

# Prepositions<sup>1</sup>

about	at	by	like	through
above	before	down	near	to
across	behind	during	of	toward
after	below	except	off	under
against	beneath	for	on	underneath
along	beside	from	onto	until
amid	between	in	over	up
among	beyond	inside	past	upon
around	but	into	since	with
within				
without				

**Prepositions:** A preposition describes a relationship between other words in a sentence. They are usually combined with nouns to make **prepositional phrases**, which show a relationship in time or space. Without nouns, prepositions are difficult to define and meaningless.

\*For example: We were **at**. (You were **at** where? The mall? **Mall** is a noun.)

We were **at the mall**. (Prepositional phrase: shows your relationship to space.)

When prepositional phrases introduce a sentence, a comma is needed.

\*For example: **Except** for my brother, my family loves going to the mall.

Otherwise, do not break up a prepositional phrase with a comma.

\*For Example: The mall has a food court **with**, two Chinese restaurants. (**Incorrect**, no comma is needed. It should be written like this: The mall has a food court with two Chinese restaurants.)

Prepositions to take special notice of: **in, on, at**

With **time**:

- **at**: designate specific time. Ex: We will meet you **at** noon at the mall.
- **on**: designate specific days and dates. Ex: We are going to the mall **on** Sunday.
- **in**: designate nonspecific times during a day, month, year, or season.  
Ex: We like to go to the mall in the evening.

With **place**:

- **at**: designate specific address. Ex: I live at 555 Banana Drive.
- **on**: designate names of streets. Ex: The mall is on Banana Drive.
- **in**: designate the names of land area (towns, counties, states, countries, etc.).  
Ex: The best mall is **in** Orlando.

**To** is a preposition when it expresses movement.

\*For example: We went **to** the mall yesterday.

**To** is not a preposition when it is part of an infinitive (to + simple form of the verb).

\*For example: I want **to eat** lunch at the mall. (**to eat** is an infinitive, so **to** is not a preposition.)

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<sup>1</sup> Drawn from "Prepositions: Locators in Time and Place." *The Guide to Grammar and Writing*. Capital Community College Foundation, 2004. Web.

# Mastering Prepositions<sup>1</sup>

## In, on, & at

I live <b>in</b> Florida. I was born <b>in</b> Antarctica. I work <b>in</b> Orlando. My brother is <b>in</b> space. My cabin is <b>in</b> the mountains.	<i><b>In:</b> surrounded by something, contained by something.</i>
There is dust <b>on</b> the tv screen. We flew to Hawaii <b>on</b> a jet.	<i><b>On:</b> touching, supported by, hanging from, connected with, on top of.</i>
I live <b>at</b> 1234 Alafaya Trail. I shop <b>at</b> Walmart. I always eat <b>at</b> Macdonald's. We live <b>at</b> the end of the road.	<i><b>At:</b> used to indicate a point in space, the location of someone/something.</i>

## To

I went <b>to</b> the mall today. The player threw the ball <b>to</b> her teammate.	<i><b>To:</b> in the direction of and reaching, as far as.</i>
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## To is not always a preposition

*To* is not a preposition when it is part of the infinitive. The infinitive is: **to** + the simple form of the verb. The simple form of the verb is a verb without **-s**, **-ed**, or **-ing** endings, e.g., walk, study, want. The infinitives of these words are: to walk, to study, to want.

I tried <b>to</b> climb the tree. The bird began <b>to</b> sing.
I want <b>to</b> eat. We like <b>to</b> go shopping. The children have <b>to</b> sleep at night. Everyone needs <b>to</b> breathe.

## Into

We put the groceries <b>into</b> the bag. The snake crawled <b>into</b> the closet.	<i><b>Into:</b> to the inside of</i>
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<sup>1</sup> Drawn from Gloria Wahlen's *Prepositions Illustrated*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1995.