

Prepositions "On," "At," and "In"

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A preposition is a word that links a noun, pronoun, or noun phrase to some other part of the sentence.

Prepositions can be tricky for English learners. There is no definite rule for choosing a preposition. In the beginning stage of learning the language, you should try to identify a preposition when reading or listening in English and recognize its usage.

A preposition is used to show direction, location, or time.

Here are a few common prepositions and examples.

On

Used to express a surface of something:

- I put an egg on the kitchen table.
- The paper is on my desk.

Used to specify days and dates:

- The garbage truck comes on Wednesdays.
- I was born on the 14th day of June in 1988.

Used to indicate a device or machine, such as a phone or computer:

- He is on the phone right now.
- She has been on the computer since this morning.
- My favorite movie will be on TV tonight.

Used to indicate a part of the body:

- The stick hit me on my shoulder.
- He kissed me on my cheek.
- I wear a ring on my finger.

Used to indicate the state of something:

- Everything in this store is on sale.
- The building is on fire.

At

Used to point out specific time:

- I will meet you at 12 p.m.
- The bus will stop here at 5:45 p.m.

Used to indicate a place:

- There is a party at the club house.
- There were hundreds of people at the park.
- We saw a baseball game at the stadium.

Used to indicate an email address:

- Please email me at abc@defg.com.

Used to indicate an activity:

- He laughed at my acting.
- I am good at drawing a portrait.

In

Used for unspecific times during a day, month, season, year:

- She always reads newspapers in the morning.
- In the summer, we have a rainy season for three weeks.
- The new semester will start in March.

Used to indicate a location or place:

- She looked me directly in the eyes.
- I am currently staying in a hotel.
- My hometown is Los Angeles, which is in California.

Used to indicate a shape, color, or size:

- This painting is mostly in blue.
- The students stood in a circle.
- This jacket comes in four different sizes.