



on

preposition **7** ▼ Synonyms Example Sentences Word History Rhymes Entries Ne

# on 1 of 7 preposition

'òn ◀▶

'än ◀▶

[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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**a** → 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

| fast 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



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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

| *parathion*

## **-on** 6 of 7 noun suffix (2)

**1** : subatomic particle

| *nucleon*

**2 a** : unit : quantum

| *photon*

| *magneton*

**b** : basic hereditary component

| *cistron*

| *operon*

## **-on** 7 of 7 noun suffix (3)

: noble gas

| *radon*

### • 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

**i** Examples are automatically compiled from online sources to show current usage. [Read More](#)

### Preposition

That item may not go before the City Commission **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. Season **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 creation **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 >](#)

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## Kids Definition

# on 1 of 3 preposition

(<sup>ˈ</sup>ɒn ◀) (<sup>ˈ</sup>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 right *on* the salt

short *on* cash

**9** : following in series

loss *on* loss

## on **2 of 3** adverb

'**ɒ**n, 'ä**n**

**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

'**ɒ**n, 'ä**n**

**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

'òn, 'än ◀▶

: 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

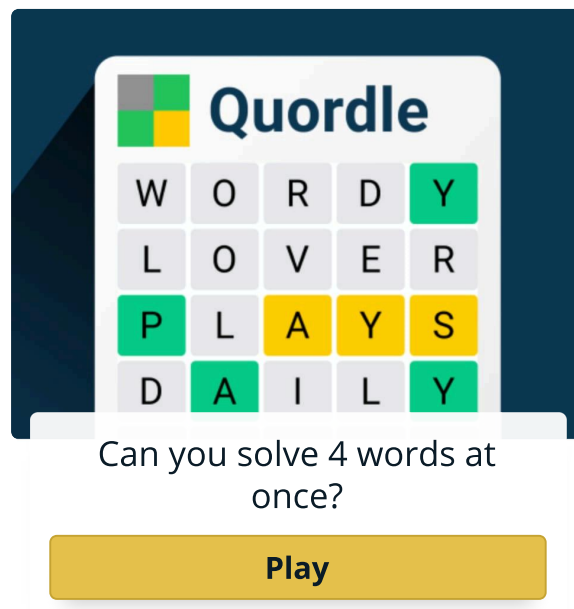
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