Prepositions

- Introductory remarks
- Types of prepositions and their uses
- Position of prepositions
- Omission of prepositions
- Functions of prepositions
An eagle was flying over the mountains.

You could find the drugstore next to the high school.

The head nurse put her in charge of elderly patients.

I visited the website out of curiosity.

The forest was too thick to move through.
Prepositions usually precede nouns or pronouns, but they could also occupy the end position.

Prepositions serve different purposes and show many relationships.

Prepositions vary in type.

Prepositions may come in single words or multiple words; in either case they are fixed.

Prepositions along with their accompanying nouns and pronouns are termed “prepositional phrases”.
Prepositions of time:

Point in time: in, at, on,

Duration of time: since, for, during, between, from … to/till/ throughout, within, inside, in, till/until, up to,

Before or after time: before, after, by, past,
POINT IN TIME: IN, AT, ON

- In
  - To be used with months, seasons, years, centuries, and parts of the day
  1. They got married in June.
  2. Trees bloom in spring.
  3. Twin towers in America were bombed in 2001.
  4. The Industrial Revolution began in the 18th century.
  5. In the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening
To express how soon something will happen or how long something takes to happen

1. Call me back in two hours. (after two hours)
2. I will post the grades in a week’s time. (after a week)
3. She can stay under water breathless in about one minute. (for one minute)
4. They built the hospital in two years. (it took two years)
At

To express clock time, public holidays, age, parts of the day

1. The train leaves the station at 7 o’clock.
2. We visit relatives and friends at Now Rowz.
3. She passed away at 90.
4. At noon, at night, at midnight, at dusk, at dawn, at lunchtime, at the weekend (British English)
On

To express days of the week, dates, special or particular days
1. We go cycling on Fridays.
2. University classes in Japan begin on the first of April/April 1st.
3. What did you buy your mother on Mother’s day?
4. On Christmas day, on Easter Monday, on Student’s Day, On weekend (American English), on the evening/morning/ afternoon, night of the eleventh
**PREPOSITIONS OF PLACE**

- **Position:**
  1. Horizontal relationship: (← →) in, at, on;
  2. Vertical relationship: (↑↓) over, above, under, below, underneath, beneath; near, by, close to, next to, alongside, beside, between, among,
  3. Facing relationship: (→ ←) opposite, across, behind, in front of,

- **Direction:** to … from, into, onto, out of, up, down, around, through, past or by, as far as, off, away from, towards,
In

To indicate position inside large areas such as names of the continents, countries, cities, towns, villages

1. He lived and died in Iran.
2. Some countries in Europe are currently facing financial crisis.
3. Bus Rapid Terminal was first launched in Tehran in Iran.
4. He comes from Zibashahr.
5. Two farmers were attacked by a wolf in Ghaziabad.
To express a point in an enclosed place or any three-dimensional space or any place having boundaries

1. I was trapped in the elevator.
2. Put the bread in the bread bin.
3. He was chatting with strangers in the coffee shop.
4. They hid themselves in the tunnel.
5. Women farmers were planting rice in the paddy fields.
6. I was boiling hot in the helicopter.
7. In church/ college/ school/ a picture/ the sky/ the rain/ a tent/ a hat/ bed/hospital/ prison
At

To talk a point in space or position

1. You can find him now at the bus stop.
2. He was standing at the crossroads.
3. Wait for me at the bookstore.
4. Don’t put the book at the edge of the table; it will fall down.
5. Some people were sitting at the corner of the street to be called out for work.
6. At home/ at work/ at the office/ at church/ at school/ college/ at a farm
To refer to gatherings of people
1. I met him at a lecture.
2. The losing team fans ruined were furious at the match.
3. At a party/ at a conference/ at a concert/ at a meeting

To talk about addresses
Our professor lived at 35 Bahar street.

To say where people study
1. Noam Chomsky is a linguist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
2. My son is majoring in Translation Studies at International Imam Khomeini University.
To be used with the name of a city to talk about the city’s university
1. He is teaching at Tehran.
2. My brother is a PhD candidate at Tabriz.

To be used with a possessive to mean ‘at somebody’s house or shop’.
1. He is at the barber’s.
2. I will be spending the night at Ali’s.

To be used before the name of a building to talk about an activity happening there
Let’s eat out at Ala Eddin.
On

To talk about position on a line or surface

1. The moving car stopped suddenly on the road to avoid hitting a passing fox.
2. We enjoyed ourselves on the beach.
3. She put the books on the table.
4. She was lying on the pavement unconscious.
5. Hang the picture on the wall.
(Directly) Higher than and higher in rank: above or over

1. There were banners of condolence above/over the wall.
2. Three loud speakers were installed above/over the mosque.
3. The lamp is hanging above/over the table.
4. Above the long road lay high mountains.

(not directly over)

5. The dean of the faculty comes above/over the department heads.
Covering or touching: over
1. He put a blanket over the sleeping baby.
2. He placed the cover back over the printer.

Horizontal movement at a higher level: over
1. Thick clouds were floating over the mountains.
2. The airplane was flying over the wide ocean.
Ages, speeds, prices, distances and quantities: more than: over
1. My grandmother lived over 100 hundred years.
2. The pilot was flying the plane at over 1000 miles an hour.
3. Over ten million people were demonstrating in the streets.
4. She swam over 1000 miles to reach land.
Measurements (height, temperature and other cases of vertical rank or scale): above

1. His temperature is above 38°.
2. The railway station is 500 meters above the sea level.
3. This book is way above intermediate in level.
4. Your child is well above average in intelligence.
Under (# over) and below (# above): (directly) lower than and lower in rank or level

1. He was found dead below/under the bridge.
2. The highway was built below/under the railway.
3. There was a parking lot below/ under the garage.
4. Some rodents live below ground.
5. As an employee of accounting in the company, my brother works below/ under the head accountant.
- Covering, horizontal movement, less/fewer than: under
  1. He was wearing a pullover under his coat.
  2. Don’t watch this movie if you are under 18.
  3. Under twenty students attended the classroom.
  4. He was wandering aimlessly under the bridge.
Measurements:

1. Water freezes below zero.
2. It is thirty degrees below zero.
3. The plane came down below the clouds.
4. Rainfall has been below normal for this time of year.
UNDERNEATH AND BENEATH

- Underneath:

- To talk about physical positions (lower than) = under:

1. The key was hidden underneath the mat.
2. You should put in a fan underneath your computer laptop to cool it.
3. Underneath the bed lay some drops of blood.
4. A minister is underneath a president.
To talk about physical positions lower than: below
1. The mountains disappeared beneath the thick clouds.
2. Beneath my e-mail rests the forwarded message of the editor.

To be common before abstract nouns in idiomatic expressions
1. He made it quite clear that much speech was beneath his dignity.
2. Leaving litter in the wilderness was beneath contempt.
On the other side or to the other side: both across and over

1. You could find the fire department across/over the street.
2. Across/ over the river, some fishermen were busy fishing.
3. The passerby was pushed across/over the street.
4. There has been rumour all over (across or right across: more emphatic) the city that the prime minister has resigned.
**Flat surfaces or areas: across**

1. Wild animals were roaming freely across the dry land.
2. The ships were sailing across the Atlantic ocean.

**High things: over**

1. He jumped over the fence to escape the police.
2. The children were climbing over the wall.
ALONG, THROUGH, THROUGHOUT

- To talk about length rather than width: along
  1. The people were walking along the street.
  2. Along the beach were erected tents.

- To talk about one side to the other side in a three-dimensional space: through
  1. The plane flew through the clouds.
  2. Water will be pumped through a pipe.
  3. The crowd was too large for him to squeeze through.

- To talk about in every part of a place: throughout
  1. Trite remarks are sprinkled throughout this book.
  2. Different types of animals were displayed throughout the zoo.
Between and Among (amongst=literary)

- Between:
  A. To talk about two or more things or people considered separately
  1. The child was standing between his father and mother in the photo.
  2. The chair was placed between the legs of the table.
  3. The soldiers were trapped between the deep valley on the right, high mountains on the left, the enemy soldiers in front, and a fast-flowing river from behind.
B. To talk about choices
1. She was left alone to choose between her family, her friends, and her wealth.
2. She was torn between her love of dancing and her fear of performing in public.

C. To talk about comparisons and relationships:
   (association, balance, comparison, connection, contrast, correlation, difference, distinction, link, relationship)
1. There is a definite link between smoking and lung cancer.
2. The connection between long hours of sleeping and depression is far from clear.
Among

A. To talk about three or more people or things taken as a whole
1. He was lost among the trees.
2. There was a fly among the food.
3. Can you find your name among these lists?
4. Among the prisoners of war was a colonel.
B. To talk about existing or happening or included in a particular group

1. The swine flu once caused panic among people.
2. We are among the most creative painters in the world.
3. The changes will mean 7,000 job losses among railway workers.
Between and among: to talk about sharing and dividing

1. He divided his wealth between/among his children.
2. Food was distributed between/among refugees.
3. The children used the laptop between/among three of them.

Between you and me or between ourselves; among other things, among others.
1. Reza is sitting behind Hossein.
2. Hossein is sitting in front of Reza.
3. The teacher is speaking before/ in front of/ opposite/ across from students.
1. I drive to my office from home.
2. The people in Iran have been migrating from rural to urban areas over the past thirty years.
3. We moved the fridge from the kitchen to the cellar.
1. A drunken teenager stepped into the restaurant and asked for free lunch.
2. He thrust his hands into the air.
3. The dog was rescued out of the tunnel.
4. The prayers moved out of mosque.
5. The convict was released out of prison.
CIRCULAR MOVEMENT OR POSITION: ROUND (BRITISH) OR AROUND (AMERICAN)

Around or round

1. The pilgrims must walk round/around Ka’be seven times.
2. The earth orbits round/around the sun.
3. A stranger was wandering round/around our house this morning.
IN THE DIRECTION OF: TOWARDS—AWAY FROM

1. All mosques face toward Mecca.
2. The demonstrators were heading towards the main square of the city.
3. The bulky man dragged the bag up to the door.
4. Students ran away from school.
5. Keep the children away from home.
She drove past/by the old school where she had spent his primary schooling.

I was walking past/ by the temple when I noticed a man entering it.

The river was flowing past the small village.
1. We swam as far as/up to the deep part of the sea.
2. Railroads were set up as far as Tabriz.
3. The child drew a line as far as the middle of the page.
To exclude something or someone

1. She let all in but/except (for), save (for) Zahra.
2. All the animals migrated to the south except for/save for/but some birds.
3. But/except for/ save for his books, he sold all his property.
4. The army destroyed every thing on its way except for, save for, but mosques.
Before prepositions, that and other clauses, and infinitive structures: except not except for

1. She never eats out except in this restaurant.
2. This room is ideal for a classroom, except that it is poorly ventilated. (save is possible)
3. We could do nothing except (to) accept the proposal.
4. The committee was unanimous in every decision except to choose him as the head.
But is preferred: immediately after nobody, none, nothing, nowhere, no one, etc

1. No one but Reza was present in the classroom.

2. Nowhere but this palace can you find such crowns.

Except is preferred: when nobody, none, nothing, nowhere, no one, etc come later in the sentence

1. Nothing could threatened animals except a fire.

2. None of my friends visited me except Ali.
Except for not except: before all, every, any, no, whole etc

1. Except for foreign guests, all other people were present.
2. Except for rial, any other currency is acceptable.
3. Except for midterm and final term, no other exam will be given.
Prepositions of Inclusion and Exclusion

- Preposition of inclusion: among, between; as well as, besides, in addition to; under, within;

A. As well as: in addition to or not only ... but also
1. Iran exports oil as well as gas.
2. My boss always looks angry as well as grumpy.
3. As an off-the-cuff speaker, he can argue clearly as well as persuasively.
4. Why do you keep working in the night shift as well as in the morning shift?
5. She runs a modest photo shop, as well as teaching in a primary school.
6. We wanted to build a school as well as raise funds for the charity.
7. They own a house in France as well as a villa in Spain.
8. She speaks English as well as she does French./ She speaks English as well as German.
B. Besides (informal): in addition to
1. Besides money, other things do matter in real life.
2. I can teach inferential statistics besides physics.
3. Besides specializing in oral surgery, my father manages a football team.
4. The area has stunning scenery, beautiful beaches, and much more besides. (Adverb)
5. The book costs a lot; besides, it is very old. (Conjunctive adverb)
C. Under and within: to indicate power or lack of power

1. The English department was in a mess under its new head.

2. Under his presidency, women enjoyed much more freedom.

3. France may have a different turn under a socialist government.

4. Many changes have been made within the country since the revolution. (a place name)

5. The discussion of all grammatical structures is impossible within a weekly meeting. (an abstract noun)

6. We have to work within the framework defined. (a range)
A. beyond, outside of, out of: not within a range or scope or part of something

1. Typing letters is beyond/ outside/ out of my area of responsibility in this office.
2. Operating an elderly patient on liver was beyond/ outside/ out of the experience of a resident.
3. Riots have gone beyond/ outside/ out of control in some Arabic countries.
B. Instead of

1. Instead of staying home, I went swimming.
2. She wanted to buy her toddler a teddy bear instead of a doll.
3. Instead of going to bed early, children stay up late at night watching TV programmes.
1. She never uses public transportation apart from buses.
2. Apart from football, I am fond of other sports.
3. Apart from being a member of parliament, he is the dean of a state-run university.
4. I used to talk a great deal apart from making slurping sounds at lunchtime.
A. By: means of transport
1. She rode to school by bicycle.
2. We travelled to Spain by ship.
Other expressions: by bus/ car/ plane/ subway/ train/ tube/ boat/; radio/letter/phone/mail/ post

B. Method or agent (we do something to achieve a result)
1. The door was slammed shut by the man.
2. The police trapped him by surrounding the town.
3. He stayed in power by bloodshed.
4. My father makes money by (means of) hard work.
C. With: an instrument, tool, etc (we use something to achieve a result)
1. Her wife was killed with a kitchen knife.
2. He unlocked the door with a key.
3. They dug the tunnel with picks.

D. Manner (how)
1. I mounted the elephant with great difficulty.
2. She greeted me with a smile.

E. Other uses: inclusion and descriptions
1. He came back with a police officer.
2. The boy with his finger in his nose spat on the ground.
3. The man with shaggy hair, clean-cut good looks, and a heavy build approached me, asking for directions.
F. Without: negative of by and with
1. It was not possible to build the highway without destroying the jungle./The road was built by destroying the jungle.
2. I washed the dishes with a dishwasher./I did not like the dishes with a dishwasher.
3. Without a wrench, you cannot loosen this nut.
G. In: with means of transport when definite articles or possessive adjectives are used
1. She drove to her workplace in her friend’s car.
2. He was carried to hospital in a car.

H. Other uses of in: streets with a name; languages; means to achieve something
1. He works in Azadi street.
2. This letter is written in English.
4. He prefers to paint in watercolor.
I. Via: a certain route or place/a particular person, machine, etc to send something
1. He went to Japan via Beijing.
2. Please, send along the word files via e-mail attachment.
3. I learned about the his father’s death via Reza.

Via satellite/computer/the Internet/long-distance learning
In spite of/ despite/ for all

1. Despite/ in spite of/ for all international pressure, progress has slowed in the peace talks.
2. The newly wed couples still avoid having children despite/ in spite of all the government’s efforts to encourage population growth.
3. In spite of/ despite qualifying for the job, he failed to get it.
4. Despite/ in spite of the fact that my father had held the post of production manager for twenty years, he was relegated to the head of the accounting office under the new managing director.
Notwithstanding:
1. Notwithstanding all his practical experience in farming, his crop yields decreased this year.
2. Notwithstanding the full support of the public, the presidential candidate failed to win the election.
3. All his contributions to society notwithstanding, he has to stand trial for the murder.

Regardless of, irrespective of:
1. The wedding ceremony must be held regardless of/ irrespective of bad weather.
2. Every adult pays the same amount of tax, irrespective of/ regardless of income.
Because of/ for/ on account of

1. The subway trains had to be stopped because of/ for/ on account of the earthquake.
2. They are not playing baseball today because of/ for/ on account of the rain.
3. Because of/for/ on account of unsafe products, people were warned not to buy them.
Due to (more common)/ owning to
1. He was hanged, due to/owning to murdering six children.
2. Due to/ owning to smoking, he developed lung cancer.
3. Oil prices have spiked in the last two weeks due to/owning to cuts in production.
4. His belated delay in responding to you was due to a hectic work schedule. (… owning to a hectic work schedule.)
For lack of, for want of: negative prepositions of reason
1. The lake died for lack of/ for want of enough rain. (because there was not enough rain)
2. The meeting was cancelled for lack of/ want of members.

For the sake of
1. I stepped down for the sake of my illness.
2. He was put under house arrest for his own safety.

Out of
1. Just out of curiosity, the baby touched the socket.
2. We gave up pursuing the argument out of the fear of conflict.
In case of/ in the event of
1. In case of/ in the event of the failure of the nuclear reactors, the city must be deployed.
2. In case of/ in the event of strong empirical evidence, the government may stop salads in restaurants.

Barring:
1. Barring the delay of our flight, we should arrive there on time.
2. Barring a rise in house prices, we will be able to buy a house.
1. As for/as to the deadline, we could extend it to one month.
2. As for/as to your staying with us, we are excited to say that we will hold a party.
3. With reference to our agents, we have complete confidence in the honesty.
4. In reference to your inquiry, I should say that I will be on a sabbatical.
5. With respect to your second question, it is still too early to tell.
6. We reconsider establishing economic relationship with regard to European countries.
7. We would like to thank Dr Abbasi regarding/concerning the help with analysis of our data.
8. Regarding/concerning the latest terrorist bombing, UN issued a statement, condemning the bombing.
On and about:

1. The biologist gave a lecture on the extinction of some species of eagles. (serious or more suitable for specialists)

2. I watched a television documentary about wildlife in Africa. (ordinary, more general kinds of communication)

3. She has written a paper on the adverse side effects of some rarely prescribed drugs.

4. I had a chat with my friend about his marriage problems.
ABOUT AND ROUND/AROUND

 Movements or positions not very clear or definite
 1. Children are playing about/around the house now.
 2. Some police officers were patrolling about/around park when I drove by.

 To indicate time meaning “not exactly”
 1. The football match begins about/around/round 9 o’clock.
 2. About/around/round five hundred guests were present in the wedding ceremony.
LIKE, UNLIKE, AS

Like: similar to
1. His house was like a palace.
2. He works like a dog.
3. Like many women her age, she struggled to find a balance between her career and her children.
4. He acts like a gentleman before hotshots.

Unlike: different from
1. She was unlike any other girl I had met.
2. Unlike many criticisms levelled at her movie, it turned out to be a hit.
3. Political skills, unlike communication skills, are not widely distributed within the population.

As
1. My mother works as the head nurse in that hospital.
2. I play as a witch in the new series
OF, FROM, OFF,

- Of: possession and material
  1. She was repairing the leg of the table.
  2. This window is made (out) of wood.
  3. The house was built of brick.
- From: place, source, and material
  1. He was from Germany.
  2. Bees get nectar from flowers.
  3. Yogurt is made from milk.
- Off: removed from contact or connection; away from a place occupied before
  1. The leaves fell off the tree.
  2. I lost a button off my coat.
  3. The soap dish is off the sink.
ACCORDING TO

- Reporting or citing authority or source of information
  1. According to nutritionists, change in our eating styles can result in endangering our health.
  2. Football has turned into an industry than a sport, according to many critics.
  3. According to me, text messaging is a genre of writing. (in my opinion, … )

- Degree
  1. Teachers should assign school kids according to their abilities.
  2. The amount of calories we consume should be according to our daily activity.
To express benefit or to represent someone

1. I am writing on behalf of the journal editor to invite you to act as the guest editor for our forthcoming issue.
2. I will hand over the book on your behalf.
Before nouns or pronouns anywhere in the sentence

1. I parked my car in the parking lot.
2. Servants must bow before a king.
3. Between us, we could share the fortune.
4. Down the mountain lay a deep valley.
5. These figures, according to the Statistics Department, are fake.
6. My mother, unlike my father, is very sociable and communicative.
Alone at the end of the sentence (stranded prepositions)

A. Questions (direct or indirect):
1. What institution are you affiliated with?
2. How many patients did you send in?
3. How long have you been waiting for?
4. Whom are you dating with?
5. Let me know what you are interested in.
6. What awkward position you have put me in!
B. Relative clauses

1. You are the only friend whom he confides in.
2. This is the first novel which I have read through.
3. Politics is the only topic I am not so interested to discuss about.
4. The bond market is the starting point we can invest money in.
C. Passives:
1. He was frowned at.
2. The White Fang hated to be giggled at.
3. The first page of this book has been ripped up.
4. The area is not yet settled in.
5. The sugar will be added to.
6. The snow has been walked on.
D. Infinitive structures

1. The software is very user-friendly to work with.
2. The room is too hot to sleep in.
3. The matter is serious enough to ponder over.
4. Old people need some one to talk to.
5. Do you have anything to worry about?
6. I am asking for a pen to sign with.
7. Are you looking for someone to eat out?
OMISSION OF PREPOSITIONS

After certain verbs: meet, marry, enter, discuss, lack, resemble, approach

1. I met him in the park.
2. She married a psychiatrist.
3. The newborn baby resembles her father.
4. We discussed your application in our meeting, but it was turned down.
5. The beggar approached me, asking for money.
6. He has the discipline that other professors lack.
BEFORE A NUMBER OF COMMON EXPRESSIONS OF TIME

1. Come over next Tuesday!
2. This pizzeria was shut down last year.
3. We will send along the cargo this month.
4. The latest blackout lasted all day.
5. I commute to Tabriz every week.
6. You could pay me any time.
7. You will regret your decision one/some day.

Tomorrow morning/yesterday afternoon/the following week etc.
1. We had company over Friday night.
2. See you Tuesday evening!

With “a” meaning each: (per is formal)
1. I eat three times a day.
2. Potatoes cost two dollars a kilo.
3. He drives 100 kilometers an hour.

At before what time (more natural), and on before what/which day (informal)
1. What time do you join us?
2. What/which day is she due?
1. The party ended about midnight.
2. She has been fasting two weeks now.
3. How long will you stay in Japan?

Measurement expressions after be
1. She is the same age as I am.
2. These shoes are your size.
3. This ruler is the right length.
4. This tower is a strange shape.
1. The hotel is this way.
2. You should follow the same way I have explained in the booklet.
3. I would like to thank those who have contributed to this project one way or the other.
4. I stayed home all weekend.
5. We were heading home.
6. I remember him that way
BEFORE “NOUN + INFINITIVE + PREPOSITION STRUCTURE”

1. Students have a wide variety of topics to choose (from).
2. She has no money to live (with).
3. He could not find a place to dump the rubbish (in).
FUNCTIONS OF PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES

- As adjectives
  1. His latest movie about bloodshed in the war-torn country depicts innocent civilian slaughtered by terrorist groups.
  2. His lecture on gay marriage has stirred up hatred.

- As adverbs
  1. Put the book on my desk.
  2. The ship sank under water.
  3. Don’t look him square in the eye.
As subject complements

1. She was in the park.
2. The audience were in the auditorium to listen to symphony.