHIND Indicating TIME)**

The flight is six hours **behind** its scheduled arrival.

**(BEHIND Indicating POSITION/LOCATION)**

Murali was standing **behind** the door, waiting for Raghu to come in.

### **BELOW**

**(BELOW Indicating AGE)**

Children **below** five years are not allowed.

**(BELOW Indicating POSITION/LOCATION)**

They are **below** the mountain. We can easily see them from here.

### **BENEATH**

**(BENEATH Indicating POSITION/LOCATION)**

To tell the truth was **beneath** his idea of morality.

Chandran was standing **beneath** Rupa's window when the bee stung him.

### **BESIDE**

**(BESIDE Indicating POSITION/LOCATION)**

The car was parked **beside** the coconut tree.

**(BESIDE Indicating COMPARISON)**

The monkey looks more human **beside** you.

### **BESIDES**

**(BESIDES Indicating EXCEPTION)**

There was no one else in the room **besides** Dinakaran.

**(BESIDES Indicating IN ADDITION TO)**

**Besides** you and me, Vikram also has a blue Mercedes.

## **BETWEEN**

**(BETWEEN Indicating TIME)**



**(BETWEEN Indicating POSITION/LOCATION)**

The flower pot containing the stolen jewels is kept **between** the two guards.

## **BEYOND**

**(BEYOND Indicating POSITION/LOCATION)**

The ball was way **beyond** the fielder's hands.

**(BEYOND Indicating TIME)**

I will not wait for you at the bus stop **beyond** 4:00 P.M.

### **BUT**

**(BUT Indicating EXCEPTION)**

No one **but** you can stop them from taking such a decision.

Everyone **but** you was present at the wedding.

### **BY**

**(BY Indicating SOURCE/AGENT)**

That song was sung **by** Hariharan.

**(BY Indicating MANNER)**

The children attracted attention onto themselves **by** shouting loudly.

**(BY Indicating MOVEMENT)**

Geeta said that she will come **by** the house in the evening.

**(BY Indicating MEANS OF TRANSPORT)**

Ratna will come **by** Rajdhani Express.

He travels **by** bus regularly.

## **Other Common Prepositions 3**

### **DOWN**

**(DOWN Indicating DIRECTION)**

Kevin is cycling **down**  
the incline.



**(DOWN Indicating POSITION/LOCATION)**

My best friend Heena's house is located **down** the road.

### **DURING**

**(DURING Indicating TIME)**

**During** Vikramaditya's reign, there was justice and peace all over.

Someone was laughing **during** my piano recital.

The schools are closed **during** the really hot summer months.

### **EXCEPT**

**(EXCEPT Indicating EXCEPTION)**

No one **except** you can stop the approaching army.

Everyone **except** you was ready for the race.

## **FOR**

### ***(FOR Indicating REASON)***

Dev was punished by his dad **for** throwing a stone at the bird.

My mom tells me to eat spinach **for** good health.

### ***(FOR Indicating TIME)***

Ramamurthy has been exercising **for** one hour.

**[Remember: Use 'for' when the noun refers to time duration.]**

### ***(FOR Indicating PRICE)***

The shopkeeper refused to sell the notebook **for** eight rupees.

### ***(FOR Indicating FUNCTION/PURPOSE)***

This movie is meant **for** intelligent viewers.

Jeetu has two extra tickets **for** the fourth India-Australia ODI.

He is a great player who stands **for** team spirit and sportsmanship.

### ***(FOR Indicating FREQUENCY)***

The teacher repeated herself **for** the umpteenth time.

### ***(FOR Indicating EXCHANGE)***

Utsav gave me his new video game **for** my cricket bat.

### ***(FOR Indicating DIRECTION)***

All these pilgrims are heading **for** Sabarimala.

## **FROM**

**(FROM Indicating TIME)**

Hari was playing football **from** six to seven.

**(FROM Indicating SOURCE)**

A parcel has come **from** your uncle.

A message has arrived **from** heaven.

## **INTO**

**(INTO Indicating DIRECTION)**

The puppy ran **into** the kitchen in pursuit of a rat.

Champu jumped **into** the river on seeing Sheru.

**(INTO Indicating CHANGE)**

Chota Judugar changed a man sitting in the audience **into** a rabbit.

## **LIKE**

**(LIKE Indicating COMPARISON/SIMILARITY)**

This place was **like** heaven on earth before the war.

I am **like** a dog chasing cats.

## **Other Common Prepositions 4**

### **OF**

**(OF Indicating POSSESSION)**

The actor Samar Khan is an old friend **of** mine.

The greatest work **of** Marquez is *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

*Gajar ka halwa* is a speciality **of** my mom.

Big boss told me to get out **of** his room.

**(OF Indicating SUBJECT/TOPIC)**

They often think **of** each other.

**(OF Indicating CONTENT)**

I will have a cup **of** boiling hot coffee.

**(OF Indicating QUALITY)**

They are men **of** honour. They will not use unfair means.

**(OF Indicating REASON)**

The joke was so funny that the audience almost died **of** laughter.

**OFF**

**(OFF Indicating DIRECTION)**

The police let the criminal **off** the hook.

Raj took his hat **off** the stand.

The gardener told everybody to keep **off** the wet grass.

**ONTO**

**(ONTO Indicating DIRECTION)**

The detective threw his gloves **onto** the table.

The monkey climbed **onto** the branch on seeing the crocodile.

The cat jumped **onto** the table.



**OVER**

**(OVER Indicating AGE)**

A person **over** eighteen years of age is eligible to vote.

**(OVER Indicating OUTER COVERING)**

It was so cold that Rishi wore a coat **over** the cardigan.

**(OVER Indicating POSITION/LOCATION)**

The rainbow bridge was built **over** the city museum.

**PAST**

**(PAST Indicating DIRECTION)**

The soldiers marched **past** Pintu while he was repairing his bicycle.

**(PAST Indicating TIME)**

You will not stay outside home **past** ten o'clock.

**SINCE**

**(SINCE Indicating TIME)**

Yuvraj has been playing hockey **since** he was twelve.

Rini has been working non-stop **since** ten in the morning.

**[Remember: Use 'since' when the noun refers to a point of time.]**

**THROUGH**

**(THROUGH Indicating TIME)**

Tarun said that he will be busy all **through** the next week.

**(THROUGH Indicating DIRECTION)**

There is no doubt that the burglar came **through** the open window.

**THROUGHOUT**

**(THROUGHOUT Indicating EXTENT)**

There was peace and prosperity **throughout** the world.

**(THROUGHOUT Indicating TIME)**

Raju was looking at the ceiling **throughout** the exam.

### **TILL**

**(TILL Indicating TIME)**

We have **till** tomorrow to come up with a solution to the problem.

I will be in the examination hall from morning **till** noon.

### **TO**

**(TO Indicating DIRECTION)**

Billu and Pinky are going **to** their *Mamaji's* house tomorrow.

**(TO Indicating INFINITIVE)**

The team likes **to get** into a huddle after the fall of a wicket.

### **TOWARD**

**(TOWARD Indicating DIRECTION)**

Latika is moving **toward** a bright future.



## Other Common Prepositions 5

### **UNDER**

**(UNDER Indicating POSITION/LOCATION)**

The gold coins of Jahangir lie hidden **under** the great banyan tree.

Donna is waiting for you **under** the park bridge.

**(UNDER Indicating AGE)**

Jimmy was not allowed to enter the theatre as he was **under** twenty.

### **UNDERNEATH**

**(UNDERNEATH Indicating POSITION/LOCATION)**

Trisha's doll is lying **underneath** her bed.

The dog is hiding **underneath** the table.

### **UNLIKE**

**(UNLIKE Indicating CONTRAST/DISSIMILARITY)**

This movie is **unlike** any that you have seen before.

**Unlike** Karan, Ravi is a hard working boy.

It is so **unlike** Mohit to be at the office after five.

**UNTIL**

**(UNTIL Indicating TIME)**

They had **until** Tuesday to finish the project.

I will be working in the garden from two **until** three.

**UP**

**(UP Indicating DIRECTION)**

The regiment has decided to climb **up** those dangerous hills.

If you have to move **up** the ladder of success, then you will have to do this.

**UPON**

**(UPON Indicating TIME)**

The father and son ran with the bicycle **upon** seeing the police.

**(UPON Indicating POSITION/LOCATION)**

The necklace was lying **upon** the dressing table.

## **WITH**

**(WITH Indicating METHOD)**

In my native place, everyone eats food **with** their hands.

**(WITH Indicating COMPANY)**

The children want to go **with** their uncle.

**(WITH Indicating POSSESSION)**

He has confessed that he does not have the gold **with** him.

## **WITHIN**

**(WITHIN Indicating TIME)**

Pulkit has been asked to complete the project **within** a week.

**(WITHIN Indicating POSITION/LOCATION)**

I will remain **within** the house until the weather outside becomes bearable.

## **WITHOUT**

**(WITHOUT Indicating ABSENCE)**

The old man can see absolutely nothing **without** his spectacles.

The two met each other **without** ill will.