

Prepositions: A List

This list contains most of the prepositions used. It could be expanded by listing other combinations of prepositions.

1. aboard	29. beneath	57. in view of	85. respecting
2. about	30. beside	58. inasmuch as	86. round
3. above	31. besides	59. including	87. save
4. absent	32. between	60. inside	88. saving
5. according to	33. beyond	61. instead of	89. similar to
6. across	34. but	62. into	90. since
7. after	35. by	63. less	91. than
8. against	36. by the time of	64. like	92. through
9. ahead of	37. circa	65. minus	93. throughout
10. all over	38. close by	66. near	94. till
11. along	39. close to	67. near to	95. to
12. alongside	40. concerning	68. next to	96. toward or towards
13. amid or amidst	41. considering	69. notwithstanding	97. under
14. among	42. despite	70. of	98. underneath
15. around	43. down	71. off	99. unlike
16. as	44. due to	72. on	100. until
17. as of	45. during	73. on top of	101. unto
18. as to	46. except	74. onto	102. up
19. aside	47. except for	75. opposite	103. upon
20. astride	48. excepting	76. out	104. versus
21. at	49. excluding	77. out of	105. via
22. away from	50. failing	78. outside	106. wanting
23. bar	51. for	79. over	107. while
24. barring	52. from	80. past	108. with
25. because of	53. in	81. pending	109. within
26. before	54. in between	82. per	110. without
27. behind	55. in front of	83. plus	
28. below	56. in spite of	84. regarding	

preposition (prep'ʔ-zishʔn) noun Abbr. prep.

1. In some languages, a word placed before a substantive and indicating the relation of that substantive to a verb, an adjective, or another substantive, as English *at*, *by*, *in*, *to*, *from*, and *with*.
2. A word or construction similar in function to a preposition, such as *in regard to* or *concerning*.

[Middle English *preposicioun*, from Old French *preposicion*, from Latin *praepositio*, *praeposition-*, a putting before, preposition (translation of Greek *prothesis*), from *praepositus* past participle of *praepondere*, to put in front : *prae-*, pre- + *ponere*, to put.]

Usage Note: The doctrine that a preposition may not be used to end a sentence was first promulgated by Dryden, probably on the basis of a specious analogy to Latin, and was subsequently refined by 18th-century grammarians. The rule has since become one of the most venerated maxims of schoolroom grammatical lore. But sentences ending with prepositions can be found in the works of most of the great writers since the Renaissance. In fact, English syntax allows and sometimes requires final placement of the preposition. Such placement is the only possible one in sentences such as *We have much to be thankful for* or *That depends on what you believe in*. Efforts to rewrite such sentences to place the preposition elsewhere will have comically stilted results; for example: *We have much for which to be thankful* or *That depends on that in which you believe*. Even sticklers for the traditional rule can have no grounds for criticizing sentences such as *I don't know where she will end up* or *It's the most curious book I've ever run across*. In these examples, *up* and *across* are used as adverbs, not prepositions, as demonstrated by the ungrammaticality of sentences such as *I don't know up where she will end* and *It's the most curious book across which I have ever run*.

Excerpted from The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition

Six Prepositions: in, on, at, to, by, for, of

in (ɪn) preposition

- a.** Within the limits, bounds, or area of: *was hit in the face; born in the spring; a chair in the garden.* **b.** From the outside to a point within; into: *threw the letter in the wastebasket.*
- To or at a situation or condition of: *was split in two; in debt; a woman in love.*
- a.** Having the activity, occupation, or function of: *a life in politics; the officer in command.* **b.** During the act or process of: *tripped in racing for the bus.*
- a.** With the arrangement or order of: *fabric that fell in luxuriant folds; arranged to purchase the car in equal payments.* **b.** After the style or form of: *a poem in iambic pentameter.*
- With the characteristic, attribute, or property of: *a tall man in an overcoat.*
- a.** By means of: *paid in cash.* **b.** Made with or through the medium of: *a statue in bronze; a note written in German.*
- With the aim or purpose of: *followed in pursuit.*
- With reference to: *six inches in depth; has faith in your judgment.*
- Used to indicate the second and larger term of a ratio or proportion: *saved only one in ten.*

adverb

- To or toward the inside: *opened the door and stepped in.*
- To or toward a destination or goal: *The mob closed in.*
- Baseball.** To home base; so as to score: *runs batted in; singled the runner in.*
- Within a place, as of business or residence: *The manager is in before anyone else.*
- So as to include or incorporate: *Fold in the egg whites.*
- So as to occupy a position of success or favor: *campaigned hard and was voted in.*
- In a particular relationship: *got in bad with their supervisor.*

adjective

- Located inside; inner.
- Incoming; inward: *took the in bus.*
- Holding office; having power: *the in party.*
- Informal.** **a.** Currently fashionable: *the in thing to wear this season.* **b.** Concerned with or attuned to the latest fashions: *the in crowd.* See synonyms at [fashionable](#).

noun

- One that has position, influence, or power: *the ins against the outs.*
- Informal.** Influence; power: *had an in with the authorities.*

— **idiom.**

in for

Guaranteed to get or have: *You're in for a big surprise.*

in that

For the reason that.

on (ɒn, ɒn) preposition

- a.** Used to indicate position above and supported by or in contact with: *The vase is on the table. We rested on our hands and knees.* **b.** Used to indicate contact with or extent over (a surface) regardless of position: *a picture on the wall; a rash on my back.* **c.** Used to indicate location at or along: *the pasture on the south side of the river; a house on the highway.* **d.** Used to indicate proximity: *a town on the border.* **e.** Used to indicate attachment to or

suspension from: **beads on a string**. **f.** Used to indicate figurative or abstract position: **on the young side, but experienced; on her third beer; stopped on chapter two.**

2. **a.** Used to indicate actual motion toward, against, or onto: **jumped on the table; the march on Washington.** **b.** Used to indicate figurative or abstract motion toward, against, or onto: **going on six o'clock; came on the answer by accident.**
3. **a.** Used to indicate occurrence at a given time: **on July third; every hour on the hour.** **b.** Used to indicate the particular occasion or circumstance: **On entering the room, she saw him.**
4. **a.** Used to indicate the object affected by actual, perceptible action: **The spotlight fell on the actress. He knocked on the door.** **b.** Used to indicate the object affected by a figurative action: **Have pity on them.** **c.** Used to indicate the object of an action directed, tending, or moving against it: **an attack on the fortress.** **d.** Used to indicate the object of perception or thought: **gazed on the vista; meditated on his actions.**
5. Used to indicate the agent or agency of a specified action: **cut his foot on the broken glass; talked on the telephone.**
6. **a.** Used to indicate a medicine or other corrective taken or undertaken routinely: **went on a strict diet.** **b.** Used to indicate a substance that is the cause of an addiction, a habit, or an altered state of consciousness: **high on dope.**
7. Used to indicate a source or basis: **"We will reach our judgments not on intentions or on promises but on deeds and on results"** (Margaret Thatcher).
8. **a.** Used to indicate the state or process of: **on leave; on fire; on the way.** **b.** Used to indicate the purpose of: **travel on business.** **c.** Used to indicate a means of conveyance: **ride on a train.** **d.** Used to indicate availability by means of: **beer on tap; a physician on call.**
9. Used to indicate belonging to: **a nurse on the hospital staff.**
10. Used to indicate addition or repetition: **heaped error on error.**
11. **a.** Concerning; about: **a book on astronomy.** **b.** Concerning and to the disadvantage of: **We have some evidence on him.**
12. **Informal.** In one's possession; with: **I haven't a cent on me.**
13. At the expense of; compliments of: **drinks on the house.**

adverb

1. In or into a position or condition of being supported by or in contact with something: **Put the coffee on.**
2. In or into a position of being attached to or covering something: **Put your clothes on.**
3. In the direction of something: **He looked on while the ship docked.**
4. **a.** Toward or at a point lying ahead in space or time; forward: **The play moved on to the next city.** **b.** At or to a more distant point in time or space: **I'll do it later on.**
5. In a continuous course: **He worked on quietly.**
6. **a.** In or into performance or operation: **Turn on the radio.** **b.** In progress or action; in a state of activity: **The show must go on.**
7. In or at the present position or condition: **stay on; hang on.**
8. In a condition of being scheduled for or decided upon: **There is a party on tonight.**

adjective

1. Being in operation: **The television is on.**
2. **a.** Engaged in a given function or activity, such as a vocal or dramatic role: **You're on in five minutes!** **b.** Under or behaving as if under observation: **A minister is always on.**
3. **Slang.** Functioning or performing at a high degree of competence or energy: **The goalie is really on.**
4. **a.** Planned; intended: **Our calendar is open; we have nothing on for this weekend.** **b.** Happening; taking place: **The parade is on.**

— **idiom.**

be on to Slang

To be aware of or have information about: **You'll never deceive us again; we're on to you.**

on and off

Intermittently.

on and on

Without stopping; continuously.

Usage Note: To indicate motion toward a position, both **on** and **onto** can be used: **The cat jumped on the table. The cat jumped onto the table.** **Onto** is more specific, however, in indicating that the motion was initiated from an outside point. **He wandered onto the battlefield** means that he began his wandering at some point off the battlefield. **He wandered on the battlefield** may mean that his wandering began on the battlefield. · In constructions where **on** is an adverb attached to a verb, it should not be joined with **to** to form the single word **onto**: **move on to** (not **onto**) **new subjects**; **hold on to** (not **onto**) **our gains**. · In their uses to indicate spatial relations, **on** and **upon** are often interchangeable: **It was resting on** (or **upon**) **two supports**. **She took it on** (or **upon**) **herself to finish the project**. **We saw a finch light on** (or **upon**) **a bough**. To indicate a relation between two things, however, instead of between an action and an end point, **upon** cannot always be used: **Hand me the book on** (not **upon**) **the table**. **It was the only town on** (not **upon**) **the main line**. Similarly, **upon** cannot always be used in place of **on** when the relation is not spatial: **He wrote a book on** (not **upon**) **alchemy**. **She will be here on** (not **upon**) **Tuesday**.

at

at (ät; ət *when unstressed*) *preposition*

- 1. a.** In or near the area occupied by; in or near the location of: **at the market; at our destination**. **b.** In or near the position of: **always at my side; at the center of the page**.
- 2.** To or toward the direction or location of, especially for a specific purpose: **Questions came at us from all sides**.
- 3.** Present during; attending: **at the dance**.
- 4.** Within the interval or span of: **at the dinner hour; at a glance**.
- 5.** In the state or condition of: **at peace with one's conscience**.
- 6.** In the activity or field of: **skilled at playing chess; good at math**.
- 7.** To or using the rate, extent, or amount of; to the point of: **at 30 cents a pound; at high speed; at 20 paces; at 350°F**.
- 8.** On, near, or by the time or age of: **at three o'clock; at 72 years of age**.
- 9.** On account of; because of: **rejoice at a victory**.
- 10.** By way of; through: **exited at the rear gate**.
- 11.** In accord with; following: **at my request**.
- 12.** Dependent upon: **at the mercy of the court**.
- 13.** Occupied with: **at work**.

— *idiom*.

at it *Informal*

Engaged in verbal or physical conflict; arguing or fighting: **The neighbors are at it again**.

to

to (t□; tə *when unstressed*) *preposition*

- 1. a.** In a direction toward so as to reach: **went to the city**. **b.** Towards: **turned to me**.
- 2. a.** Reaching as far as: **The ocean water was clear all the way to the bottom**. **b.** To the extent or degree of: **loved him to distraction**. **c.** With the resultant condition of: **nursed her back to health**.
- 3.** Toward a given state: **helping minority women to economic equality**.
- 4.** In contact with; against: **their faces pressed to the windows**.
- 5.** In front of: **stood face to face**.
- 6.** Used to indicate appropriation or possession: **looked for the top to the jar**.
- 7.** Concerning; regarding: **waiting for an answer to my letter**.
- 8.** In a particular relationship with: **The brook runs parallel to the road**.
- 9.** As an accompaniment or a complement of: **danced to the tune**.
- 10.** Composing; constituting: **two cups to a pint**.
- 11.** In accord with: **job responsibilities suited to her abilities**.

12. As compared with: **a book superior to his others.**
13. a. Before: **The time is ten to five.** b. Up till; until: **worked from nine to five.**
14. a. For the purpose of: **went out to lunch.** b. In honor of: **a toast to the queen.**
15. a. Used before a verb to indicate the infinitive: **I'd like to go.** b. Used alone when the infinitive is understood: **Go if you want to.**
16. a. Used to indicate the relationship of a verb with its complement: **refer to a dictionary; refer me to a dictionary.** b. Used with a reflexive pronoun to indicate exclusivity or separateness: **had the plane to ourselves.**

adverb

1. In one direction; toward a person or thing: **owls with feathers wrong end to.**
 2. Into a shut or closed position: **pushed the door to.**
 3. Into a state of consciousness: **The patient came to.**
 4. Into a state of action or attentiveness: **sat down for lunch and fell to.**
 5. **Nautical.** Into the wind.
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by

by (bī) **preposition**

1. Close to; next to: **the window by the door.**
2. With the use or help of; through: **We came by the back road.**
3. Up to and beyond; past: **We drove by the house.**
4. In the period of; during: **sleeping by day.**
5. Not later than: **by 5:30 P.M.**
6. a. In the amount of: **letters by the thousands.** b. To the extent of: **shorter by two inches.**
7. a. According to: **played by the rules.** b. With respect to: **siblings by blood.**
8. In the name of: **swore by the Bible to tell the truth.**
9. Through the agency or action of: **was killed by a bullet.**
10. Used to indicate a succession of specified individuals, groups, or quantities: **One by one they left. They were persuaded little by little.**
11. a. Used in multiplication and division: **Multiply 4 by 6 to get 24.** b. Used with measurements: **a room 12 by 18 feet.** c. Used to express direction with points of the compass: **south by southeast.**

adverb

1. On hand; nearby: **Stand by.**
 2. Aside; away: **We put it by for later.**
 3. Up to, alongside, and past: **The car raced by.**
 4. Into the past: **as years go by.**
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for

for (fôr; fær *when unstressed*) **preposition**

1. a. Used to indicate the object, aim, or purpose of an action or activity: **trained for the ministry; put the house up for sale; plans to run for senator.** b. Used to indicate a destination: **headed off for town.**
2. Used to indicate the object of a desire, an intention, or a perception: **had a nose for news; eager for fame and fortune.**
3. a. Used to indicate the recipient or beneficiary of an action: **prepared lunch for us.** b. On behalf of: **spoke for all the members.** c. In favor of: **Were they for or against the proposal?** d. In place of: **a substitute for eggs.**
4. a. Used to indicate equivalence or equality: **paid ten dollars for a ticket; repeated the conversation word for**

- word. b.** Used to indicate correlation or correspondence: ***took two steps back for every step forward.***
5. **a.** Used to indicate amount, extent, or duration: ***a bill for five dollars; walked for miles; stood in line for several minutes.*** **b.** Used to indicate a specific time: ***had an appointment for two o'clock.***
6. **a.** As being: ***take for granted; mistook me for the librarian.*** **b.** Used to indicate an actual or implied listing or choosing: ***For one thing, we can't afford it.***
7. As a result of; because of: ***jumped for joy.***
8. Used to indicate appropriateness or suitability: ***It will be for the judge to decide.***
9. Notwithstanding; despite: ***For all the problems, it was a valuable experience.***
10. **a.** As regards; concerning: ***a stickler for neatness.*** **b.** Considering the nature or usual character of: ***was spry for his advanced age.*** **c.** In honor of: ***named for her grandmother.***
- conj.**
Because; since.
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Of of (ʊv, ɔv; əv when unstressed) preposition

1. Derived or coming from; originating at or from: ***men of the north.***
2. Caused by; resulting from: ***a death of tuberculosis.***
3. Away from; at a distance from: ***a mile east of here.***
4. So as to be separated or relieved from: ***robbed of one's dignity; cured of distemper.***
5. From the total or group comprising: ***give of one's time; two of her friends; most of the cases.***
6. Composed or made from: ***a dress of silk.***
7. Associated with or adhering to: ***a man of your religion.***
8. Belonging or connected to: ***the rungs of a ladder.***
9. **a.** Possessing; having: ***a person of honor.***
b. On one's part: ***very nice of you.***
10. Containing or carrying: ***a basket of groceries.***
11. Specified as; named or called: ***a depth of ten feet; the Garden of Eden.***
12. Centering on; directed toward: ***a love of horses.***
13. Produced by; issuing from: ***products of the vine.***
14. Characterized or identified by: ***a year of famine.***
15. **a.** With reference to; about: ***think highly of her proposals; will speak of it later.***
b. In respect to: ***slow of speech.***
16. Set aside for; taken up by: ***a day of rest.***
17. Before; until: ***five minutes of two.***
18. During or on a specified time: ***of recent years.***
19. By: ***beloved of the family.***
20. Used to indicate an appositive: ***that idiot of a driver.***
21. *Archaic.* On: ***"A plague of all cowards, I say"*** (Shakespeare).

Usage Note: Grammarians have sometimes condemned categorically the so-called double genitive construction, as in ***a friend of my father's; a book of mine.*** The construction is well supported by literary precedent, however, and serves a useful purpose. Thus there is no substitute for the double genitive in a sentence such as ***That's the only friend of yours that I've ever met,*** since sentences such as ***That's your only friend that I've ever met*** and ***That's your only friend, whom I've ever met*** are obviously impossible.

Three Prepositions: At, To, Of

- 1) a basket _____ groceries
- 2) a book superior _____ his others
- 3) a depth _____ ten feet
- 4) a dress _____ silk
- 5) a love _____ horses
- 6) a man _____ your religion
- 7) a mile east _____ here
- 8) a person _____ honor
- 9) a toast _____ the star
- 10) a year _____ famine
- 11) _____ 20 paces
- 12) always _____ my side
- 13) on sale _____ 30 cents a pound
- 14) bake _____ 350°F
- 15) heat oven _____ 350°F
- 16) cured _____ cancer
- 17) _____ 72 years _____ age
- 18) danced _____ the tune
- 19) _____ a glance
- 20) exited _____ the rear gate
- 21) _____ high speed
- 22) five minutes _____ two
- 23) _____ my request
- 24) give _____ one's time
- 25) good _____ math
- 26) _____ our destination
- 27) had the plane _____ ourselves
- 28) helping minorities _____ economic equality
- 29) _____ peace with one's conscience
- 30) job responsibilities suited _____ her abilities
- 31) _____ the center _____ the page
- 32) loved him _____ distraction
- 33) _____ the dinner hour

Fill in the blanks with *at, to, or of*.

- 34) men _____ the north
- 35) most _____ the cases
- 36) go _____ the market
- 37) nursed her back _____ health
- 38) _____ the mercy _____ the court
- 39) stay _____ the market all day
- 40) _____ three o'clock
- 41) products _____ the vine
- 42) pushed the door _____
- 43) _____ work
- 44) Questions came _____ us from all sides
- 45) rejoice _____ a victory
- 46) robbed _____ one's dignity
- 47) say _____ them
- 48) refer me _____ a dictionary
- 49) skilled _____ playing chess
- 50) slow _____ speech
- 51) stood face _____ face
- 52) that idiot _____ a driver
- 53) The brook runs parallel _____ the road
- 54) the Garden _____ Eden
- 55) The neighbors are _____ it again
- 56) The water was clear all the way _____ the bottom
- 57) The patient came _____
- 58) the rungs _____ a ladder
- 59) The time is ten _____ five
- 60) their faces pressed _____ the windows
- 61) think highly _____ her proposals
- 62) turned _____ me
- 63) two _____ her friends
- 64) two cups _____ a pint
- 65) That was very nice _____ you.
- 66) waiting for an answer _____ my letter
- 67) went _____ the city
- 68) went out _____ lunch
- 69) will speak _____ it later
- 70) worked from nine _____ five

Vocabulary: Two Prepositions in Various Senses

Fill in the blanks with the appropriate preposition. You only need two prepositions. Once you find one of them, you have the answer to about half the blanks. The other one will, of course, fill in the rest. Note: In a few cases, either preposition is correct.

1. a bill _____ five dollars
2. a book superior _____ his others
3. a stickler _____ neatness
4. a substitute _____ eggs
5. danced _____ the tune
6. _____ all the problems, it was a valuable experience.
7. had a nose _____ news
8. had an appointment _____ two o'clock
9. had the plane _____ ourselves
10. headed off _____ town
11. helping minority women _____ economic equality
12. It will be _____ the judge _____ decide.
13. jumped _____ joy
14. mistook me _____ the librarian
15. named _____ her grandmother
16. nursed her back _____ health
17. paid ten dollars _____ a ticket
18. prepared lunch _____ us
19. refer _____ a dictionary; refer me _____ a dictionary
20. repeated the conversation word _____ word
21. spoke _____ all the members
22. stood face _____ face
23. stood in line _____ several minutes
24. take _____ granted
25. The brook runs parallel _____ the road
26. The ocean water was clear all the way _____ the bottom
27. The time is ten _____ five
28. their faces pressed _____ the windows
29. trained _____ the ministry
30. two cups _____ a pint
31. waiting _____ an answer _____ my letter
32. walked _____ miles
33. was spry _____ his advanced age
34. went _____ the city
35. worked from nine _____ five