



PREPOSITIONS

A preposition is a word used before a noun to show its relation to some other word in the sentence.

Types/Uses

Examples

Prepositions of Place or Position

- To indicate the position of a subject
- The cat is sleeping **under** the table.
- The post office is **behind** the school.
- She was leaning **against** the tree when the boy cycled by.
- She sits **beside** Praveena in class.

Prepositions of Direction

- To indicate where something is going or moving to
- The dog ran **across** the road.
- She walked **towards** the boy and carried him in her arms.
- The cat fell **off** the table.
- Bryan turned **around** when the teacher called his name.
- He quickly put the books **into** the bag and ran **off**.

Types/Uses

Examples

Prepositions of Time

- To indicate when something happens

- They left **after** the game.
- The boys arrived **before** you did.
- A fight broke out **during** the match.
- Sheila has been living in Ipoh **since** 1971.
- She managed to finish the run **within** the time allocated.
- Siti slogged over the stove **for** two hours.

Prepositions of Purpose

- To indicate the purpose of an action

- The man was taken to the police station **for** questioning.
- The boy begged the teacher **for** an extra mark so that he could pass his exam.

Common Errors

in, into

- *In* shows a position or place.
- *Into* shows a movement from one position to another.

- The boy is **in** the room.
- He went **into** the room to take his bag.

between, among

- *Between* is used for only two things.
- *Among* is used to compare more than two.

- I sit **between** Yvonne and Cheng Wun in class.
- Siti is the tallest **among** the three sisters.

by, with

- *By* is usually used with people or a means of transport.
- *With* is used for instruments.

- He was questioned **by** the police.
- Shanmugan goes to school **by** bus.
- He sliced the potato **with** a knife.

beside, besides

- *Beside* means next to
- *Besides* means *in addition to*.

- I sit **beside** Gowry in class.
- **Besides** listening to English songs, we can read more English books to improve our language.

at, in

- *In* usually refers to a larger space of time, or place.
- *At* is more precise.

- Mr Soo went home **at** 6 o'clock **in** the evening.
- His house is **at** Lorong Tupai **in** Taman Selesa.

Exercise 1

Complete the following with suitable one-word prepositions.

- 1 Pancho Villa was born _____ 1877 and died
_____ 1923. He was a Mexican bandit who joined forces
_____ other Mexicans _____ fight the
dictatorship _____ Porfirio Diaz. He remained
_____ the army even _____ the revolution. After

1914, Villa governed the state _____ Chihuahua, but continued his rebellion _____ the new governor of Mexico. He was assassinated _____ his ranch _____ 1923.

- 2 The audience cheered as the artist walked _____ the stage. She removed the microphone _____ its stand and walked _____ the centre _____ the stage. The moment she started _____ sing, the crowd cheered again. They clapped and cheered _____ the rhythm.
- 3 Hundreds of children were seated _____ the floor painting their favourite cartoon character. Most _____ them were so deep _____ concentration that they did not bother _____ collect their drink coupons. They were trying _____ complete their drawing _____ the time allotted _____ them.

Exercise 2

Complete the following dialogues with suitable prepositions.

- 1 Anita : When do we have to hand _____ our project?
Samsiah : It is due next week.
- 2 Julia : How does this tape recorder work?
Moi Sin : Push this button to turn it _____ and push that button to shut it _____.
- 3 Kee Seng : May I borrow your dictionary?
Mohd. : Sure. But please be sure to put it _____ the shelf after you've finished.
- 4 Mani : I need to talk to Kamariah.
Susi : Why don't you call her _____? She's probably at home.
- 5 Ella : Are you here to apply for a job?
Siti : Yes.
Ella : Here is an application form. Fill it _____ and then give it _____ me when you have finished.
- 6 Mum : Don't forget to turn the lights _____ before you go to bed.
Son : All right.

- 7 Samy : How was your holiday _____ Pulau Tioman?
Muthu : I had a great time.
Samy : When did you get back _____ Pulau Tioman?
Muthu : A few days ago. I had planned _____ stay a little longer, but I ran _____ of money.
- 8 Teacher : Omar, would you please pass these papers _____ the rest of the class?
Omar : I'd be happy _____, teacher.
- 9 Din : How do you spell 'occasionally'?
Mat : I'm not sure. You'd better look it _____ in your dictionary.
- 10 Gopal : How do you get _____ with your roommate?
Siva : Fine. He's a nice guy.

Exercise 3

Complete the following proverbs with suitable prepositions.

- 1 Birds _____ a feather flock together.
- 2 People who live _____ glass houses shouldn't throw stones.
- 3 A man may lead a horse _____ water, but he cannot make it drink.
- 4 Charity begins _____ home.
- 5 Don't cry _____ spilt milk.
- 6 Don't judge a book _____ its cover.
- 7 Don't put all your eggs _____ one basket.
- 8 A jack of all trades is a master _____ none.
- 9 Look _____ you leap.
- 10 A stitch _____ time saves nine.
- 11 There is no smoke _____ fire.
- 12 Time and tide wait _____ no man.