
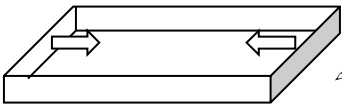
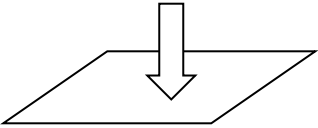


## USING PREPOSITIONS

Although many prepositions are used idiomatically with certain verbs (see the Writing Center handout on Phrasal Verbs for a partial glossary of these idioms), most commonly prepositions provide information about the relationship of a noun or pronoun to another part of the sentence in which the prepositions appear. To remember the role of prepositions, notice that “position” appears in the word “preposition”!

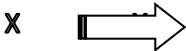
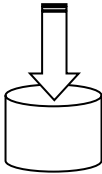
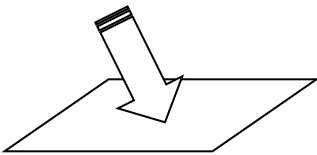
### Prepositions of Location: At, In, On

<b>At</b>	<p>Located at a specific place:</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clara studied <b>at</b> the library all day.</li> <li>• I left my homework <b>at</b> home.</li> <li>• She arrived <b>at</b> the party early.</li> </ul>
<b>In</b>	<p>Located within boundaries (enclosed):</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The fans are <b>in</b> the stadium.</li> <li>• There are ostriches <b>in</b> that field!</li> <li>• We live <b>in</b> California.</li> <li>• We were <b>in</b> the car when it happened.</li> </ul> <p><i>This also applies to metaphorical boundaries:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She works <b>in</b> the field of engineering.</li> </ul>
<b>On</b>	<p>Located on a surface (not enclosed):</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I left my homework <b>on</b> the kitchen table.</li> <li>• Soccer players practice <b>on</b> the field. (not enclosed)</li> <li>• Cowboys live out <b>on</b> the range.</li> </ul> <p><i>Unlike a field, the “range” is not considered enclosed.</i></p> <p><i>While we travel “in” cars, we travel “on” trains and planes.</i></p>

### Prepositions of Time: In, On, At, By

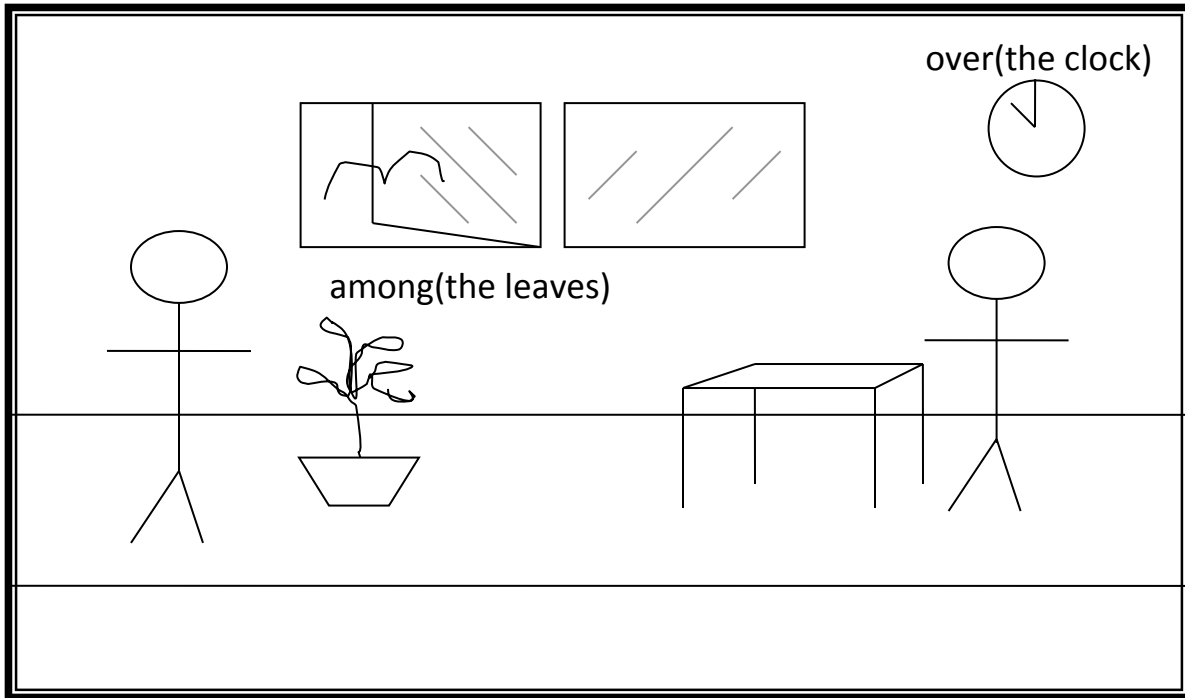
<b>YEAR: In</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I was born <b>in</b> 1982.</li> </ul>
<b>MONTH: In</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The wedding will be <b>in</b> April.</li> </ul>
<b>WEEK: In</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are <b>in</b> the sixth week of the semester.</li> </ul>
<b>DAY: On</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The party is <b>on</b> Friday.</li> </ul>
<b>HOUR: At</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrive <b>at</b> 3 p.m.</li> </ul>
<b>Deadlines:</b>	<p>No matter the time frame, use “<b>by</b>” with due dates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your papers are due <b>by</b> 5 p.m./Tuesday/April/2009.</li> </ul>

### Prepositions of Direction: To, Into, Onto

<b>To</b>	<p>Moving toward a specific place:</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are moving <b>to</b> Chicago next month.</li> <li>• Janice flew from Los Angeles <b>to</b> Mexico City.</li> <li>• She walks <b>to</b> school.</li> </ul>
<b>Into</b>	<p>Moving to the inside of an enclosed space:</p> 	<p><i>“In” and “into” can be used interchangeably with some verbs, and still keep the meaning of the sentence the same:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The dog jumped <b>into</b> the pond.</li> <li>• The dog jumped <b>in</b> the pond.</li> </ul> <p><i>Otherwise, “in” and “into” have distinct meanings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rosa poured the water <b>into</b> the cup. (action)</li> <li>• There is water <b>in</b> the cup. (position)</li> </ul> <p><i>She hurried <b>in to buy</b> the milk. (preposition with infinitive)</i></p>
<b>Onto</b>	<p>Moving toward a surface:</p> 	<p><i>“On” and “onto” can often be used interchangeably and still keep the meaning of the sentence the same:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The book fell <b>onto</b> the floor.</li> <li>• The book fell <b>on</b> the floor.</li> </ul> <p><i>Otherwise, “on” and “onto” have distinct meanings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She tossed the papers <b>onto</b> the coffee table. (action)</li> <li>• The papers are <b>on</b> the coffee table. (position)</li> </ul> <p><i>She turned the TV <b>on to watch</b> the show. (prp. w/ infinitive)</i></p>

## Practice Using Prepositions

- 1) Choose words from the boxes below and write them on the picture in the location that the prepositional word or phrase describes. See the examples to get you started.



### Common prepositions:


about	before	considering	like	past	toward
above	behind	despite	near	plus	under
across	below	down	next	regarding	underneath
after	beneath	during	of	respecting	unlike
against	beside	except	off	round	until
along	between	for	on	since	up
among	beyond	from	onto	through	upon
around	but	in	out	throughout	with
as	by	inside	outside	till	within
at	concerning	into	over	to	without

### Common compound prepositions:

according to	due to	in front of	in spite of	on account of
as well as	except for	in place of	instead of	out of
because of	in addition to	in regard to	next to	with regard to
by way of				

- 2) *Practice with your own writing.*

Identify, independently or with a tutor, which sentences in your own writing have prepositions that are used incorrectly. Use this handout to help you choose the correct preposition, based on the guidelines on the front of the handout.

 For information about idiomatic phrasal verbs that use prepositions (for example, “to fall back on” and “to keep up”), consult the Writing Center handout on “Phrasal Verbs.”