

# PREPOSITIONS

## Basic Uses of Prepositions

### INTRODUCTION

A preposition shows a relationship between its object and other words in a sentence. The preposition may be in the form of one word (at, by, in, on, etc.) or in the form of a phrase that functions as a unit (in front of, by way of, etc.).

Some of the relationships that prepositions express are *place or position*, *direction*, *time*, *manner*, and *agent*.

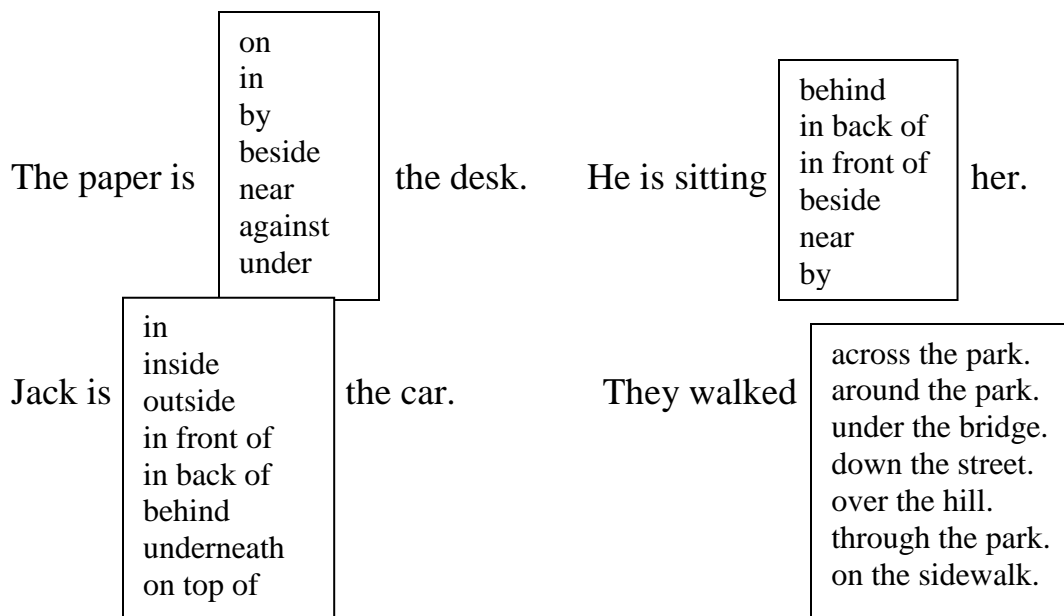
The book is on the desk.	(place or position)
The boy ran toward the house.	(direction)
The man arrived at ten o'clock.	(time)
He travels by train.	(manner)
The book was written by him.	(agent)

A preposition + an object forms a *phrase*. This kind of phrase usually functions as a modifier (adjective or verb).

The report of the meeting was read.	(adjective)
We go to class at ten o'clock.	(adverb)

### PREPOSITIONS of PLACE or POSITION

The following sentences and illustrations show some of the relationships of place or position expressed by various prepositions:



**77b.** Below is a list of some prepositions that indicate relationships of place or position:

1. at Elizabeth is **at** the store.  
Is Mary **at** home?
2. to Elizabeth went **to** the store.  
from Mr. MacDonald is **from** Scotland.
3. in Mr. Brown is sitting **in** the leather chair **in** the lobby.  
on Put a stamp **on** the envelope.  
Please sit **on** the sofa.
4. by The matches are over there **by** the cigarettes.  
beside The napkin is placed **beside** the plate.  
near They are sitting **near** the window.  
against Don't lean **against** the stove.
5. over Our apartment is directly **over** yours.  
under A plane flew **over** our house at noon.  
beneath The box is **under** the table.  
underneath The closet is **beneath** the stairs.  
on top of Put a pad **underneath** the rug.  
The carpenter is **on top of** the house.
6. behind The chair is **behind** the desk.  
in back of John is standing **in back of** Harry.  
in front of There is a car parked **in front of** the house.
7. up I saw Mr. Jones walking **up** the street.  
down There is a service station about two miles **down** the road.
8. across They live **across** the street from us.  
Around Let's take a walk **around**

## IN

- a. Idea of enclosure; something or being inside  
The pencil is in the drawer.  
The teacher is in the classroom.
- b. in + city  
Carol lives in Chicago.
- c. in + state  
Carbondale is in Illinois.
- d. in + country  
I arrived in the United States three weeks ago.

## AT

- a. at + specific place  
My plane landed at Kennedy Airport.  
Harry is at Alice's party.
- b. at + addresses with numbers  
He lives at 509 South Wall Street.

## ON

- a. on + specific street  
I live on Main Street.
- b. on + surface  
The book is on the table.  
Your shoes are on the floor.  
The students are going to meet on campus.

## TIME

### IN

- a. in + month  
He arrived here in February.
- b. in + year  
Lincoln was born in 1809.
- c. in + part of a day  
I don't like to get up in the morning.
- d. in + season  
It snows in winter.

### AT

- a. at + specific time  
Grammar class begins at 12:10.  
My classes end at 3:30.  
I eat lunch at noon.  
I go to bed at midnight.

### ON

- a. on + days of the week  
I sleep late on Saturdays.  
He goes to church on Sunday.  
I hate to go to work on Monday.
- b. on + complete date  
He was born on July 19, 1957.