

## PREPOSITION USES

Prepositions are frequently used in English to relate a noun or pronoun to some other word in the sentence. They express a number of relationships, including time, location, manner, means, quantity, purpose, and state or condition. You will find examples of preposition usage in your reading. Study them in the context in which they appear.

### To Show Time

*When does it happen?*

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| <b>about</b> | about noon (approximately)  |
| <b>after</b> | after the game<br>after lunch<br>after three  |
| <b>at</b>    | at five o'clock<br>at last (finally)  |
| <b>by</b>    | by midnight (not later than)  |
| <b>for</b>   | for an hour (duration)  |
| <b>from</b>  | from Monday to Friday   |
| <b>in</b>    | in the morning (evening)<br>in the fall (spring)<br>in April (month)<br>in 1969 (year)<br>in six months (at the end of)<br>in time (early enough) |
| <b>of</b>    | quarter of three  |
| <b>on</b>    | on Tuesday (weekday)  |
| <b>on</b>    | on May 8 (date)<br>on time (punctual)   |
| <b>past</b>  | quarter past three  |
| <b>to</b>    | quarter to three  |

### To Show Manner

*How did it happen? How was it done?*

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| <b>by</b>   | By doing it yourself, you save time  |
| <b>in</b>   | He left in confusion.<br>The room was in a turmoil.<br>You can do it in a day. |
| <b>like</b> | He looks like a hero.  |
| <b>on</b>   | I swear it on my word of honor   |
| <b>with</b> | He ate it with a fork.<br>He went with me.                                     |

### To Show Place or Direction

*Where is it? Where is it going?*

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>around</b>  | She walked around the car.   |
| <b>at</b>      | They are at home.<br>We were at the restaurant.<br>He smiled at her. |
| <b>down</b>    | They lived down the hall.  |
| <b>from</b>    | We drove from Utah to Iowa.<br>a mile from here                      |
| <b>in</b>      | He lives in a trailer.<br>We waited in the bus<br>He is in Paris.    |
| <b>of</b>      | inside of the house<br>south of Montreal                             |
| <b>on</b>      | on the ocean pier<br>on the train (bus, plane)<br>on the table       |
| <b>through</b> | We drove through the tunnel  |
| <b>to</b>      | He went to Prague.<br>Give it to me.                                 |
| <b>up</b>      | He walked up the stairs.   |

### To Show Means or Agent

*Who or what did it?*

*What was it done with?*

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| <b>by</b>   | He was hit by a ball.<br>She came by train.<br>He did it by hard work.<br>It came by special delivery.<br>He got there by swimming. |
| <b>from</b> | His success came from planning.<br>He takes pleasure in it.   |
| <b>on</b>   | They live on fruit.   |
| <b>with</b> | He cut the bread with a knife..   |

## To Show Purpose

*Why was this done?*

**for** He bought it for them.  
She went to the city for sightseeing.  
He loved her for her thoughtfulness.  
I asked you for it.  
We looked for it.

## To Show State or Condition

*How or where is it?*

**at** My friend is at work.  
She is at home.  
**by** They are by themselves. (alone)  
**in** He is in a state of confusion.  
**on** He is on duty. (subject to duty)

## To Show Quantity or Measure

*How much? How long?*

**for** We drove for twenty miles.  
We bought it for ten cents.  
**by** We bought them by the kilo.

## Uses of Prepositions after Certain Verbs

account for (meaning *explain*)  
agree on (something)  
agree with (someone)  
apologize to  
apply for  
approve of  
argue with (someone)  
ask for  
believe in  
belong to  
blame (someone) for (something)  
blame (something) on (someone)  
borrow from  
call on (upon)  
care for  
compliment (someone) on  
come from  
consent to  
consist of  
convince (someone) of (something)  
decide upon  
depend on, upon  
get rid of  
hear about  
hear from

hear of  
insist on, upon  
invite (someone) to  
laugh at  
listen for  
listen to  
look at  
look for  
look forward to  
object to  
plan on  
provide for  
provide with  
recover from  
remind (someone) of  
search for  
see about  
substitute for  
talk about  
talk of  
telephone to  
think about  
think of  
wait for (meaning *anticipate*)  
wait on (meaning *serve*)

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