

# Prepositions in English

## What is a preposition?

By definition, a preposition is a word used before a noun or pronoun to mark its relation to the rest of the sentence, such as "to" in "I went to the beach."

## 1. Common Prepositions

Here is a list of prepositions that are most common. They refer to movement or placement.

- about
- above
- across
- after
- against
- among
- around
- at
- before
- behind
- below
- beside
- between
- by
- down
- during
- for
- from
- in
- inside
- into
- near
- of
- off
- on
- out
- over
- through
- to
- toward
- under
- up
- with

## 2. Less common prepositions

There are many other prepositions that you might never have considered prepositions. Here is a list of prepositions that deserve to be recognized alongside the common examples.

- aboard
- along
- amid
- as
- beneath
- beyond
- but
- concerning

- considering
- despite
- except
- following
- like
- minus
- next
- onto
- opposite
- outside
- past
- per
- plus
- regarding
- round
- save
- since
- than
- till
- underneath
- unlike
- until
- upon
- versus
- via
- within
- without

### 3. Prepositional phrases

Because prepositions are typically followed by nouns, you'll often encounter them in phrases.

What is a prepositional phrase?

Prepositional phrases start with a preposition and end with a noun, although several different types of words can come in between them. Because there are endless possibilities, there is no comprehensive prepositional phrase list, but here are several examples.

#### Prepositional phrase examples

##### preposition + noun

after midnight

since yesterday

##### preposition + proper noun

on Mount Everest

outside Buckingham Palace

##### preposition + article + noun

under the table

along a route

##### preposition + adjectives + noun

before your first day

unlike the last English paper

A noun in a prepositional phrase is known as the **object of the preposition**.

### 4. Prepositions and Verbs

Sometimes, you might see a preposition followed by a verb. This can only happen if the verb is a **gerund**, which is a verb ending in -ing that denotes an action or state and thus functions as a noun in a sentence.

Prepositional phrase examples with gerunds

She beat me home **by running** the whole way.

I managed not to fall **during ice skating** for once!

**Between cooking and cleaning**, I wasn't able to get anything else done today.

And then there's "to"—a tricky proposition that often appears with verbs. However, when "to" is followed by a verb, it is called an **infinitive**, not a prepositional phrase. An infinitive is an unconjugated form of a verb.

Infinitive examples

to be

to run

to drive

## 5. Prepositions and Idioms

There are many prepositional phrases that make up idioms. Here are just some examples:

across the street

along the way

at any rate

at last

behind the scenes

beside the point

beyond me

by accident

by the way

down the street

down to the wire

for a living

for sure

in any case

in common

in fact

next in line

of course

on demand

on sale

on time

out of the blue

out of the ordinary

under control

under the circumstances

up in the air

with open arms

with regard to

within reason