

Explanations

Movement

Prepositions used with verbs of motion (*come, go, run, etc*) show the direction of the movement.

*Jack ran **out of** the room. Sue moved **towards** the door.*

Other examples: *to, into, across, around, along, up, down, past*

Position and place

Prepositions can show position.

*Ted was sitting **next to** Janet. The bank is **opposite** the cinema.*

Other examples: *before, below, beside, in front of, near, on top of, under*

Prepositions can show place.

*I live **in** France. Sue lives **on** an island. John is **at** school.*

See below for problems of use.

Other uses

- Prepositions are also used in time expressions.
- Prepositions cover a wide range of other meanings.
*This book is **about** Napoleon.*
*I can't drink tea **with/without** sugar.*

Problems of use

- *To* and *at*
With verbs of motion *to* means *in the direction of*. *At* is not used with verbs of motion. It is used to say where someone or something is.
*We went **to** the cinema. We arrived **at** the cinema.*
- *Next to* and *near*
Next to means *very close, with nothing in between*. It is the same as *beside*. *Near* means *only a short distance from*, which can be a matter of opinion.
*Peter always sits **next to** Mary.*
*I live **near** the sea, it's only ten miles away.*
- *Above* and *over*
Both words mean *in a higher position than*, but *over* suggests closeness or touching.
*There was a plane high **above** them.*
*Put this blanket **over** you.*
There may be little difference in some contexts.
*There was something written **above/over** the door.*

■ *In* and *at*: places

In refers to towns, countries and the 'inside' of places.

She lives in Paris. They arrived in Peru. He's in the kitchen.

At refers to points with a particular purpose rather than inside.

She lives at home. I'll meet you at the bus stop.

Compare:

They met in the cinema. (inside)

They met at the cinema. (place)

■ Prepositions at the end of a sentence

Study these common examples:

Who are you waiting for? (question)

You are very difficult to live with! (infinitive)

That's the company that I work for. (relative clause)

**Prepositions
without an object**

Some prepositions can be used without an object.

Ted was walking along, whistling.

In this example we mean *along the street*, but it is clear from the context or unimportant.

Other prepositions used like this are: *around, along, behind, opposite*

**Prepositions with
more than one word**

Examples: *according to, on behalf of, by means of*

Other examples are included in the Practice section.

**Prepositional
phrases**

There are many fixed phrases containing prepositions.

Examples: *by mistake, on purpose, out of order*

Other examples are included in the Practice section.

Practice

1 Underline the most suitable prepositions.

- I got *at/to* the station just in time to see Jack getting *from/off* the train.
- The cafe is *among/between* the chemist's and the butcher's and *across/opposite* the library.
- Sue lives *at/in* Wales, which is a country *at/in* the west of Britain.
- I was brought up *in/on* an island *near/next to* the coast of Scotland.
- Travelling *by/in* your own car is better than going *by/on* foot.
- Jack was leaning *by/against* the wall with his hands *in/into* his pockets.
- Ann had a hat *on/over* her head and a veil *above/over* her face.
- We arrived *at/in* England *at/in* Gatwick Airport.
- I left my bags *at/from* the station *at/in* a left luggage locker.
- Peter came running *into/to* the room and threw his books *at/onto* the floor.

2 Complete each sentence with a suitable word or phrase from the box.

according to because of ~~instead of~~ apart from by means of
in favour of on behalf of as for in case of regardless of

- I think I'd rather have coffee *instead of* tea.
- the danger, Paul ran back into the burning house.
- fire, smash the glass and push the button.
- Personally, I am banning cigarette smoking completely!
- I would like to thank you, everyone who was rescued.
- you, no-one else knows that I have escaped.
- Steve, he believes that we should stay where we are.
- Jim managed to climb into the house a ladder he found.
- the rain, the match was postponed.
- the timetable, the next train isn't for two hours.

3 Decide whether it is possible to leave out the words in *italics*.

- Most people are wandering around *the streets*, taking photos. ... *possible*
- I gave my bike to *my little sister*, when it became too small for me.
- The people who live in the house opposite *our house* are Italian.
- I left my coat *on the bed* in here but it seems to have disappeared.
- I'll wait for you outside *the cinema*, on the pavement.
- Peter took a deep breath, and then went under *the water* again.
- Don't worry, the hotel's quite near *to where we are now*.
- The children can sit behind *you in the back seats*.

4 Complete each sentence with a suitable word or phrase from the box.

at by for in on ~~off~~ out of to under without

- a) Police officers don't have to wear uniform when they are*off*..... duty.
- b) I feel very tired. times I consider giving up work.
- c) The children were all upset, and some were tears.
- d) This factory needs modernising. Everything here is date.
- e) Don't worry, everything is control.
- f) Sorry, I seem to have taken the wrong umbrella mistake.
- g) Please hurry. We need these documents delay.
- h) That wasn't an accident! You did it purpose.
- i) We thought the two films were very similar each other.
- j) We decided to take a holiday in Wales a change.

5 Underline the most suitable phrase in each sentence.

- a) I can't disturb John now. He's *at bed*/*in bed*.
- b) Tony always arrives exactly *in time*/*on time* for his lesson.
- c) Two pounds for each ticket, that makes £12 *in all*/*with all*.
- d) I can't pick that last apple. It's *out of hand*/*out of reach*.
- e) Joe and I met on the plane completely *by chance*/*by surprise*.
- f) The children spend most of their time *out of doors*/*out of place*.
- g) I'm sorry but Jane isn't here *at present*/*at a time*.
- h) How can Sam love Lucy? They have nothing *in common*/*in general*.
- i) They should be here soon. They are *in the way*/*on the way*.
- j) Terry isn't here. He's away *in business*/*on business*.

6 Complete each sentence with a suitable word from the box.

breath fail impression secret strike ~~costs~~ return stock

- a) This is important. You must catch the two men at all*costs*.....
- b) I was under the that you enjoyed working here.
- c) Please hand your work in on Tuesday, without
- d) We can't go by train. The train-drivers are on
- e) Martin is supposed to have given up smoking, but he smokes in
- f) I'm afraid we don't have your size, we are out of
- g) If I give you the information, what will you give me in ?
- h) I ran for the bus, and now I'm out of

7 Complete each sentence with a suitable word from the box.

average ~~profit~~ sight detail himself practice public whole

- a) Harry managed to sell his house at a *profit*
- b) What was he doing here all by
- c) Larry is so famous that he doesn't appear in very often.
- d) That was a terrible shot! I'm rather out of
- e) How many cars do you sell, on, every week?
- f) The police are coming! Stay out of until they leave.
- g) I suppose I enjoyed my holiday on the
- h) Can you tell me about the plans in

8 Complete each sentence with a suitable phrase from the box.

by heart in difficulties out of work by sight in pain
~~in two~~ on sale without a doubt

- a) When I sat on the pencil, it broke *in two*
- b) This is the best washing machine on the market.
- c) Graham has been ever since he came to London.
- d) I know her, but I don't know her name.
- e) The lifeguard dived in to save a swimmer
- f) John learned his first speech
- g) You could tell he was because he kept groaning.
- h) Cigarettes and ice cream are in the foyer.

9 Complete each sentence with one of the phrases from the box.

at any rate in person out of danger out of tune
 from now on in private out of order ~~under orders~~

- a) Jim's excuse was that he was acting *under orders* from his boss.
- b) Things have changed., no-one leaves before 5.00.
- c) Thank goodness. All the passengers are now
- d) The President would like to meet you and thank you
- e) Your violin sounds awful! I think it's
- f) It's a warm country. We won't need our pullovers,
- g) Excuse me, but I'd like to have a word with you
- h) You can't use the phone. It's

10 Look carefully at each line. Some of the lines are correct, and some have a word which should not be there. Tick each correct line. If a line has a word which should not be there, write the word in the space.

The psychology of accidents

Most people are under the impression that doing something by a mistake is quite different from doing something on purpose. In the fact, according to by some psychologists, many accidents do not, on the whole, really happen to by chance. There may be good reasons for actions which seem to be accidental. For an example, someone who fails to arrive on time as for a meeting at work may be worried about his or her job, or be in with difficulties at home. In other words, there are often good reasons for behaviour which seems at the first to be accidental. Of this course, some people are involved in more accidents than others. These people are called 'accident prone'. In the general they either suffer from stress, or could have in a physical illness without knowing about it.

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Key points

- 1 There is a group of prepositions used with verbs of motion.
across, along, around, down, into, out of, past, to, towards, up
- 2 Some prepositions can be used without an object.
*Jean lives **opposite**.*
- 3 A sentence can end with a preposition.
*Paul didn't have a chair to sit **on**.*

→ SEE ALSO

Grammar 14: Time expressions
Grammar 15: Consolidation