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Prepositions

The festival delivery



Grammar at a glance

When you want to...	Form to use	Worked example
Place an object	in / on / under + reference	The key is under the mat.
Trace movement	into / through / out of	The bird flew through the tunnel.
Locate an event in time	at + time / on + day / in + year	At noon on Monday in 2026.
Give useful directions	between + point A + and + point B	Wait between the ramp and the gate.

SELECT A ROW TO OPEN ITS LESSON

PREPOSITIONS

Inside, on a surface or below?



Sam cannot find the parcel. “Near the table” is not precise enough. Change the parcel’s position and tell him exactly where to look.

A preposition connects something to a reference point. In, on and under describe different positions.

USE	EXAMPLE	WHAT TO NOTICE
Inside the box	The parcel is in the box.	In places the parcel inside the box’s boundaries.
On the table	The parcel is on the table.	On places the parcel on the supporting surface.
Under the table	The parcel is under the table.	Under places it below the table.

HOW THE PATTERN WORKS

The bag is under the chair. The bag is not on the seat.

Can an object have only one correct location phrase?

No. A parcel can be in a box and under a shelf at the same time. The question must name the relevant reference object.

YOUR TURN

A ticket is inside an envelope. “The ticket is ___ the envelope.”
on / in

> **Answer • in**
> In means inside here.

PREPOSITIONS

A position or a change of position?



A location says where a parcel is. A route says where it moves. Help the volunteers distinguish the journey from the final position.

Into describes a change of position. In can describe the position after the move. Through traces a path inside and out.

USE	EXAMPLE	WHAT TO NOTICE
A position inside	The parcel is in the box.	In describes its position inside the box.
A move inside	Move the parcel into the box.	Into highlights movement from outside to inside. The diagram shows the destination.
A move to a surface	Lift the parcel onto the table.	Onto highlights movement to the tabletop. The diagram shows the destination.

HOW THE PATTERN WORKS

Take the cups out of the box. Lift the box onto the bench.

Does in always mean there can be no movement?

No. “Put it in the box” is natural. Into makes the outside-to-inside path explicit, while in can describe the destination with put.

YOUR TURN

“The guests walked through the tunnel.” What does through show?

Passage inside the tunnel / A position on its roof

> **Answer • Passage inside the tunnel**
> Through describes passage within a space.

PREPOSITIONS

At, on, in—and sometimes no preposition

The volunteers need a meeting time. A month, a day and an exact time require different wording. Avoid adding a preposition where English normally uses none.

For time, use at with a clock time, on with a day and in with a month or year. Say “next Friday” on its own.

USE	EXAMPLE	WHAT TO NOTICE
An exact time	Meet at 9 o’clock.	At introduces this exact clock time.
A day	Meet on Monday.	On introduces a day or date.
A month	The festival is in June.	In introduces a month, year or many longer periods.

HOW THE PATTERN WORKS

Day	Clock time	Month	No preposition
on Monday	at 9 o’clock	in June	next Monday

Does every mention of a day need on?

No. On Monday contrasts with next Monday, this Monday and every Monday. Look at the whole time phrase.

YOUR TURN

“The garden opened ___ 2024.”

in / on

> Answer • in
> In introduces a year.

PREPOSITIONS

Give the listener a usable reference point



Two helpers read the same note differently. One uses “between” without naming the landmarks; another confuses a position with a direction. Edit the instructions so everyone can act on them.

Give the listener enough landmarks. Between usually needs two identifiable reference points in directions.

USE	EXAMPLE	WHAT TO NOTICE
Beside	Put the parcel beside the box.	Beside means next to the reference object.
Between	Put the parcel between the two boxes.	The two named boxes give reference points on either side.
A complete instruction	Move the parcel into the box beside the table.	Into describes movement; beside identifies which box. One sentence can contain more than one prepositional phrase.

HOW THE PATTERN WORKS

Meet beside the fountain on Friday at noon.

Does longer always mean clearer?

No. Extra words help only when they remove uncertainty. If there are several benches, name the relevant one with a shared detail.

YOUR TURN

“Wait between the fountain and the gate.” Which are the reference points?

The fountain and the gate / The person waiting

> Answer • The fountain and the gate
> These landmarks identify the space.

ONE LAST CHALLENGE

Where should the visitor wait?

Give a time and two landmarks. The visitor should meet you at four, in the space separating the gate and the fountain.



A POSSIBLE ANSWER

Meet me at four between the gate and the fountain.

At introduces the clock time. Between identifies the position using both landmarks.

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