on 1 of 7 preposition

ˈȯn ˈän

Synonyms of *on* >

1 **a** → used as a function word to indicate position in contact with and supported by the top surface of

> the book is lying *on* the table

b → used as a function word to indicate position in or in contact with an outer surface

> the fly landed *on* the ceiling
>
> I have a cut *on* my finger
>
> paint *on* the wall

c → used as a function word to indicate position in close proximity with

> a village *on* the sea
>
> stay *on* your opponent

d → used as a function word to indicate the location of something

> *on* the left
>
> *on* the south side of the house
>
> *on* the farm

2 **a** → used as a function word to indicate a source of attachment or support

> *on* a string
>
> stand *on* one foot
>
> hang it *on* a nail

b → used as a function word to indicate a source of dependence

> you can rely *on* me
>
> feeds *on* insects

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d → used as a function word to indicate presence in the possession of

> had a knife *on* him

3 → used as a function word to indicate a time frame during which something takes place

> a parade *on* Sunday

or an instant, action, or occurrence when something begins or is done

> *on* cue
>
> *on* arriving home, I found your letter
>
> news *on* the hour
>
> cash *on* delivery

4 **archaic** : **OF**

5 **a** → used as a function word to indicate manner of doing something → often used with *the*

> *on* the sly
>
> keep everything *on* the up-and-up

b → used as a function word to indicate means or agency

> cut myself *on* a knife
>
> talk *on* the telephone

c → used as a function word to indicate a medium of expression

> *on* stage
>
> best show *on* television

6 **a** **(1)** → used as a function word to indicate active involvement in a condition or status

> *on* the increase
>
> *on* the lookout

(2) : regularly using or showing the effects of using

> *on* drugs

b → used as a function word to indicate involvement or participation

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c → used as a function word to indicate inclusion

> put it *on* the agenda

d → used as a function word to indicate position or status in proper relationship with a standard or objective

> *on* schedule

7 **a** → used as a function word to indicate reason, ground, or basis (as for an action, opinion, or computation)

> I have it *on* good authority

> *on* one condition

> the interest will be 10 cents *on* the dollar

b → used as a function word to indicate the cause or source

> profited *on* the sale of stock

c → used as a function word to indicate the focus of obligation or responsibility

> drinks are *on* the house

> put the blame *on* me

8 **a** → used as a function word to indicate the object of collision, opposition, or hostile action

> bumped my head *on* a limb

> an attack *on* religion

> pulled a gun *on* me

b → used as a function word to indicate the object with respect to some disadvantage, handicap, or detriment

> has three inches in height *on* me

> a 3-game lead *on* the second-place team

> the joke's *on* me

9 **a** → used as a function word to indicate destination or the focus of some action, movement, or directed effort

> crept up *on* him

> feast your eyes *on* this

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have pity *on* me

keen *on* sports

a curse *on* you

c → used as a function word to indicate the object with respect to some misfortune or disadvantageous event

the crops died *on* them

d → used as a function word to indicate the subject of study, discussion, or consideration

a book *on* insects

reflect *on* that a moment

agree *on* price

e : with respect to

go light *on* the salt

short *on* cash

10 → used as a function word to indicate reduplication or succession in a series

loss *on* loss

trouble *on* trouble

on 2 of 7 adverb

1 a : in or into a position of contact with an upper surface especially so as to be positioned for use or operation

put the plates *on*

b : in or into a position of being attached to or covering a surface

especially : in or into the condition of being worn

put his new shoes *on*

2 a : forward or at a more advanced point in space or time

went *on* home

later on

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and so *on*

3 : into operation or a position permitting operation
switched the light *on*

on 3 of 7 adjective

1 : engaged in an activity or function (such as a dramatic role)

2 a (1) : being in operation
The radio is *on*.

(2) : placed so as to permit operation
The switch is *on*.

b : taking place or being broadcast
The game is *on*.

3 : aware of something → usually used with *to*
My boss was *on* to me.

4 : **INTENDED**, **PLANNED**
has nothing *on* for tonight

5 **British** : talking or harping incessantly → used with *about*

6 **chiefly British** : regarded as possible or feasible → usually used in negative constructions

7 a : engaged in or as if in a performance
The comedian was always *on*.

b : being at a high level of performance

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-on 5 of 7 noun suffix (1)

: chemical compound not a ketone or other oxo compound

parathi*on*

-on 6 of 7 noun suffix (2)

1 : subatomic particle

nucle*on*

2 a : unit : quantum

phot*on*

magnet*on*

b : basic hereditary component

cistr*on*

oper*on*

-on 7 of 7 noun suffix (3)

: noble gas

rad*on*

Synonyms

Preposition

about

apropos

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concerning
of
regarding
respecting
touching
toward
towards

Adverb

ahead
forth
forward
onward
onwards

Adjective

active
alive
functional
functioning
going
live
living
operating
operational
operative
running
working

See All Synonyms & Antonyms in Thesaurus >

Examples of *on* in a Sentence

Preposition

There is a lot of frosting ***on*** the cake.

books ***on*** sports heroes are my favorite reading matter

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Recent Examples on the Web

Examples are automatically compiled from online sources to show current usage. Read More

Preposition

That item may not go before the City Commissi***on*** until the following meeting on June 26 or a subsequent meeting in July.

– Tess Riski, *Miami Herald*, 4 June 2025

The recall was announced ***on*** June 2 after Coca-Cola, Topo Chico's distributor, identified possible contamination with Pseudomonas aeruginosa, a bacteria that occurs naturally in water sources, including mineral water.

– Amber Brenza, *Health*, 4 June 2025

The villas serve as a backdrop to the entire show, providing Islanders with a variety of areas to lounge and chat. Seas***on*** 7 — which premiered on June 3 — takes place at the same Fijian villa that the previous season of Love Island USA was filmed in.

– Francesca Gariano, *People.com*, 4 June 2025

The creati***on*** of this content included the use of AI based on templates created, reviewed and edited by journalists in the newsroom.

– Star-Telegram Weather Bot, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, 4 June 2025

See All Example Sentences for *on* ›

Word History

Etymology

Preposition, Adverb, and Adjective

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Noun suffix (2)

from *-on* (in *ion*)

Noun suffix (3)

New Latin, from *-on* (in *argon*)

First Known Use

Preposition

before the 12th century, in the meaning defined at sense 1a

Adverb

before the 12th century, in the meaning defined at sense 1a

Adjective

circa 1541, in the meaning defined at sense 1

Time Traveler

The first known use of *on* was before the 12th century

See more words from the same century

Rhymes for *on*

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chon con

conn crohn

dawn drawn

fawn gone

See All Rhymes for *on* ›

Browse Nearby Words

-on **on** **ON**

See All Nearby Words ›

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"On." *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/on. Accessed 6 Jun. 2025.

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Kids Definition

on 1 of 3 preposition

(ˈ)ȯn (ˈ)än

1 a : in contact with and supported by
- the book *on* the table

b : in a position in contact with or near
- a fly *on* the wall
- a town *on* the river

c → used to indicate the location of something
- *on* the other side of the house
- *on* the right

2 a → used to indicate means of being attached or supported
- *on* a string
- stood *on* one foot
- hang your coat *on* the peg
- you can rely *on* me
- lives *on* insects

b → used to indicate means of being carried
- rode *on* a horse
- went *on* the bus
- have only five dollars *on* me

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4 **a** → used to indicate the way something is done

told her *on* the sly

b → used to indicate what something is done with or done by

cut *on* broken glass

talk *on* the phone

type *on* a keyboard

displayed *on* a TV screen

5 **a** : involved with or participating in : busy with

on a committee

on tour

b : in a state or process of

on fire

on the increase

c : in keeping with a goal or objective

on schedule

6 **a** → used to indicate a reason or basis

on one condition

interest of 10 cents *on* the dollar

b → used to indicate who or what is responsible

this treat is *on* me

blamed it *on* the weather

7 → used to indicate someone or something an action or feeling is directed toward

was creeping up *on* us

have pity *on* me

the joke's *on* you

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go light *on* the salt

short *on* cash

9 : following in series

loss *on* loss

on 2 of 3 adverb

ˈȯn, ˈän

1 : in or into contact with a surface

put the kettle *on*

has new shoes *on*

2 : forward in space, time, or action

went *on* home

on came the storm

getting *on* in years

3 : from one to another

pass the word *on*

and so *on*

4 : into operation or a position allowing operation

turn the light *on*

on 3 of 3 adjective

ˈȯn, ˈän

1 : doing an activity (as a role in a play)

you're *on* next

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b : set so as to permit operation

the switch is *on*

c : taking place or being broadcast

the game is *on*

3 : having been planned

has nothing *on* for tonight

Medical Definition

on preposition

ˈȯn, ˈän

: regularly using or showing the effects of using

is *on* an ACE inhibitor to control hypertension

was *on* drugs for two years before entering rehab

More from Merriam-Webster on *on*

Nglish: Translation of *on* for Spanish Speakers

Last Updated: 6 Jun 2025 - Updated example sentences

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More from Merriam-Webster

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Play

WORD OF THE DAY

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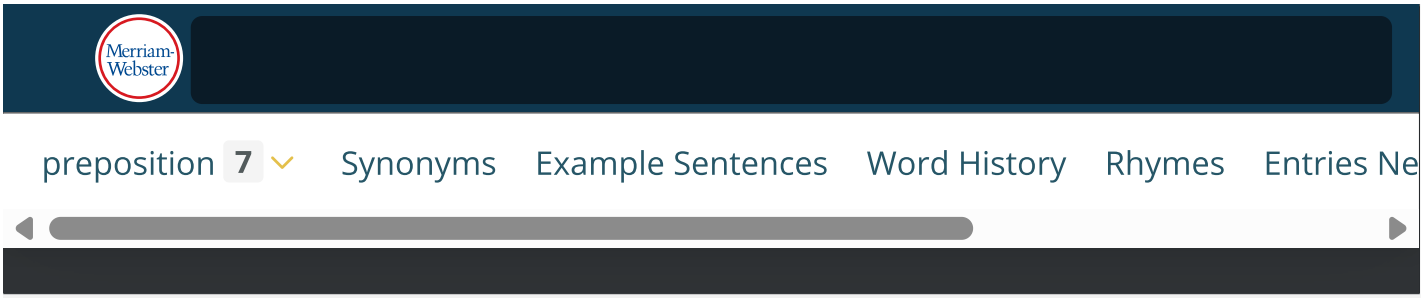

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