



Meaning of **about** in English



about

preposition

US /əˈbaʊt/ UK /əˈbaʊt/

about preposition (CONNECTED WITH)



A1

on the subject of, or connected with:

- *What's that book about?*
- *a film about the Spanish Civil War*
- *We were talking/laughing about Sophie.*
- *He's always **going on** about what a great job he has.*
- *I'm worried about David.*
- *I really don't know what all the fuss is about.*
- *I wish you'd **do something** about (= take action to solve the problem of) your bedroom - it's a real mess.*
- *What didn't you like about the play?*
- ***There's something** about her attitude that worries me.*
- ***There's something** special about him (= in his character).*
- *"Is that your car?" "Yes, **what** about it?" (= Why are you asking me?)*

— **Thesaurus: synonyms, antonyms, and examples**

to be about something

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concern *The film concerns the complicated nature of marriage.*

cover *We will cover the passive voice later in the course.*

deal with *We will deal with the use of antidepressants in chapter three.*

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+ Thesaurus: synonyms, antonyms, and examples

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about *preposition* (NO ORDER)



mainly UK

(US usually **around**)

positioned around a place, often without a clear purpose or order:

- *Their belongings were flung about the room.*

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about *preposition* (POSITION)



UK formal

in a particular place:

- *Do you have such a thing as a pen about **you/your person**? (= Do you have a pen?)*





Grammar

About

About is a preposition or an adverb. ...

About as a preposition

The most common meaning of about as a preposition is 'on the subject of' or 'connected with': ...

About as an adverb

We use about as an adverb when we talk about time, number and quantity. About makes the time, number or quantity less specific and more approximate: ...

Be about to

We use the modal expression be about to as an adjective in the modal expression be about to to ... soon in the future: ...



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A1

a little more or less than the stated number or amount:

- *about six feet tall*
- *about two months ago*
- *"What time are you leaving?" "About five."*

+ Thesaurus: synonyms and examples



+ SMART Vocabulary: related words and phrases

about *adverb* (ALMOST)



almost:

- *We're about ready to leave.*
- *Well, I think **that's** about **it** for now (= we have almost finished what we are doing for the present).*

+ Thesaurus: synonyms, antonyms, and examples

+ SMART Vocabulary: related words and phrases

about *adverb* (ALL DIRECTIONS)



B2 mainly UK

(US usually **around**)

in many different directions:

- *They heard someone moving about outside.*
- *I've been running about all morning trying to find you.*

+ SMART Vocabulary: related words and phrases





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about *adverb* (NO ORDER)



B2 mainly UK

(US usually **around**)

positioned around a place, often without a clear purpose or order:

- *She always leaves her clothes lying about on the floor.*

+ SMART Vocabulary: related words and phrases

about *adverb* (PLACE)



mainly UK

(US usually **around**)

in or near a place:

- *Is John about (= somewhere near)?*
- *There's a lot of flu about (= many people have it) at the moment.*

+ SMART Vocabulary: related words and phrases

Grammar

About

About is a preposition or an adverb. ...





About as an adverb

We use *about* as an adverb when we talk about time, number and quantity. *About* makes the time, number or quantity less specific and more approximate: ...

Be about to

We use the modal expression *be about to* as an adjective in the modal expression *be about to* to refer to something that will happen very soon in the future: ...



about

adjective

US /əˈbaʊt/ UK /əˈbaʊt/

about adjective (INTENDING)

▶ be about to do something



B1

to be going to do something very soon:

- *I was about to leave when Mark arrived.*

[See more](#)

Grammar

Be about to

We use the modal expression *be about to* as an adjective in the modal expression *be about to* to refer to something that will happen very soon in the future: ...

Be able to

Be able to is like *can*. We use it to talk about abilities. We often use it in places where it is not possible to use *can*. For example, it isn't possible to use *can* after another modal verb: ...

Be about to





(Definition of **about** from the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus © Cambridge University Press)

about | INTERMEDIATE ENGLISH

about

preposition

US /əˈbaʊt/

about **preposition** (CONNECTED WITH)



on the subject of; connected with:

- *"What's that book about?" "It's about the Civil War."*
- *I don't know what all the fuss is about.*
- *There's something about her attitude that worries me.*

Idiom

(it's) about time



about

adverb [not gradable]

US /əˈbaʊt/

about **adverb** [not gradable] (APPROXIMATELY)



a little more or less than a specific number; approximately:

- *He's about six feet tall.*
- *It happened about two months ago.*
- *I've had just about enough of your complaining (= I do not want to hear any more).*





about

adjective [+ to infinitive; not gradable]

US /əˈbaʊt/

about adjective [+ to infinitive; not gradable] (INTENDING)



almost ready to do something, or intending to do something soon:

- *He looked as if he was about to burst into tears.*
- *I'm not about to apologize to him.*



about

preposition, adjective, adverb [not gradable]

US /əˈbaʊt/

(also **around**)

about preposition, adjective, adverb [not gradable] (IN THIS PLACE)



positioned or moving in or near a place:

- *Reporters stood about, waiting for more news.*

(Definition of **about** from the [Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary](#) © Cambridge University Press)

EXAMPLES of **about**

about

In these days the word "maintenance" covers quite a lot: apparently you can double the size of your roads, have dual-carriageways, roundabouts and so forth.

From the [Hansard archive](#)



However, the key thing to note *about* pre-electoral coalitions is that they can affect the probability that a party gets to enter government.





From the [Cambridge English Corpus](#)



The size of this effect is *about* the same as that of decentralization.

From the [Cambridge English Corpus](#)



Do you expect the national economy to get better, get worse, or stay *about* the same?

From the [Cambridge English Corpus](#)



We summarize our main findings in conclusion and discuss their contribution to the debate *about* the influence of issue preferences on the voter's decision.

From the [Cambridge English Corpus](#)



Nonetheless, a few words *about* our methods are in order.

From the [Cambridge English Corpus](#)



On one hand, partisanship is an enduring attribute, among the most central and most stable beliefs people hold *about* politics.

From the [Cambridge English Corpus](#)



Uncertainty *about* campaign finance is added to all the other uncertainties in his or her world.

From the [Cambridge English Corpus](#)



The changes made in conference were, however, more *about* style than substance.

From the [Cambridge English Corpus](#)



Retailers also had to confront changing beliefs *about* the purpose of bankruptcy law.

From the [Cambridge English Corpus](#)



The main result *about* model families is the following.

From the [Cambridge English Corpus](#)



The findings have implications for normative questions *about* 'dialogue' in campaigns and for theories of candidate strategy.

From the [Cambridge English Corpus](#)



The negotiation process *about* the distribution of ministerial portfolios started next.

From the [Cambridge English Corpus](#)





See all examples of about

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Translations of about

in Chinese (Traditional)

和...有關, 在...方面, 有關 · 關於 · 涉及...

See more

in Chinese (Simplified)

和...有关, 在...方面, 有关, 关于, 涉及...

See more

in Spanish

sobre, por, aproximadamente...

See more

in Portuguese

sobre, de, por...

See more

in more languages



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What is the pronunciation of about?



Browse

abound

abound in/with something



**about**

about-face

about-turn

above

above all *phrase***Test your vocabulary with our fun image quizzes**[Image credits](#)**Try a quiz now****More meanings of *about*****— All**[about-face](#)[about-turn](#)[going about](#) BETA[man-about-town](#)

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WORD OF THE DAY

filter

uk /'fɪl.tər/ us /'fɪl.tə/

to remove solids from liquids or gases, or to remove particular types of light, using special equipment

[About this](#)



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