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Prepositions for Time, Place, and Introducing Objects

Summary: This section deals with prepositions and their standard uses.

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One point in time

On is used with days:

- I will see you **on** Monday.
- The week begins **on** Sunday.

At is used with noon, night, midnight, and with the time of day:

- My plane leaves **at** noon.
- The movie starts **at** 6 p.m.

In is used with other parts of the day, with months, with years, with seasons:

- He likes to read **in** the afternoon.
- The days are long **in** August.
- The book was published **in** 1999.
- The flowers will bloom **in** spring.

Extended time

To express extended time, English uses the following prepositions: **since, for, by, from—to, from-until, during,(with)in**

- She has been gone **since** yesterday. (*She left yesterday and has not returned.*)
- I'm going to Paris **for** two weeks. (*I will spend two weeks there.*)
- The movie showed **from** August **to** October. (*Beginning in August and ending in October.*)
- The decorations were up **from** spring **until** fall. (*Beginning in spring and ending in fall.*)
- I watch TV **during** the evening. (*For some period of time in the evening.*)

- We must finish the project **within** a year. (*No longer than a year.*)

Place

To express notions of place, English uses the following prepositions: to talk about the point itself: **in**, to express something contained: **inside**, to talk about the surface: **on**, to talk about a general vicinity, **at**.

- There is a wasp **in** the room.
- Put the present **inside** the box.
- I left your keys **on** the table.
- She was waiting **at** the corner.

Higher than a point

To express notions of an object being higher than a point, English uses the following prepositions: **over**, **above**.

- He threw the ball **over** the roof.
- Hang that picture **above** the couch.

Lower than a point

To express notions of an object being lower than a point, English uses the following prepositions: **under**, **underneath**, **beneath**, **below**.

- The rabbit burrowed **under** the ground.
- The child hid **underneath** the blanket.
- We relaxed in the shade **beneath** the branches.
- The valley is **below** sea-level.

Close to a point

To express notions of an object being close to a point, English uses the following prepositions: **near**, **by**, **next to**, **between**, **among**, **opposite**.

- She lives **near** the school.
- There is an ice cream shop **by** the store.
- An oak tree grows **next to** my house
- The house is **between** Elm Street and Maple Street.
- I found my pen lying **among** the books.
- The bathroom is **opposite** that room.

To introduce objects of verbs

English uses the following prepositions to introduce objects of the following verbs.

At: glance, laugh, look, rejoice, smile, stare

- She glanced **at** her reflection.
(*exception with **mirror**: She glanced **in** the mirror.*)
- You didn't laugh **at** his joke.
- I'm looking **at** the computer monitor.
- We rejoiced **at** his safe rescue.
- That pretty girl smiled **at** you.
- Stop staring **at** me.

Of: approve, consist, smell

- I don't approve **of** his speech.
- My contribution to the article consists **of** many pages.
- He came home smelling **of** alcohol.

Of (or about): dream, think

- I dream **of** finishing college in four years.
- Can you think **of** a number between one and ten?
- I am thinking **about** this problem.

For: call, hope, look, wait, watch, wish

- Did someone call **for** a taxi?
 - He hopes **for** a raise in salary next year.
 - I'm looking **for** my keys.
 - We'll wait **for** her here.
 - You go buy the tickets and I'll watch **for** the train.
 - If you wish **for** an "A" in this class, you must work hard.
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