Prepositions of Place

above | at | below | beneath | by | down | in | inside | next | on | outside | over | prepositions of place | under | up | within

Prepositions allow us to talk about the relationship between two words in a sentence. Here, we will discuss the different prepositions of place in English.

Beginner | Intermediate | Advanced

What Are Prepositions of Place?

Prepositions of place are used to provide additional information about the **location** of a noun or pronoun in relation to other objects or places. These prepositions help to convey a clear picture of **where** something is and how it relates to its surroundings.

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Prepositions of Place: Types

We can classify the prepositions of place into five groups, based on their meaning:

- Prepositions used to show **Location** '(on, at, in)'
- Prepositions used to show **Position** '(above, over, below, under, on, beneath)'
- Prepositions used to show **Distance** '(near, beside, next to, by, beyond)'
- Prepositions used to show **Direction** '(up, down, in front of, behind)'
- Prepositions used for **Enclosed Areas** '(in, within, inside, outside)'

Prepositions used to show Location

These prepositions ('**on**', '**at**', '**in**') are the most common prepositions of place in English. Each of them is used to refer to the *location or position* of something or someone seen as a **point**.

At

'**At**' is used to talk about a **specific place or location**. It can be used to refer to:

- addresses
- events
- **public places** that offer treatments or services
- **buildings** such as institutions, companies, etc.

Take a look at some examples:

The university is **at** 98 Roosevelt Street.
* address

I was **at** a birthday party.
* event

See you **at** the dentist's office.
* public place

I had a meeting with Mary's teacher **at** school.
* building

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In

We use '**in**' to talk about a **specific area within a general space**. This preposition is mostly used for:

- locations in relation to a larger area
- a car

Take a look at some examples:

The baby is sleeping in her room.

* locations in relation to a larger area

I will wait for you in the car.

Warning

We can use both '**in**' and '**at**' to describe locations within a building. When we use '**in**', we are indicating that the location is inside the *enclosed space of the building*. On the other hand, '**at**' can also be used to indicate a location within a building, but it does not provide as much specific detail. For example:

See you in school.

* inside the building

She's still at school.

On

'**On**' has two different meanings. When it is used to refer to **location**, it is often used for:

- a floor in a building
- showing that something is on a horizontal surface
- public transport
- roads, streets, rivers, oceans, and lakes
- something that is physically attached or joined to something else

Take a look at some examples:

The boss's office is on the 7th floor.

Please hang the painting on the wall behind the sofa.

We enjoy going on a trip on the train.

They spent the weekend sailing on the rolling sea.

She was staring at the ring on her finger.

* physically attached

Tip

We use '**at**' to show a general location. Using the preposition '**on**' shows a more specific location. Look at the examples:

She's at the beach.

* She may be at a shop on the beach or in the water.

She's on the beach.

* She is actually on the shore.

Prepositions used to show Position

These prepositions are used to show the position of something in a **vertical line**. We can arrange them from the highest position to the lowest position. Let us go through these prepositions one by one.

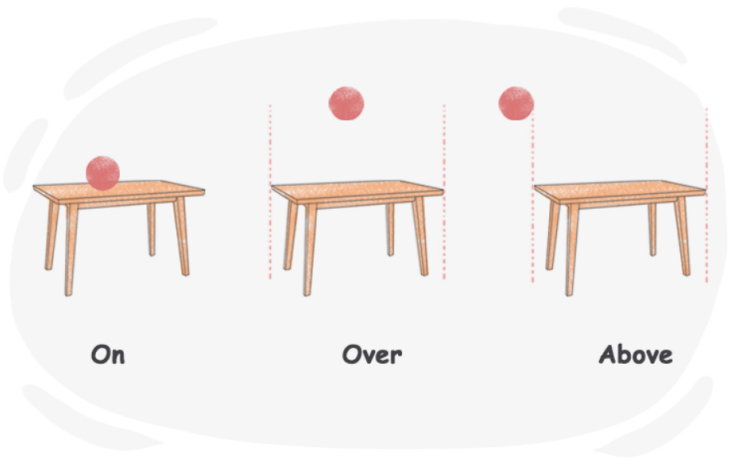
- Above
- Over
- On
- Under
- Beneath
- Below

Above

'**Above**' is used to show that something is on a **higher** position than another thing. For example:

> The birds were flying above the clouds.

Over



prepositions of direction and place

'**Over**' is a preposition used to indicate that something is at a **higher level** than something else, or that something *covers or touches* something else. For example:

> Mom kept the umbrella over our heads.

> Her mother put a blanket over her.

On

As we mentioned before, '**on**' has two meanings. When 'on' is used as a vertical proposition, it shows **physical contact** with a horizontal surface.

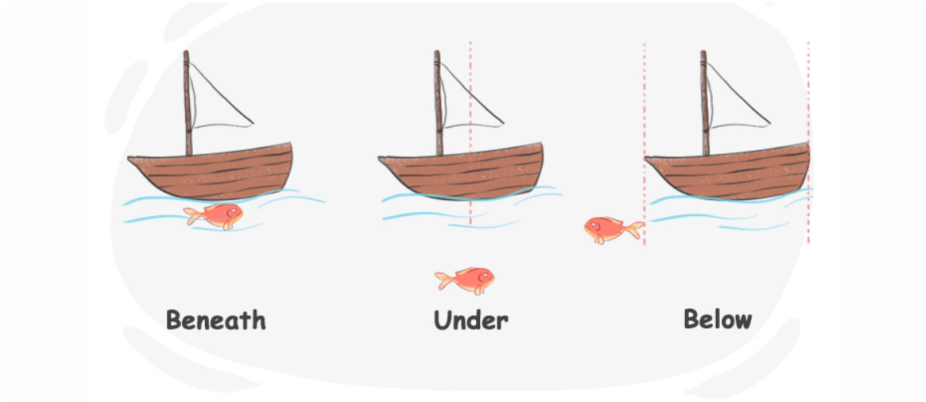
> The candles are on the table.

Under

'**Under**' is a preposition that refers to a position **below** something. For example:

> There are no monsters under the bed, Johnny!

Beneath



prepositions of direction and place

'**Beneath**' is often used to indicate that something is located **directly underneath** another object or surface. For example:

> The shop is right beneath the apartment.

Below

'**Below**' is typically used to indicate that something is located at *a lower level* than another object or surface. For example:

> Just below the surface of the water, the crocodile hid.

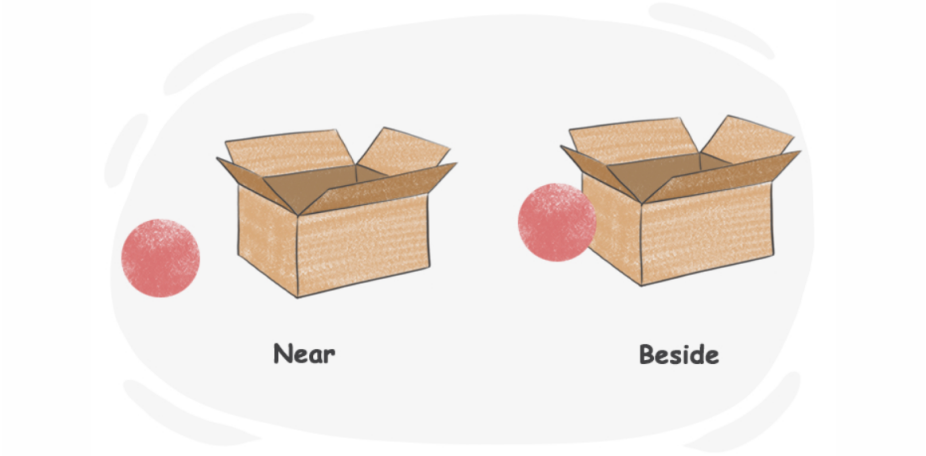
In the list below, you can see some other examples of prepositions used to show position:

- Underneath
- On top of

Prepositions used to show Distance

These prepositions are also called **prepositions of proximity**. They show how *close* someone or something is to another person or thing.

Near



using the preposition 'near' to talk about distance

'Near' is used to show **a short distance** from something or someone else. For example:

> The parking lot is near the shopping center.

> Don't go near the edge.

> If you swim near the bottom, you can see the coral reefs.

Beside, Next to, and By

These three prepositions are used to show that someone or something is **close to** another thing or person. They are similar in meaning. However, there is a subtle difference between them. '**Beside**' shows that there is **no space** between two things. Also, it is not common to use 'beside' with things that don't have sides.

> **The umbrella is beside that chair.**
>
> * There is no space between the chair and the umbrella.

'**Next to**' shows that there is **nothing between the two objects or persons**, although there might be space.

> **The umbrella is next to that chair.**
>
> * There is nothing between the umbrella and the chair.

'**By**' means **close**, but not as close as 'beside'.

> **They're standing by the car.**

> **Tip**
>
> Remember that 'beside', 'next to', 'by', and 'near', are all prepositions of proximity; but unlike 'near', the others show that something is placed in *a horizontal position* relative to another thing.

Beyond

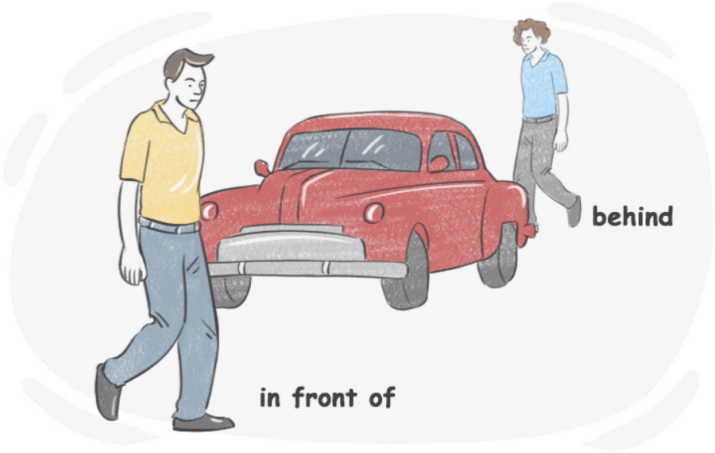
'**Beyond**' is a preposition used to indicate a location or position that is further away or on the other side of something. For example:

> **You can find the castle beyond the bridge.**

In the list below you can see some other examples of distance-related prepositions:

- Among
- Between
- Off

Prepositions used to show Direction



prepositions of directions

While '**in front of**' and '**behind**' are used with something that has a *front and back*, '**up**' and '**down**' are used with something that has a *higher or lower position.*

Up

As mentioned before, we use '**up**' to show that something is **located at a higher position**. Look at the example below:

The church is just up the street.

Down

prepositions of direction and place

We use 'down' to show that something is **located at a lower position**. Look at the example:

The lake is just down the hill.

In front of

This preposition shows a position in **ahead of another thing**. It also shows the position **facing something or someone**. For example:

The car was parked in front of my house.

I get so nervous in front of the camera.

Behind

'Behind' is the opposite of 'in front of'. It refers to the position **at the back of something**.

The sun hid behind the clouds.

In the list below, you can see some other examples of prepositions used to show direction:

1. Before
2. After
3. Opposite

Prepositions used for Enclosed Area

By using this group of prepositions, we can show the position of something or someone *in relation to* an enclosed area.

In

'**In**' is used to show the position inside an **enclosed (or semi-enclosed) area**. Look at the example:

There's some tea left in my mug.

Outside

'**Outside**' is used to show the position **external to an enclosed (or semi-enclosed) area**. Look at the example:

The fans were waiting outside the cinema.

In the list below, you can see some other examples of Prepositions used for Enclosed Area:

- Within
- Inside

Review

We use Prepositions of Place to show the **location or position of someone or something**. Based on their meaning we can put these prepositions into 5 groups:

1. Prepositions used to show **Location** (on, at, in)
2. Prepositions used to show **Horizontal Position** (above, over, below, under, on, beneath)
3. Prepositions used to show **Distance** (near, beside, next to, by, beyond)
4. Prepositions used to show **Direction** (up, down, in front of, behind)
5. Prepositions used for **Enclosed Area** (in, within, inside, outside)

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Prepositions

Prepositions can refer to many things. Since there are a lot of prepositions in the English language and they are used a lot, we have to learn them completely.

Types of Prepositions

Prepositions can indicate different relationships between the elements of the sentence. This lesson will clarify some of their most common functions.

Prepositions of Time

Prepositions allow us to talk about the relationship between two words in a sentence. Here, we will discuss the different prepositions of time in English.

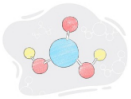
Prepositions of Direction and Movement

As their names suggest, prepositions of direction and movement show a movement from one place to

another or show a particular direction.

Prepositions of Manner

Prepositions of Manner which is also called Prepositions of Method express how a certain thing happens or is done. In this part, we will discuss them.



Compound Prepositions

Compound Prepositions or complex prepositions consist of two or more words that function as a single preposition. You'll learn about them here!

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