PREPOSITIONS

“The plane flew above the cloud, behind the cloud, around the cloud, below the cloud, beneath the cloud, beside the cloud, beyond the cloud, into the cloud, near the cloud, outside the cloud, over the cloud, past the cloud, through the cloud, toward the cloud, under the cloud, and finally dived underneath the cloud.”

A preposition is a word that shows the relationship between two things. In the example above, the prepositions show the relationships between a plane and a cloud. Below is a list of most common prepositions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>about</th>
<th>beside</th>
<th>inside</th>
<th>to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>above</td>
<td>besides</td>
<td>like</td>
<td>toward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>across</td>
<td>between</td>
<td>near</td>
<td>under</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after</td>
<td>beyond</td>
<td>of</td>
<td>underneath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>against</td>
<td>by</td>
<td>off</td>
<td>until</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>along</td>
<td>despite</td>
<td>on</td>
<td>up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>among</td>
<td>down</td>
<td>out</td>
<td>with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>around</td>
<td>during</td>
<td>outside</td>
<td>within</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at</td>
<td>except</td>
<td>over</td>
<td>without</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before</td>
<td>for</td>
<td>past</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>behind</td>
<td>from</td>
<td>since</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>below</td>
<td>in</td>
<td>through</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beneath</td>
<td>into</td>
<td>throughout</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some prepositions consist of more than one word. Here is a list of the most common multiword prepositions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>along with</th>
<th>in place of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>because of</td>
<td>in spite of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due to</td>
<td>instead of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>except for</td>
<td>on account of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in addition to</td>
<td>out of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in case of</td>
<td>up to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in front of</td>
<td>with the exception of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prepositions for Time, Place, and Introducing Objects

Time

- **On** is used with days.

  I will see you on Monday.
The week begins on Sunday.

- **At** is used with noon, night, midnight, and with the time of day.

  My plane leaves at noon.
The movie starts at 6 p.m.

- **In** is used with other parts of the day, with months, with years, with seasons.

  He likes to read in the afternoon.
The days are long in August.
The book was published in 1999.
The flowers will bloom in spring.

- **Since, for, by, from—to, from—until, during, (with)in** – expresses extended time.

  She has been gone since yesterday. (She left yesterday and has not returned.)
  I'm going to Paris for two weeks. (I will spend two weeks there.)
  The movie showed from August to/until October. (Beginning in August, ending in October.)
  I watch TV during the evening. (For some period of time in the evening.)
  We must finish the project within a year. (No longer than a year.)

Place

- **In** – describes the point itself.

  There is a wasp in the room.

- **Inside** – expresses something contained.

  Put the present inside the box.

- **On** – talks about the surface.

  I left your keys on the table.

- **At** – talks about a general vicinity.

  She was waiting at the corner.
- **Over, above** – when the object is higher than a point.

He threw the ball over the roof.
Hang that picture above the couch.

- **Under, underneath, beneath, below** – when the object is lower than a point.

The rabbit burrowed under the ground.
The child hid underneath the blanket.
We relaxed in the shade beneath the branches.
The valley is below sea-level.

- **Near, by, next to, between, among, opposite** – when the object is close to a point.

She lives near the school.
There is an ice cream shop by the store.
An oak tree grows next to my house.
The house is between Elm Street and Maple Street.
I found my pen lying among the books.
The bathroom is opposite the kitchen.

**Introduce objects of verbs**

- **At** – with verbs glance, laugh, look, rejoice, smile, and stare

She took a quick glance at her reflection.
(exception with mirror: She took a quick glance in the mirror.)
You didn’t laugh at his joke.
I’m looking at the computer monitor.
We rejoiced at his safe rescue.
That pretty girl smiled at you.
Stop staring at me.

- **Of** – with verbs approve, consist, and smell

I don’t approve of his speech.
My contribution to the article consists of many pages.
He came home smelling of alcohol.

- **Of/About** – with verbs dream and think

I dream of finishing college in four years.
Can you think of a number between one and ten?
I am thinking about this problem.

- **For** – with verbs call, hope, look, wait, watch, and wish

Did someone call for a taxi?
He hopes for a raise in salary next year.
I’m looking for my keys.
We’ll wait for her here.
You go buy the tickets, and I'll watch for the train. If you wish for an 'A' in this class, you must work hard.

Frequently Misused Prepositions

Prepositions may sometimes be confused because of slang and the general informality of talk. Here are some frequently misused prepositions.

- **beside, besides.** Beside means next to, whereas besides means in addition.
  
  The comb is beside the brush. 
  Besides planning the trip, she is also getting the tickets.

- **between, among.** Generally, between is used when two items are involved; with three or more, among is preferred.
  
  Between you and me, he is among friends.

- **due to.** Due to should not be used as a preposition meaning because of.
  
  Because of (not due to) his speeding, we were all ticketed.

- **inside of.** The of is always unnecessary.
  
  Stay inside the house. 
  The man stayed outside (not outside of) the post office.