

SECTION 20 prepositions

● grammar summary

above	across	against	along	at	behind	between	by	down	during
for	from	in	in front of	into	near	off	on	opposite	out of
past	round	through	to	under	until/till	up			over

Some prepositions are difficult, because they have more than one meaning. (A preposition in one language often has several different translations into another language.)

In this section, we explain and practise the most important prepositions: those that we use to talk about **time, place and movement**.

- For *since* and *for*, see page 61.
- For the **place** of prepositions in questions, see page 137; in passives, see page 101; with relative pronouns, see page 242.
- For *-ing* forms after prepositions, see page 132.
- For verbs followed by prepositions, see page 136.
- For lists of common expressions with prepositions, see pages 278–279.

● pre-test: which units do you need?

Try this small test. It will help you to decide which units you need. The answers are on page 284.

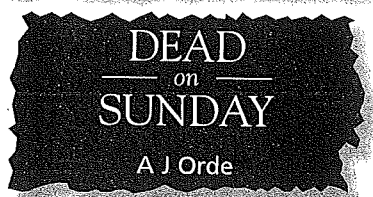
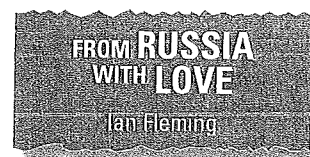
① Correct (✓) or not (X)?

- ▷ I'll see you on Tuesday afternoon. ✓
- 1 What are you doing on next Thursday? ...
- 2 Are you going away at Christmas? ...
- 3 She was born at April 6, 1998. ...
- 4 We played tennis from 2.00 till 6.00. ...
- 5 Can you clean this jacket until Saturday? ...
- 6 What time does the lesson start? ...
- 7 Can I speak to you during a few minutes? ...
- 8 She felt ill during the journey. ...
- 9 There was a notice in the door that said 'CLOSED'. ...
- 10 I'll wait for you at the cinema. ...
- 11 When did you arrive to the station? ...
- 12 There's a supermarket in front of our house. ...
- 13 I walked across the street and into the station. ...
- 14 A bird flew through my window. ...

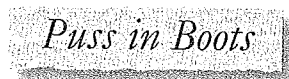
BOOK TITLES



Under the Volcano
Malcolm Lowry



Death in the Afternoon
Ernest Hemingway



ARTHUR KOESTLER
DARKNESS at NOON



at, in and on (time)

We use **at** with clock times.

I'll see you at 4.15. The plane leaves at six. Call me at lunchtime.

But we say **What time...?**, NOT USUALLY **At what time ...?**

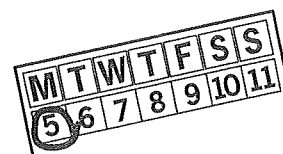
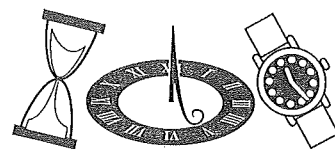
What time is the film?

We use **on** with days, dates and expressions like *Monday morning* and *Friday afternoon*.

I'll be at home on Tuesday. We get up late on Sundays.

The meeting's on June 23rd. I'm always sleepy on Monday mornings.

I had to work on Christmas Day.



① Put in **at** or **on**.

- 1 What are you doing Saturday?
- 2 Can you wake me 6.30?
- 3 The classes start September 8th.
- 4 I'll be at work late Tuesday morning.
- 5 I have my guitar lessons 10.00 Wednesdays.
- 6 She got married Easter Monday.
- 7 My new job starts April 17th.
- 8 Can we meet lunchtime Tuesday?

We say **in the morning**, **in the afternoon**, **in the evening**, but **at night**.

She was born at 6.16 in the morning. I work best in the evening.

This street is very quiet at night.

We use **in** with **weeks**, **seasons**, **months**, **years** and **centuries**.

We're going to Denmark in the first week of May.

I always get unhappy in the winter. My birthday's in March.

Shakespeare died in 1616.

There were terrible wars in the 17th century.

We say **at the weekend**, **at Christmas**, **at Easter**.

What are you doing at the weekend? Did you go away at Christmas?



William
Shakespeare
1564 – 1616



② Put in **in**, **at** or **on**.

- 1 We all went to Wales the weekend.
- 2 I usually go skiing February.
- 3 She finished school 1996.
- 4 My mother usually comes to stay Christmas.
- 5 I don't like driving night.
- 6 Our garden looks wonderful the spring.
- 7 I usually stop work 5.00 the afternoon.
- 8 I'll finish university June.
- 9 I last saw her 1998.
- 10 Carola was born 8.25 the evening
Thursday 17th April 2000.
- 11 I'm never hungry early the morning.
- 12 It gets very hot here the summer.

We don't use prepositions before common expressions with *this*, *next*, *last* and *every*.

What are you doing *this afternoon*? Goodbye. See you *next week*.

Bill was here *last Tuesday*. We go on holiday to the same place *every year*.

3 Today is Wednesday March 15th 2002. Rewrite the sentences using *this*, *next*, *last* and *every*.

- ▷ I met her *in 2001*. ...~~I met her last year~~.....
- 1 I'll see you *on March 22nd*.
 - 2 It rained non-stop *from March 6th to March 12th*.
 - 3 Business was bad *in February 2002*.
 - 4 Shall we go out *on March 15th in the evening*?
 - 5 We're going to America *in April 2002*.
 - 6 Ann had a car crash *on March 8th*.
 - 7 I'm going to change my job *in 2003*.
 - 8 My holiday is in August 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006 etc.
 - 9 I've spent too much money already *in March*.
 - 10 The new school will be open *in March 2003*.

To say how long it takes to finish something, we use *in*.

They built our house *in three months*. Your soup will be ready *in ten minutes*.

4 My Australian friend Sheila is saving money because she wants to buy a sports car. She is saving \$1 a day, starting tomorrow.

- ▷ When will she have \$2 in her savings account? ...*in two days*.....
- 1 When will she have \$5?
 - 2 When will she have \$7? In a
 - 3 When will she have \$14?
 - 4 When will she have \$30?
 - 5 When will she have \$365?
 - 6 The car costs \$36,500. When will she have it?

GRAMMAR AND VOCABULARY: dates

WE WRITE

1999

17(th) March 2002

OR March 17(th) 2002

OR 17.3.(20)02

OR 17/3/(20)02

American English: 3.17.2002

WE SAY

nineteen ninety-nine

the seventeenth of March, two thousand and two

March the seventeenth, two thousand and two

March (the) seventeenth, two thousand (and) two

5 Say these dates:

1 21.3.1999

2 14 February 1960

3 July 28 1846

4 6/5/03

5 May 9 1984

from ... to, until and by

We use **until** or **till** (informal) to say when an action or situation ends.

We played football **until** 5 o'clock. I'll be in London **till** Thursday.

1 Complete the sentences with **until** or **till** and expressions from the box.

the age of 14 July lunchtime six o'clock in the morning ✓ Saturday the end

- It was a great party. We danced until six o'clock in the morning.
- I'm going to have a sandwich now. I can't wait
 - Granny's coming on Monday for a few days. She's going to stay
 - When I was young, you had to go to school
 - I didn't like the film, so I didn't stay
 - I'm doing a three-month computer course; it goes on

We can give the **beginning and end** of an action or situation with **from ... to/until/till**.

I worked **from** 8.00 **to** 6.00 yesterday. We'll be away **from** July 16 **until/till** August 4.

2 Make sentences about John's Sunday morning with **to**, **till** or **until**.

- read paper / 7.30 / 8.00 He read the paper from 7.30 to 8.00.
OR He read the paper from 7.30 until/till 8.00.
- washed car / 8.00 / 9.00
 - talked to woman next door / 9.00 / 9.15
 - played tennis / 10.00 / 11.00
 - talked to friends / 11.00 / 11.30
 - went for a walk / 11.30 / 12.45

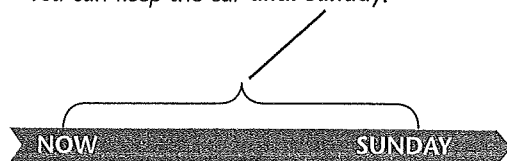
3 Write two sentences with **from ... to/till/until** about things you did yesterday.

-
-

We use **by** (= 'not later than') to say that something happens at or before a certain moment.

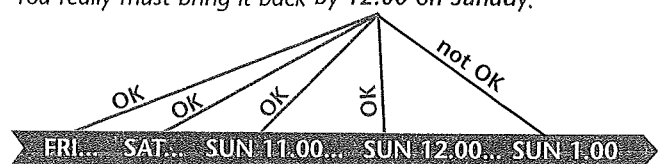
UNTIL

You can keep the car **until** Sunday.



BY

You really must bring it back **by** 12.00 on Sunday.



4 Put in **by** or **until**.

- This book must go back to the library Tuesday.
- The film goes on 9.30.
- Can you finish painting the room Friday?
- If I give you this coat to clean, can you do it tomorrow?
- I must find some money the end of the week.
- Can you wait for my answer tonight?

for, during and while

For + period tells you how long; *during* tells you when.

I slept for 20 minutes during the lesson.

The journey lasted for three days. There was a rainstorm during the night.

1 Put in *for* or *during*.

- 1 I lived in Mexico six years.
- 2 I got a headache the examination.
- 3 We visited Kyoto our holiday in Japan.
- 4 The electricity went off two hours the afternoon.
- 5 Alex and his wife met the war.
- 6 Could I talk to you a few minutes?
- 7 I usually get a lot of phone calls the morning.
- 8 She and her boyfriend have been together a long time.

During is a **preposition**: we use *during* + noun.

While is a **conjunction**: we use *while* + subject + verb (often past progressive - see page 49).

They got into the house during the night. They got into the house while I was asleep.

He got ill during the journey. He got ill while he was travelling.

2 Change the expressions.

- ▶ during the meal (*I / eat*) *while I was eating*
 - ▶ while I was travelling (*journey*) *during the journey*
- 1 during the game (*they / play*)
 - 2 while we were listening (*lesson*)
 - 3 while they were fighting (*war*)
 - 4 during her lesson (*she / teach*)
 - 5 during his speech (*he / speak*)
 - 6 during the conversation (*they / talk*)
 - 7 while she was in hospital (*illness*)
 - 8 during the snowstorm (*it / snow*)

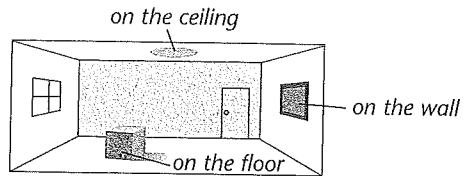
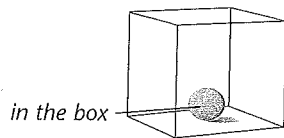
3 GRAMMAR AND VOCABULARY: useful expressions with *for*

Look at the expressions in the box, and choose suitable ones to complete the sentences.
Different answers are possible.

for a moment for a minute or two for a few minutes for an hour or so (= 'about an hour')
for a couple of hours for a long time for ages for years and years for ever for life

- 1 They waited, but the bus didn't come.
- 2 I will love you
- 3 Could I talk to you?
- 4 I played tennis and then went home.
- 5 I went to sleep during the opera.
- 6 She usually stops work at 11 o'clock and has a cup of coffee.
- 7 I often watch TV before I go to bed.
- 8 They put him in prison

in and on (place)



We use *in* with 3-dimensional spaces like boxes, rooms, towns or countries.

We use *on* with 2-dimensional surfaces like floors, tables, walls or ceilings.

'Where's Joe?' 'In the kitchen.' There's nothing in the fridge. Ann's in Poland.

Why are all those papers on the floor? The church has wonderful paintings on the ceiling.

She had photos of all her family on the wall.

People are in clothes. Clothes and jewellery (ear-rings etc) are on people.

Who is the man in the grey suit? That sweater looks good on you. She had a ring on every finger.

1 Put in *in* or *on*.



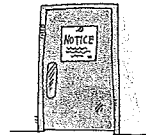
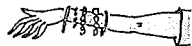
1 a bath

2 a roof

3 a tree

4 a table

5 a cup



6 her arm

7 a plate

8 your head

9 your head

10 a door

We say *in a book*, *in the newspaper*, *in a story* (BUT *on a page*); *in a street*.

Is there anything interesting in the paper? Her photo is on page 4. They live in Park Street.

2 Put in words from the boxes with *in* or *on*.

children's stories ✓ her first finger my diary the office the roof of the car the cupboard

► *In children's stories*, animals can talk.

1 'Are you free next Tuesday?' 'Just a minute. I'll look

2 Is Sandra today?

3 She had a wonderful diamond ring

4 'Where's the salt?'

5 The cat likes to sleep

a little village his T-shirt my pocket a piece of paper the wall your car

6 Don't leave your keys when you get out.

7 it said 'Aberdeen University Football Club'.

8 She had pictures of pop singers in her room.

9 They live near Belfast.

10 I wrote her address and put it

.....

Note that we say *in a car* BUT *on a bus/train/plane/ship*.

Granny arrived in a taxi, as usual. I'm leaving on the 4.15 train.

at (place)



I'll meet you **at** the cinema.

Operator	TE	GW
LONDON Paddington ⇄	1743	1803
Ealing Broadway ⇄ ...	...	...
Slough ...	1800	1822
Maidenhead ...	...	...
Twyford ...	...	...
Reading ... dep	1820	1838
Tilehurst ...	...	...
Pangbourne ...	...	...
Goring & Streatley ...	...	...
Wallingford ⇄ ...	...	...
Cholsey ...	...	...
Didcot Parkway .. arr	1835	1853

The train stops **at** Slough, Reading and Didcot.

We often use **at** to show where something happens – for example, with meeting places or points on a journey.

I'll see you this evening **at** Sarah's house. You have to change planes **at** Karachi.

I saw Ann waiting **at** the bus stop. Turn left **at** the next corner.

We often use **at** with words for things that people do, or the places where they do them.

at a football match **at** breakfast, lunch etc **at** a restaurant **at** work **at** the office
at the theatre **at** the cinema **at** the station **at** a party **at** (the) college/university

1 Put in words from the box with **at**.

a Chinese restaurant a theatre breakfast the cinema
work the party the station the traffic lights ✓

- Paul crashed his car because he didn't stop **at the traffic lights**.
- Are there any good films this week?
 - Her train was terribly late – I spent hours waiting
 - Will you be at Mike's house on Saturday?
 - We had a really good meal in Park Street last night.
 - I saw my first Shakespeare play in a small town in Ireland.
 - The boss doesn't let us take personal phone calls
 - Helen never says anything because she's still asleep.

We often use **at** with **the top, the bottom, the side, the beginning** and **the end**.

My room's **at the top** of the house. Begin **at the beginning**.

2 Put in **at the top, at the bottom** etc.

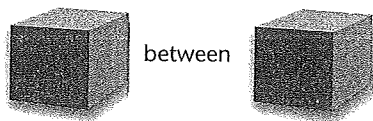
- Their house is down of the hill.
- I never have any money of the month.
- I stopped for a minute of the stairs to have a rest.
- The best fruit is always of the tree, where you can't get it.
- Maria wasn't there of the lesson; she came in late.

Sometimes **in** and **at** are **both possible**. We prefer **at** when we are thinking about the activity – what we do in the place – and **in** when we think about the place itself.

We **had lunch at** the station restaurant. It was very hot **in** the big dining room.

other prepositions of place

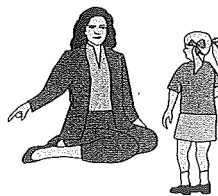
above against behind between by in front of near opposite under



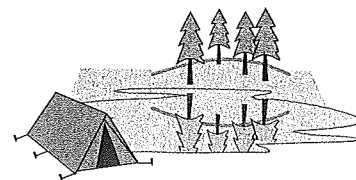
Julia Ann Eric



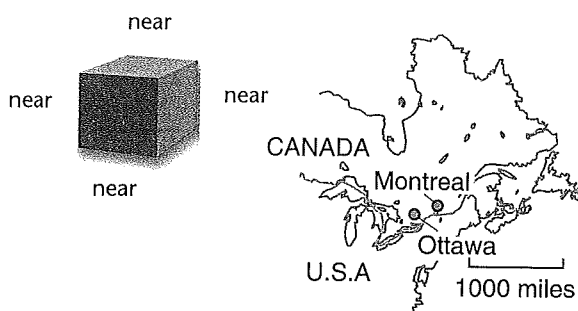
Ann is sitting **between** Eric and Julia.



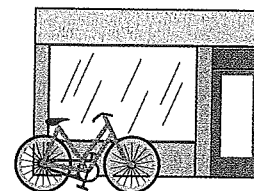
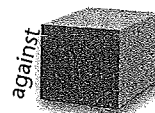
Come and sit **by** me.



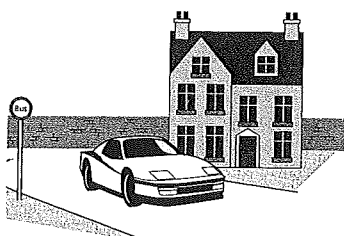
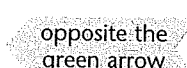
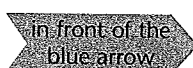
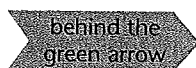
We camped **by** the lake.



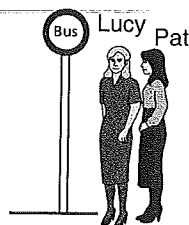
Montreal is in eastern Canada, **near** Ottawa.



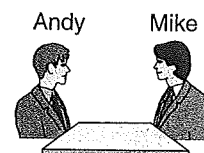
I left my bicycle **against** the shop window.



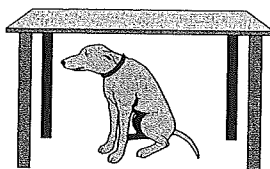
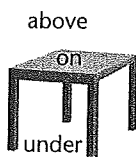
Joe's car is parked **in front of** our house.
There's a bus stop **opposite** our house.



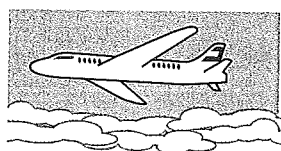
Lucy is **in front of** Pat.
Pat is **behind** Lucy.



Andy is **opposite** Mike.



The dog is hiding **under** the table.



The plane is flying **above** the clouds.

① Choose the correct prepositions.

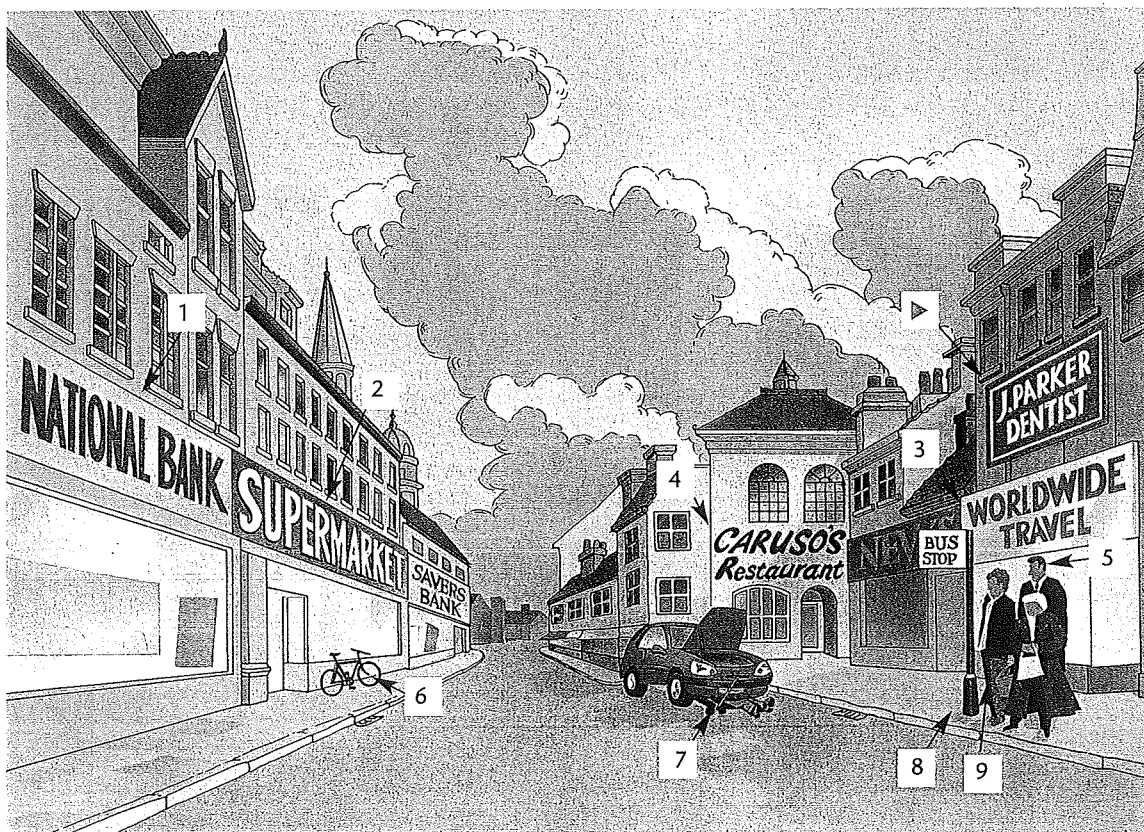
- I usually sit ~~by~~ a window in class, so I can look out if I get bored. (*behind, by, in front of*)
- 1 There was a big bird flying high up the trees. (*above, against, opposite*)
- 2 They live in a beautiful old house a river. (*above, by, under*)
- 3 There's a big clock the door of the station. (*above, against, between*)
- 4 I sat down Mary and looked into her eyes. (*above, behind, by*)
- 5 You can park your car the house. (*against, behind, between*)
- 6 I'll meet you at the station the clock. (*against, between, under*)
- 7 The door wouldn't stay shut, so I put a chair it. (*above, against, near*)

② Put in the correct prepositions.

- 1 She put the money at the bottom of her suitcase, her clothes.
- 2 Our house is a bank and a supermarket, and just the police station.
- 3 Please don't put your bicycle our wall.
- 4 Sorry we're late – we were driving a slow bus all the way.
- 5 I work in a small town Birmingham.
- 6 In the theatre I couldn't see anything because there was a very tall man me.
- 7 We usually have lunch in a little café the school, about five minutes' walk away.

③ Look at the picture and put in the prepositions.

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| ► <i>above</i> the travel agent's. | 5 the two women. |
| 1 the supermarket. | 6 the window. |
| 2 the banks. | 7 the car. |
| 3 the National Bank. | 8 the travel agent's. |
| 4 the travel agent's. | 9 the man. |



prepositions of movement

across	along	down	into	off	over
out of	past	round	through	under	up

1 Write the expressions under the correct photos. Use a dictionary if necessary.

across the river	along the yellow line	down the mountain	into the water
off the bike	over the fence	out of the shop	past the café
round the corner	through the gate	under the bridge	up the steps



1



2



3



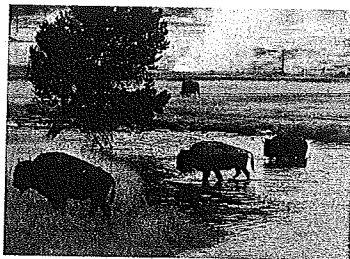
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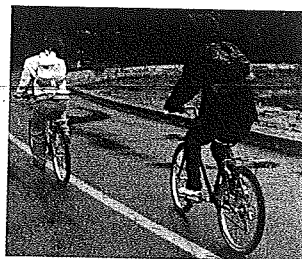
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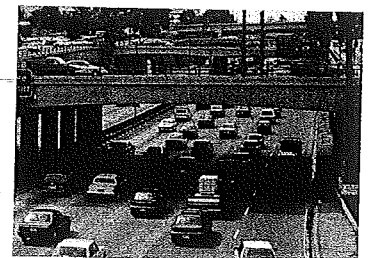
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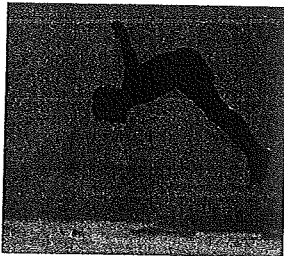
7



8



9



10



11



12

2 Cross out the words that are wrong.

- | | |
|--|---|
| ▷ across <i>the road</i> / the church | 7 through <i>the door</i> / <i>the railway line</i> |
| 1 along <i>the corner</i> / <i>the road</i> | 8 off <i>the police station</i> / <i>the table</i> |
| 2 up <i>the mountain</i> / <i>the table</i> | 9 out of <i>the church</i> / <i>the stairs</i> |
| 3 down <i>the church</i> / <i>the stairs</i> | 10 under <i>the bridge</i> / <i>the people</i> |
| 4 over <i>the corner</i> / <i>the wall</i> | 11 past <i>the floor</i> / <i>the bank</i> |
| 5 into <i>the bank</i> / <i>the bridge</i> | 12 across <i>the river</i> / <i>the wall</i> |
| 6 round <i>the corner</i> / <i>the road</i> | |

3 Choose the correct prepositions and put them in the correct places.

- ▷ I went ~~up~~ the stairs and ~~along~~ the passage. (*along, into, out of, up*)
- 1 Mrs Andrews got the taxi and ran Oxford Street. (*across, round, out of, over*)
- 2 Alice walked the steps to the river and the bridge. (*along, down, through, over*)
- 3 He walked slowly the road for a few minutes, then he stopped and went a small door a garden. (*across, along, into, through*)
- 4 Mary went the stairs and her office, took a letter the table and started to read it. (*into, off, out of, over, up*)
- 5 Go the supermarket, the railway bridge, the first corner, and the police station is on your right. (*along, down, past, round, under*)

We use **to** for **movement**, and **at** or **in** for **position** – where somebody/something is (see pages 258–259).

*I went **to** the bus stop to meet Helen. I waited **at** the bus stop for twenty minutes.*

We can use **from** ... before **to** ...

*He took five days to cycle **from** London **to** Edinburgh.*

We **get to** a place, but we **arrive at** a place, or **arrive in** a big place (NOT ~~arrive to~~).

*It took three hours to **get to** Cambridge. I was tired when I **arrived at** the station.*

*We **arrived in** London very early in the morning.*

4 Put in **from, to, at** or **in**.

- Let's go the country this weekend.
- She spends hours the bathroom.
- Shall we drive Scotland or go by train?
- We flew directly Berlin Tokyo.
- What time do we arrive Paris?
- After six days' walking, they got a river.
- I saw Annie standing the bus stop.
- When we arrived her house she had already left.

Note that we get **into** and **out of** cars BUT **on(to)** and **off** buses/trains/planes/ships.

test yourself prepositions

1 Put in *in, at, on* or nothing (-).

- I'll be here again this afternoon.
 1 I saw her Tuesday.
 2 We usually play golf the weekend.
 3 My birthday is January.
 4 The meeting is June 18th.

- 5 Do you go away Christmas?
 6 Let's go to Scotland next weekend.
 7 We always get up late Sunday morning.
 8 I can't work night.
 9 The lesson starts 9.45.

2 Put in *in, at, to* or *on*.

- We live *in* a small town near Edinburgh.
 1 'How do you know that?' 'I read it the newspaper.'
 2 The train stopped every station.
 3 I'll meet you the bus stop outside the station.
 4 Please don't put your feet the table.
 5 What's that black mark the ceiling?
 6 You will find the information page 16.

- 7 I thought she was going to walk from the station, but she arrived a taxi.
 8 Please write your name the bottom of the paper.
 9 She has a ring the third finger of her left hand.
 10 What time does this bus get London?
 11 She posted the letter in April; it arrived my house in June.

3 Put in *in, from, by* or *until*.

- 1 I'm going to stay in this job next year.
 2 I have classes tomorrow 9.30 4.00.
 3 You can borrow my bicycle, but I must have it back Friday.
 4 Do you think you can learn English two months?
 5 Can you clean these trousers tomorrow afternoon?
 6 The train leaves ten minutes.

4 Put in *for, during* or *while*.

- 1 We travelled round America two months last year.
 2 I couldn't sleep the night, so I got up and read a book.
 3 Somebody got into the house and stole the TV we were asleep.
 4 I'd like to see you a few minutes.
 5 I went to sleep the lesson.

5 Put in the correct prepositions. (More than one answer may be possible.)

- He sat *by/near* the window, and looked out from time to time.
 1 C comes B and D in the alphabet.
 2 I couldn't see the plane, because it was high the clouds.
 3 I had to wait a long time at the post office, because the woman me wanted a lot of different things.
 4 There's a garage on the other side of the street just our house.
 5 Please don't put bicycles the shop window.
 6 He turned round and walked away the trees.
 7 We cycled a little road the river for about five kilometres.
 8 Ann came the church and walked slowly the square.
 9 'Where's the swimming pool?' 'Drive the police station, the railway bridge and the corner, and you'll see it on your left.'

More difficult questions