

LEARNING ABOUT PREPOSITIONS

1

What are prepositions?

Prepositions tell us the time, direction or location of something.

Billy walks to school.

Billy puts on his coat.

Billy sits in class.

2

What sort of prepositions are there?

Prepositions come in three types:

Prepositions of time

At	School starts at 9 o'clock.
On	The holidays start on Monday.
In	We will be leaving in 10 minutes.
For	Mary-Jane waited for half an hour.
From	Billy was kept in from 3.30 till 4.00 for being naughty.
Since	They have lived there since 2005.
Until	I am staying home until I get over this cold.
After	We are meeting after school.
During	During the summer, we like to go to the beach.

Pic of Billy being naughty

RULE: The preposition must always be directly connected to a noun or number (which expresses the time). ('After school' really means 'after the end of school'.)

3

Prepositions of direction

To	We are going to the park to kick the football.
From	Thui is from Vietnam.
Off	We are just about to take off .
Out of	Coming out of school, we met our friends.
Towards	Let's walk towards the shops.
Into	Let's go into class early.
Onto	Billy accepted the dare and climbed onto the roof.

Up	Going up in a lift is very exciting.
Down	Come down this minute!
Along	While strolling along the jetty we saw some dolphins.
Across	Walking across the road requires real concentration.
Over	Let's go over to the shops, and get some food.
Round	Running round the corner, Billy ran into the teacher.
Through	To travel through time would be very interesting.

Pic of Billy on the roof

HINT: The prepositions 'up', 'down' and 'off' can be used on their own (without an explanatory noun). All other prepositions in this list must have a noun or pronoun (to which they refer).

4

Prepositions of location

In	There is lots of food in the pantry.
Inside	Come inside a have a drink.
Outside	We are meeting outside the school gates.
Over	The car drove over the bridge.
Above	A plane is flying high above us.
Below	The wreck is below the bridge.
Between	Their house is between the park and the school.
Under	Don't stand under a tree during a storm.
Behind	The school is behind my house.
In front of	There's a good parking spot in front of the school.
Opposite	Her place is opposite the school.
Near	In winter, it's nice to sit near a good fire.
At	We are meeting at the bus stop.
On	The food is on the table.
On top of	The keys are on top of the fridge.
Out	The garbage bin is just out the back door.
Out of	It's time to take the cake out of the oven.
By	We walked by the shop today, but it was closed.
With	We have a new car with a sunroof.

Pic of Billy standing under a tree

HINT: The prepositions 'inside', 'outside' and 'opposite' can be used with or without explanatory words (The park is opposite.). All other prepositions in this list must have a noun or pronoun (to which they refer).

5

Because prepositions are **dependent** on other words in the sentence to give them sense, they cannot be used on their own. They should **not** be put at the end of the sentence.

RULE: Do not put a preposition at the end of a sentence.

Here is why.

Child: What did you bring that book that I don't like to be read to out of up for? (*Pic of child confronting adult with book*)

Such a sentence is incredibly confusing because all the prepositions are all jumbled up.

6

Unnecessary prepositions

Most people find prepositions easy enough to use. But there are a few common mistakes, which should be avoided. Here they are:

The book fell off **of** the table.

Wrong! The 'of' is unnecessary and repetitive.

The book fell off the table.

Where did she go **to**?

Wrong! The 'to' is clumsy (it is implied anyway by the verb go).

Where did she go?

Where is your house **at**?

Wrong! The 'at' is US slang, and grammatically incorrect.

Where is your house?

I met **up with** the new girl at recess.

Wrong! The two prepositions together are awkward.

I met the new girl at recess.