

#44 Prepositions (ESL)

Prepositions are words designed to show relationships between things and ideas. A preposition can be either a word (*of, on, between*) or a phrase (*in front of, next to, far from*). Don't let their length fool you; prepositions can be some of the trickiest words in English to get a handle on. Understanding the different categories of prepositions can help you understand which preposition to use in a given situation.

Remember that a preposition is usually followed by a noun. (Sometimes prepositions may be followed by other substantives, such as pronouns, gerunds, and infinitives.)

Example: The bus was stalled *near the bus stop*.

This prepositional phrase is working as an adverbial phrase describing where the bus was stalled. This gives more information than simply using a single-word adverb (i.e., The bus was stalled *nearby*).


Prepositions of Location

The following prepositions can be used to identify relationships in space and position:

Above	Before	Down	Off	To
Across	Behind	From	On	Toward(s)
Against	Below	In	Opposite	Under
Along	Beside	In back of	Out	Underneath
Among	Between	Inside	Outside	Up
Around	Beyond	Inside of	Over	Far (away) from
At	By	Near	Past	As (far) as
Away from	By (the edge / side of)	Next to	Throughout	In the middle of

Certain prepositions of location are not interchangeable:

<p>IN: cities, states, rooms, regions, mountains, deserts. Jenna lives <i>in</i> Denver. Room 236. the Northeast. the mountains. the desert.</p>	<p>AT: specific locations, home, the shore Stephen stopped <i>at</i> 261 Green Avenue. the Boston airport. a Denny's restaurant. home. the seashore.</p>
<p>ACROSS: expanses, bodies of water, areas of land We are going <i>across</i> the Pacific. the plains. the Missouri river. the desert.</p>	<p>ON: streets, large locations, surfaces of water Mary lives <i>on</i> a houseboat a farm. the ocean. North Street. the outskirts of town.</p>

	<h3 style="text-align: center;">Prepositions of Location</h3> <p>The woman is <i>on</i> the chair. The coffee is <i>in</i> the cup. The bag is <i>below</i> the table. The laptop is <i>next to</i> the muffin. The newspaper is <i>under</i> the calculator. The glasses are <i>on</i> her nose. The bag is leaning <i>towards</i> the chair. The planner is <i>by</i> the laptop. The bun is <i>on top of</i> her head. The shoes are <i>on</i> her feet.</p>
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Prepositions of Time

The following prepositions are used to indicate relationships of action to time:

After	During	On	Till	Up to
As (late) as	For	Since	Until	Upon
Before	In	To		

To indicate a specific point in time, use *at*, *on*, or *in*:

At six o'clock
On Monday
In 1947

To indicate the passage of time, use *from...to* or *into*

We will be open **from** Monday **to** Friday.
We will remain open **into** the night.

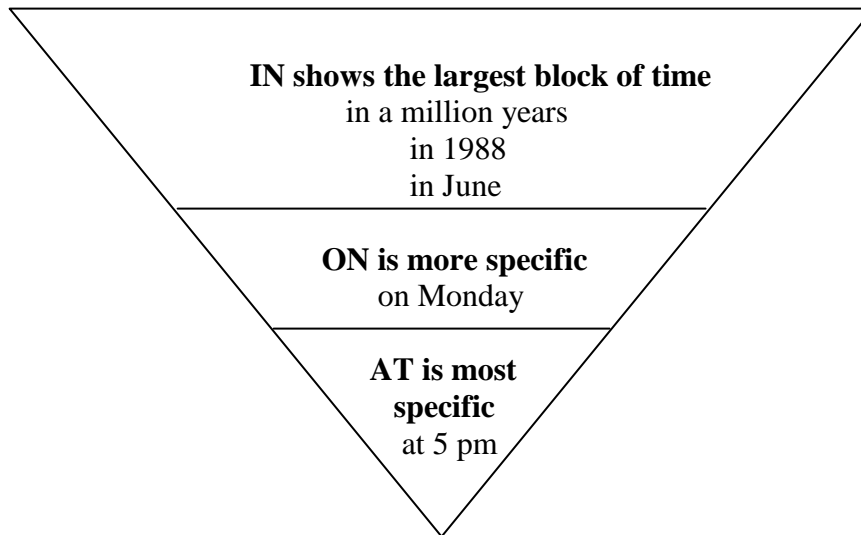
For a more general time period or time relative to a specific point, use *past*, *through*, *since*, *for* or *during*:

During the party, Jessica ate twelve cookies.
It was **past** noon when they finally arrived.
We stayed there **through** the entire show.
Since yesterday, no one has come to the store.
I slept **for** four hours last night.

There are certain expressions that use the word “in” more generally. When asked how long it will be before an event occurs, we reply “in a _____”

In a minute --- in a week --- in a month --- in a year

Remember that when using prepositions of time, “in” refers to the most general unit of time, and “at” refers to the most specific:



Prepositions That Show Relationship

A final set of prepositions shows the relationship between various ideas or elements:

1. **Of:** Shows relationship between parts and the whole
One *of* our friends has a car.
2. **Of, out of, from:** Show origin and material
Sheila is a citizen *of* Australia.
Sara is a student *from* Mexico (Her home is in Mexico).
Sara is a student *of* Mexico (She studies about Mexico).
This desk is made *of/from* wood.
We bought a basket *of* tomatoes (the basket is filled with tomatoes).
3. **For:** Shows purpose
Jen is going *for* an interview tomorrow.
Grant needs a new iPod *for* all of his music.
4. **On, about:** Show subject
This book is *on* the Revolutionary War.
Animal Planet has a show *about* vampire bats.
5. **Except, but:** Show omission
No one *but* Catherine showed up for class.
Everyone is ready *except* Bob.
6. **By, with** show an agent; **without** shows a lack of agent
The song was lead *by* Jacob
The boy tied his shoes *with* help.
The mover lifted the sofa *without* any help.