

Prepositions are short words (on, in, to) that usually stand in front of nouns (sometimes also in front of gerund verbs).

Even advanced learners of English find prepositions difficult, as a 1:1 translation is usually not possible. One preposition in your native language might have several translations depending on the situation.

The following table contains rules for some of the most frequently used prepositions in English:

Prepositions – Time

English	Usage	Example
• on	days of the week	on Monday
• in	months / seasons time of day year after a certain period of time (<i>when?</i>)	in August / in winter in the morning in 2006 in an hour
• at	for <i>night</i> for <i>weekend</i> a certain point of time (<i>when?</i>)	at night at the weekend at half past nine
• since	from a certain point of time (past till now)	since 1980
• for	over a certain period of time (past till now)	for 2 years
• ago	a certain time in the past	2 years ago
• before	earlier than a certain point of time	before 2004
• to	telling the time	ten to six (5:50)
• past	telling the time	ten past six (6:10)
• to / till / until	marking the beginning and end of a period of time	from Monday to/till Friday

English	Usage	Example
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> till / until 	in the sense of <i>how long something is going to last</i>	He is on holiday until Friday.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> by 	in the sense of <i>at the latest</i> up to a certain time	I will be back by 6 o'clock. By 11 o'clock, I had read five pages.

Prepositions – Place (Position and Direction)

English	Usage	Example
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> in 	room, building, street, town, country book, paper etc. car, taxi picture, world	in the kitchen, in London in the book in the car, in a taxi in the picture, in the world
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> at 	meaning <i>next to, by an object</i> for <i>table</i> for events place where you are to do something typical (watch a film, study, work)	at the door, at the station at the table at a concert, at the party at the cinema, at school, at work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> on 	attached for a place with a river being on a surface for a certain side (left, right) for a floor in a house for public transport for <i>television, radio</i>	the picture on the wall London lies on the Thames. on the table on the left on the first floor on the bus, on a plane on TV, on the radio
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> by, next to, beside 	left or right of somebody or something	Jane is standing by / next to / beside the car.

English	Usage	Example
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> under 	on the ground, lower than (or covered by) something else	the bag is under the table
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> below 	lower than something else but above ground	the fish are below the surface
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> over 	covered by something else meaning <i>more than</i> getting to the other side (also <i>across</i>) overcoming an obstacle	put a jacket over your shirt over 16 years of age walk over the bridge climb over the wall
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> above 	higher than something else, but not directly over it	a path above the lake
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> across 	getting to the other side (also <i>over</i>) getting to the other side	walk across the bridge swim across the lake
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> through 	something with limits on top, bottom and the sides	drive through the tunnel
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to 	movement to person or building movement to a place or country for <i>bed</i>	go to the cinema go to London / Ireland go to bed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> into 	enter a room / a building	go into the kitchen / the house
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> towards 	movement in the direction of something (but not directly to it)	go 5 steps towards the house
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> onto 	movement to the top of something	jump onto the table
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> from 	in the sense of <i>where from</i>	a flower from the garden

Other important Prepositions

English	Usage	Example
• from	who gave it	a present from Jane
• of	who/what does it belong to what does it show	a page of the book the picture of a palace
• by	who made it	a book by Mark Twain
• on	walking or riding on horseback entering a public transport vehicle	on foot, on horseback get on the bus
• in	entering a car / Taxi	get in the car
• off	leaving a public transport vehicle	get off the train
• out of	leaving a car / Taxi	get out of the taxi
• by	rise or fall of something travelling (other than walking or horseriding)	prices have risen by 10 percent by car, by bus
• at	for age	she learned Russian at 45
• about	for topics, meaning <i>what about</i>	we were talking about you

Prepositions of Place

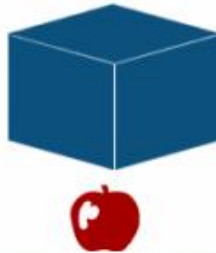
above

The apple is **above** the box.



below

The apple is **below** the box.



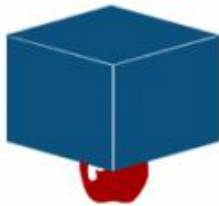
on / on top of

The apple is **on** the box.



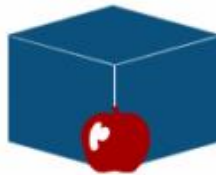
under / underneath

The apple is **under** the box.



in front of

The apple is **in front of** the box.



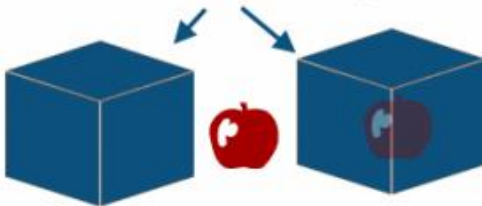
behind

The apple is **behind** the box.



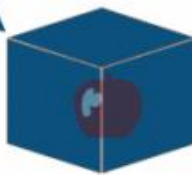
between

The apple is **between** the boxes.



in / inside

The apple is **inside** the box.



next to / beside

The apple is **next to** the box.



near / close to

The apple is **near** the box.



opposite

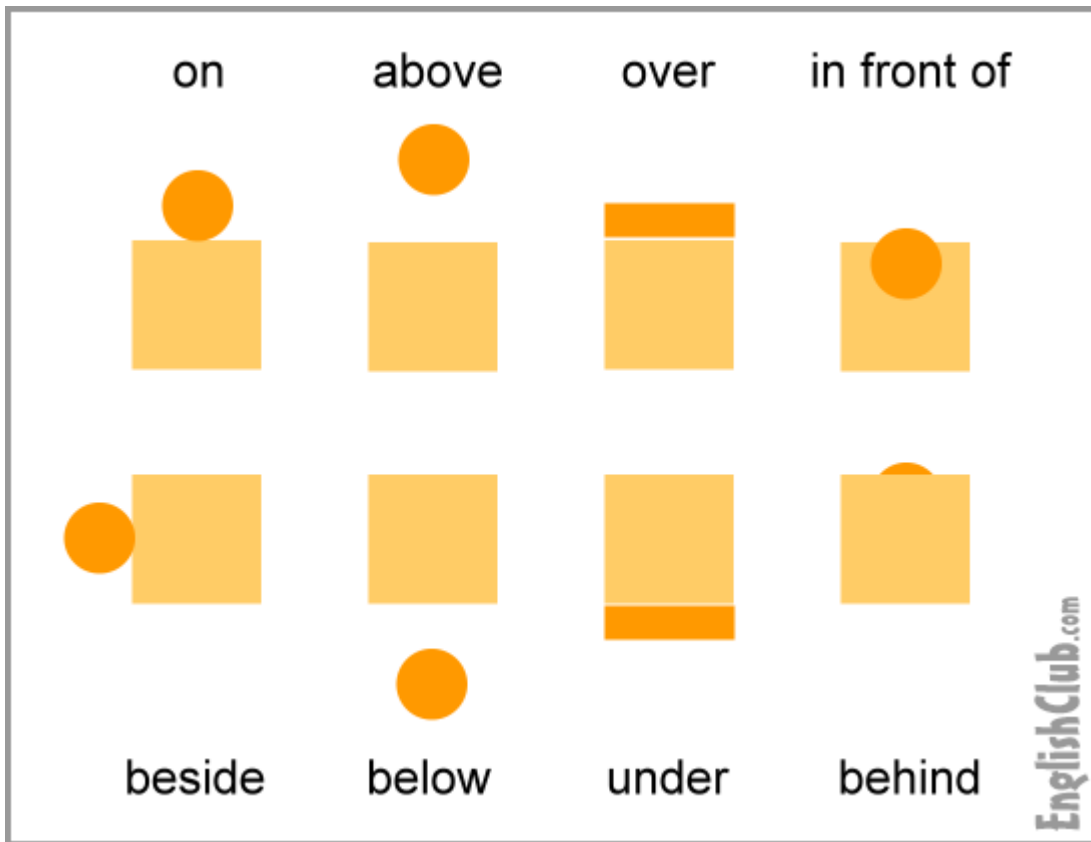
The apple is **opposite** the box.



among / amongst

The apple is **among** the boxes.





My room is usually tidy and organized. It has beige walls and a maroon and brown rug on the floor. Whenever the sun streams in, I draw the royal blue curtains. My bed is right beside the door. A bright blue bedspread covers the mattress. On the bed are two fluffy pillows. There is a wooden desk beside the window. On the desk are some writing materials and a light laptop. A wooden bookcase filled with books is hung over the desk. I love to look out of the window and watch the world go by while I take reading breaks at my desk

- *Where is the maroon and brown rug in the room?*
- *Where is the bed located?*
- *What is on the bed?*
- *What is beside the window?*
- *Name two things that are on the desk.*