

English grammar basics: The prepositions (with examples)

In English, a preposition is a short word that shows the relationship of a noun/pronoun with another word in the sentence. They are always found in prepositional sentences and are usually located before the name or pronoun.

A preposition is used to give a spatial or temporal indication, a position or a logical link between two things:

Examples:

- I'm going **to** the office.
- He's **at** the bar.
- My pen is **on** the table.
- We meet **in** an hour.
- I saw a beautiful movie painting **by** Spielberg.
- I'm **from** Canada.
- The letter is **under** your book.
- She will be back **in** a few days.
- I'm leaving **on** friday.
- The book belongs **to** me.
- The bear was killed **by** the hunter.
- Tina is the girl **in** the blue dress.
- The cat is **near** the window.

Here are some common prepositions in English:

above, about, across, against, along, among, around, at, before, behind, below, beneath, beside, between, beyond, by, down, during, except, for, from, in, inside, into, like, near, of, off, on, since, to, toward, through, under, underneath, until, up, upon, with, within....

Prepositions are always used after specific nouns, adjectives and verbs and can change their meaning:

Examples:

Nouns + preposition:

- concern **for**...
- interest **in**...
- love **of**...
- success **in**...

Adjective + preposition:

- afraid **of**...
- happy **about**...
- jealous **of**...
- made **of**...
- familiar **with**...

Verb + preposition

- give **up**...
- talk **about**...
- find **out**...
- grow **up**...
- belong **to**...

A combination of verb+preposition is called a "verbal phrasal". The word that is attached to the verb is then called a particle. The phrasal verbs are very important to know because with different prepositions (or particles) you can then form many different words: look up, look out, look down...

⚠ When prepositions are not necessary:

Sometimes, we may think that we should use a preposition in a sentence when it is not necessary:

- Where is your house ~~at~~ ?
- Where did they go ~~to~~ ?
- She wouldn't let the dog inside ~~of~~ / ~~in~~ the house.
- He threw the TV out ~~of~~ the window.

⚠ Avoid repeating prepositions:

When two words or sentences are used in parallel and require the same preposition, it is not necessary to use it twice in a row to avoid repeating it:

- You can wear that dress ~~in~~ summer and ~~in~~ winter.
- Tina is making a chocolate cake with whipped cream and ~~with~~ strawberries.