



A1 Prepositions Explanations

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Prepositions of Time 1 (at / in / on)

AT

- times: **at** 8 pm, **at** midnight, **at** 6:30
- **at** night, **at** the weekend

ON

- days: **on** Monday, **on** my birthday, **on** Christmas Day
- days + morning / afternoon / evening / night: **on** Tuesday morning
- dates: **on** the 20th of June

IN

- years: **in** 1992, **in** 2006
- months: **in** December, **in** June
- decades: **in** the sixties, **in** the 1790s
- centuries: **in** the 19th century
- seasons: **in** winter, **in** summer
- **in** the morning, **in** the afternoon, **in** the evening

NO PREPOSITION

- next week, year, month etc
- last night, year etc
- this morning, month etc
- every day, night, year etc
- today, tomorrow, yesterday



Prepositions of Time 2 (from / to / until)

From ...to / until / till

We can give the beginning or the end of an action with from ... to / until / till. The meanings of 'till', 'until' and 'to' are the same here.

- I worked from 9 am to 5 pm.
- I worked from 9 am until 5 pm.
- I worked from 9 am till 5 pm.

We don't need other prepositions when we have from / to / until / till.

- I started work at 9am and I finished work at 5pm.
- I worked from 9 am to 5 pm. NOT: ~~I worked from at 9 am to at 5 pm.~~

Until = something will continue up to a time. We use 'until' to say when an action or situation ends

We use 'till' in exactly the same way as 'until'. The meanings are the same. We use 'till' when we are speaking informally.

- I'm staying in London until Tuesday.
- He's going to wait until 6 pm, then go home.
- I lived in Scotland till I was 21.



Prepositions of Time 3 (before and after)

We can use 'before + noun' or 'after + noun'.

- He called her before the class.
- She came to our house after the party.

We can use 'before + verb+ing' or 'after + verb+ing'. In this case, the subject of the verb+ing must be the same as the subject of the whole sentence.

- I called her before leaving. (= I called her before I left. The subjects are both 'I'.)
- She likes to have coffee after eating. (= She likes to have coffee after she eats. The subjects are both 'she'.)

We can use 'before + clause' and 'after + clause'. In this case, we can change the subject of we want to.

- She went home after we finished work. ('She' and 'we' are different subjects.)
- I will go to their house before they go to the airport. ('I' and 'they' are different subjects.)

We CAN'T use 'before + to + infinitive' or 'after + to + infinitive'.

- NOT: ~~I went home before to go to the airport.~~
- NOT: ~~She washes her hands before to eat.~~



Prepositions for Places (at / in / on)

In

- countries: in France, in China
- cities: in London, in Madrid, in the city, in a town
- continents: in Asia, in South America
- buildings, when we really mean inside: in the house, in a school, in a shop, in a bank
- rooms: in the kitchen, in the bedroom
- containers: in a bottle, in a bag, in a cup
- areas of land: in the garden, in a field, in the mountains, in the countryside, in the street
- water, when we mean getting wet: in the river, in the sea
- compass points: in the north, in the west
- in a car, in a taxi
- in a book, in the newspaper, in a photo, in bed

On

- flat horizontal things: on the table, on the floor, on a plate, on the page, on the ceiling, on the grass, on the roof
- vertical things: on the wall, on the side of the building, on the window, on my face, on a t-shirt
- things that you're on top of: on the sofa, on a chair, on a bike
- on a bus, on a train, on a boat, on a horse, on a plane
- on the radio, on TV, on the Internet, on Facebook, on Twitter, on Instagram, on a blog, on Netflix, on the phone
- on the first floor, on the third floor
- on foot

At

- institutions, when we're not talking about the building: at university, at school, at the library
- entertainment, when we're not talking about the building: at the cinema, at the theatre, at the gym
- at the top, at the bottom, at the front, at the back



- when we really mean ‘beside’: at the table, at the window, at the sea, at the bus stop, at the traffic lights
- at home, at work

No Preposition

- there, here



Prepositions with 'Home'

The word 'home' is an exception.

With verbs of movement, we don't use 'to'. Instead we use no preposition.

- I went home.
- She walks home every day.

With verbs that say where we are, or where an action happens, we use 'at'.

- She's at home.
- We stayed at home all day.

We can use 'from' in certain expressions: work from home, be away from home.

- He works from home on Fridays.
- She doesn't like being away from home for too long.



Prepositions with Verbs of Movement

We usually use the preposition 'in' to talk about cities and countries and we use 'at' (or sometimes 'in') to talk about buildings.

- She is in London.
- I'll meet you at the airport.

However, with verbs of movement (for example: go, come, walk, run, drive, fly, cycle, return, take a taxi, take a bus, take a train), we use the preposition 'to'. We also use 'to' with 'get'.

- She drove to London.
- We went to the airport.

There is a tricky exception: arrive. We don't use 'to' with arrive. We use 'in' or 'at'.

- She arrived in London.
- We arrived at the airport.

With 'here' and 'there' we always use no preposition.

- He stayed there.
- I went there.
- She arrived here.



Prepositions After Adjectives

With some adjectives we need a preposition before a noun or pronoun or verb+ing form.

Here is a list of some adjectives at this level that need a preposition.

Some adjectives are followed by to + infinitive or 'that' + clause. We will talk about these later.

There aren't really any proper rules to say which preposition should go with which adjective.

However, we often use 'at' with an adjective that means 'good' or 'bad' when we want to say our level of skill at a topic.

- She's good / bad **at** tennis / history / singing / English.

We do NOT use 'in' here. NOT: She's good in history / English / singing.

Bad at

I'm very bad at music.

Difficult for

This exercise is difficult for me.

Easy for

Maths is easy for him.

Excited about

I'm so excited about our holiday.

Frightened of

She was frightened of the spider.

Good at

He's really good at English.

Interested in

She's interested in music.

Married to



She's married to John.

Surprised about

We were surprised about the present.

Worried about

I'm worried about the children.



Prepositions After Verbs

Some verbs are followed by a certain preposition. Here are some of the most common verbs that need prepositions.

Belong to somebody

This coat belongs to Julie.

Depend on something / somebody

It depends on the weather.

Explain something to somebody

Please explain this answer to me.

Give something to somebody

I gave some flowers to my girlfriend.

Listen to something / somebody

Please listen to me!

Look at something / somebody

Oh! Look at the sky! It's beautiful.

Pay somebody for something

I paid the waiter for the coffee.

Talk to somebody about something

She talked to her sister about her job.

Wait for something / somebody

Could you please wait for me?

Worry about something

My mother always worries about me.