

Prepositions

A Preposition is a word used or placed before a noun or pronoun. It shows the relation between the noun and something else. A preposition is followed by a "noun". It is never followed by a verb. Knowledge of prepositions is vital as it is a very important area on which questions will be asked in all competitive examinations. Prepositions can be studied under three categories. 1. Simple Prepositions. 2. Compound prepositions and 3. Phrase Prepositions.

Simple prepositions:

Examples: of, in, to, till, at, by, for, from, off, out, with, etc.

Compound prepositions:

Examples: beside, within, above, about, across, without, between, etc.

Phrase prepositions:

Examples: in course of, in favour of, in case of, according to, by reason of, in the event of, owing to, away from, in compliance with, with reference to, instead of, with an eye to, in comparison to, because of, etc.

Prepositions Showing Time

1. at, in

At is used with a definite point of time in mind.

E.g. Jim goes to the office at eight.

She will come at noon.

In is generally used to denote a specific time, period, month, year.

E.g. I play in the evening.

2. on, by

On is used with days and dates.

E.g. Mahatma Gandhi was born on 2nd October.

English class is on every Wednesday.

By refers to the latest time by which an action will be over.

E.g. The meeting will be over by 3 p.m.

3. for, since

For denotes a period of time and is used with the perfect continuous tense.

E.g. I have been working for the last ten years.

She has been waiting for two hours.

Since indicates point of time. It indicates continuity.

E.g. India has been independent since 1947.

4. from

From refers to the starting point of an action.

E.g. Raju is joining the firm from the 1st of June.

Prepositions Showing Position

1. at, in

At refers to an exact point.

E.g. He lives at Amberpet.

In refers to a big area.

E.g. He lives in Hyderabad.

2. between, among

Between is used to distinguish two persons and things.

E.g. There was a quarrel between the two sisters.

Among is used for more than two persons or things.

E.g. The food is distributed among the boys in the class.

3. amongst

Amongst is also used with more than two persons or things but is always used before a vowel.

E.g. Divide the oranges amongst us.

4. above, below:

Above is used for higher than.

E.g. The Aeroplane is flying above the clouds.

Below is used for lower than.

E.g. His output is below ours.

5. under, beneath

Under is used for vertically below.

E.g. We sit under the tree when we have no class.

Beneath shows a lower position.

E.g. She married beneath her.

Prepositions showing direction

1. **To** is used to indicate movement from one place to another.

E.g. The children go to school every morning.

2. Towards points out particular direction.

E.g. The lion ran towards the hunter.

3. Into indicates a movement inside something.

E.g. The cat jumped into the well.

4. At indicates aim.

E.g. The hunter aimed at the bird.

5. For denotes direction.

E.g. I shall start for Gwalior today.

6. Along shows the same line.

E.g. I walked along the shore.

7. Across means from one side.

E.g. I ran across the street.

8. From refers to a point of departure.

E.g. We feel unhappy when we depart from our parents.

9. Before denotes face- to-face.

E.g. He was standing before his wife.

10. Behind means at the back of someone or something.

E.g. My son stood behind me.

11. After refers to a sequence.

E.g. The boy came running after the mother.

12. Beside means by the side of.

E.g. John is the person standing beside the window.

13. As a preposition, besides means in addition to.

E.g. Besides the administrators, the teachers were allowed to state their views.

Words taking more than one preposition

A large number of words are always followed by a fixed preposition.

Example: insist on; instead of; prevent from; But certain words take several prepositions according to the change in meaning of the word. Here is a select list of such words starting with the letter 'A'.

1. Accompany

A. By (for living being).

The Prime Minister was accompanied by the members of his Cabinet.

B. With (subtle things).

His lecture was accompanied with subtle analysis of concepts.

2. Accountable

A. To (an authority or a person).

Should the police be more accountable to the public?

B. For (action).

He is accountable for his deeds and misdeeds.

3. Angry

A. At (a thing).

Angry demonstrators jeered at the President.

B. With (a person).

I am angry with Shyam.

C. For (for a cause).

He is angry with me for keeping him waiting.

4. Annoyed

A. With (a person).

I was annoyed with him because he kept interrupting.

B. At (something).

He is annoyed with his friend at his laziness.

5. Answerable

A. To (a Person).

I am answerable to the government for any decision I make.

B. For (something).

We are answerable to our parents for our conduct.

6. Appeal

A. To (person).

The police are appealing to the public for any information about the murder victim.

B. For (thing).

They are appealing for funds to build a new church.

7. Blind

A. Of (Physical).

He is blind of one eye.

B. To (mental).

She seems blind to his faults.

8. Communicate

A. With (to make correspondence).

We can now communicate instantly with people on the other side of the world.

B. To (to convey).

Has the news been communicated to the staff yet?

9. Compare

A. With (similar things).

Shakespeare is compared with Kalidasa.

B. To (dissimilar things).

Life is compared to a battle.

10. Compete

A. With (person).

It's difficult for a small supermarket to compete with the big supermarkets.

B. For (a thing).

The two athletes are competing for the gold medal.

11. Complain

A. To (person).

If the service was so bad why didn't you complain to the manager?

B. Against (a Person).

He complained to the Master against Sunder.

C. About (a thing).

Lots of people have complained about the noise.

12. Confer

A. On (to give).

The President conferred the title of Bharat Ratna on him.

B. With (a person).

I should like some time to confer with my lawyer.

13. Die

A. Of (disease).

He died of cancer.

B. From (a cause).

He died from hunger.

C. By (sword or violence).

He died by a sword.

14. Differ

A. With (person).

I beg to differ with you on that point.

B. From (things).

His views differ considerably from those of his parents.

15. Disqualified

A. From (action).

He's been disqualified from driving for a year.

B. For (post or thing).

He was disqualified for the post of Police Inspector.

16. Entrust

A. With (in case of a person).

Two senior officials have been entrusted with organizing the auction.

B. To (in case of thing).

I cannot entrust my money to him

17. Familiar

A. With (person).

He doesn't like to be too familiar with his staff.

B. To (subject).

I am familiar to German language.

18. Fight

A. With (Person).

We fought with the English.

B. For (thing).

We fought with the English for freedom.

19. Grateful

A. To (Person).

I am grateful to Ram.

B. For (thing).

I'm so grateful (to you) for all that you've done.

20. Heir

A. Of (descendant).

A son is usually the heir of the father.

B. To (thing).

The Prince of Wales is the heir apparent to the throne.

21. Indebted

A. To (person).

I am indebted to my friend.

B. For (thing).

I am indebted to my friend for his help.

22. Indignant

A. With (person).

He was indignant with his friends.

B. A (thing).

The teacher was indignant at his carelessness.

23. Live

A. On (to exist).

A man lives on food.

B. By (to depend on, to believe in).

For several years she lived by begging.

24. Part

A. From (persons).

To be parted from him even for two days made her sad.

B. With (things).

He cannot part with his money.

25. Responsible

A. To (person).

He was responsible to the boss.

B. For (thing).

Last month's bad weather was responsible for the crop failure.

26. Taste

A. Of (experience).

Now you will have a taste of new work.

B. For (interest).

I have no taste for athletics.

27. Tired

A. Of (mental).

I'm so tired of doing the same job, day after day.

B. With (physical).

I am tired with working for five hours continuously.

Some important prepositions:

A

Abound with

According to

Accustomed to

Admit to

Afflict with

Aim at

Alternate with

Apply to

Approximate to

Ashamed of

Assure of

Absolve from

Accordance with

Acquaint with

Averse to

Afraid of

Allegation about

Alternative to

Appreciation of

Arraign against

Aspire to

Attribute to

Abstain from

Accuse of

Acquit of

Affiliate to/with

Agree to/on

Allude to

Appear for

Apprise of

Arrest in

Associate with

Averse from

B

Begin on

Beset with

Blow down

Belief in

Beware of

Boast of

Bereft of

Blink at

Break off

Bungle over

Busy with

Busy in

C

Compatible with
Compliment on
Condole with
Confirmation of
Conscious of
Convict of
Cost of

Comply with
Compared of
Conducive to
Confirm to
Contiguity with
Cope with
Credit with

Complain of
Concur in
Confer on
Congratulate on
Converge on
Correspond with
Cure of

D

Deal with
Deliberate on
Depend on
Derogate from
Detrimental to
Difficulty in
Disgusted with
Dissociate from
Dressed in

Debar from
Delight in
Deprive of
Desist from
Devoid of
Different of
Discourse with
Divest of
Due to

Decide on
Depart to
Derive from
Despair of
Differ from
Disagree with
Dispose of
Divide into

E

Effort in
Emphasis on
Enlarge on
Entrust (somebody) with
Extend to

Election to
Employ in
Engage in
Essential to

Embroider in
Endow with
Entrust to
Expostulate with

F

Fed up with
Fire at (when not hit)/on
Fraught with

Fill with (enthusiasm) in (a form)
Focus on
Forbid to
Fritter in

Full of

G

Give to
Good at

Glad of
Gratitude for

Grapple with
Guilty of

H

Hanker after

Hostility to/ in/on hand (in possession of)

I

Identical with

Impose on

Incur on

Indict for	Indifferent to	Indulge in
Infatuated with	Infect with	Infest with
Information on	Ingratiate (oneself) with	
Inquire into (matter)/ of (person) / about / after (thing)	Interest in	Insensible to
Insist on	Intrigue with	Intimate to
Intoxicate with		Intrude on
Invest with (power)/ in (bank)		Investigation of
Involve in		

J

Jealous of	Jeer at	Jump at
Just to		

K

Key of (the doo-r)/ at (a problem)		Knock at
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L

Lash at	Lay siege to	Leave for
Level against	Live on	Long for
Look at/ to	Lure into	

M

Married to	Meddle with	Meeting for
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N

Neglect of/in	Nominated to	Noted for
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O

Oblivious of	Operate on	Opinion on
Overcome with	Owing to (not after a noun)	

P

Pay a call on	Persevere in	Persist in
Plan for	Plead for	Pleased with
Prefer to	Preference for	Present with
Prevent from	Preventive for	Priority to
Probe into	Prohibit from	Proud of
Provide with	Put out/ off	

R

Recoil from	Reconcile to	Remand to
Remonstrate with	Repent of	Replete with
Reply to	Research on	Resolve on/ to

Responsibility of

S

Sail for
Sentence to
Side with
Stickler for
Subversive of
Superior to
Surprised at
Sympathize with

Satiate with
Shoot at
Sparing of
Stricture on
Succeed in
Supply with
Susceptible to
Sympathy for

Satisfied with
Sick of
Square with
Subsist on
Sue for
Sure of
Suspect of

T

Take up
Tear off/ up
Throw at
Trace to
Try to

Temper with
Testify to
Tinker at
Trample on

Taste of/ for
Thank for
Tire of
Translate into

U

Unequal to (the task)

V

Vest with / in

View with

Vote for (a candidate)

W

Wait for
Wish for
Write in / with

Ways of
Witness of

Wide of
Wonder at

Practice Test

1. Nobody wanted to work _____ New Year's Day.
A) on B) in C) at D) through E) by
2. I met him _____ the afternoon.
A) by B) in C) on D) to E) for
3. I did things differently _____ the New Year.
A) on B) at C) in D) by E) to

4. My dog used to be scared _____ night.
A) on B) in C) to D) at E) for
5. You could not go shopping _____ working hours.
A) on B) for C) at D) to E) in
6. He had breakfast _____ eight o' clock.
A) in B) at C) on D) to E) under
7. She made a very good plan _____ once.
A) in B) on C) at D) since E) by
8. Many of Europe's great cathedrals were built _____ the Middle Ages.
A) on B) at C) to D) in E) since
9. He wrote again _____ four weeks time.
A) on B) for C) at D) to E) in
10. One of the policemen was killed _____ a knife.
A) by B) at C) how D) as E) with
11. How long have you been here _____?
A) for B) since C) at D) on E) between
12. I will be back again on Tuesday. I should be all right again _____ then.
A) by B) at C) on D) in E) with
13. I came _____ vain.
A) on B) at C) in D) through E) with
14. If you are _____ doubt do not hesitate to contact me.
A) on B) at C) by D) to E) in
15. The Indian railway workers have been _____ strike for two weeks now.
A) on B) in C) at D) by E) to

16. Rewrite the important parts of the letter _____ bold, will you?
A) in B) on C) at D) with E) to
17. Currently many countries in the world are _____ war.
A) in B) on C) at D) by E) to
18. I really enjoyed the party. All _____ all it was a successful one.
A) at B) on C) by D) with E) in
19. I know it was not an accident. You did it _____ purpose.
A) on B) in C) at D) with E) to
20. I saw it _____ TV.
A) on B) in C) to D) with E) by
21. He had to repent _____ what he had done.
A) at B) of C) over D) for E) in
22. A good judge never gropes _____ the conclusion.
A) to B) at C) on D) for E) with
23. She thought that her father was not happy _____ her.
A) with B) about C) for D) at E) over
24. A study mind triumphs _____ difficulties.
A) in B) over C) at D) with E) against
25. Religious leaders should not delve _____ politics.
A) in B) With C) at D) into E) for
26. My voice reverberated _____ the walls of the castle.
A) with B) from C) in D) on E) at
27. She hates being late. She is always _____ time.
A) on B) in C) at D) to E) from

28. How many kilometers are there _____ Paris and London?
A) from B) to C) between D) through E) for
29. It is only _____ you and me. Keep it confidential.
A) at B) in C) among D) between E) on
30. They were _____ themselves with joy when they heard the baby had been born.
A) beside B) at C) through D) without E) in
31. We did not arrive _____ time to say goodbye. They had already left.
A) in B) on C) at D) by E) for
32. He grew up _____ drug addicts. No wonder he became one.
A) in B) between C) among D) at E) on
33. Take this medicine and you will get rid _____ the bad cold.
A) from B) over C) at D) of E) in
34. Which of her books have you got, _____ this one?
A) beside B) without C) apart D) besides E) for
35. Did you come all this way _____ foot?
A) on B) in C) at D) by E) for
36. _____ when have you lived in this town?
A) For B) during C) since D) without E) on
37. I rang him _____ Friday.
A) In B) to C) since D) on E) for
38. I spent a lot of money _____ my holiday.
A) On B) in C) for D) at E) about
39. I paid the phone bill _____ March.
A) On B) in C) at D) behind E) for

ANSWERS

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|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. A | 2. B | 3. C | 4. D | 5. E | 6. B |
| 7. C | 8. D | 9. E | 10. E | 11. A | 12. A |
| 13. C | 14. E | 15. A | 16. A | 17. C | 18. E |
| 19. A | 20. A | 21. D | 22. D | 23. A | 24. B |
| 25) D | 26) B | 27) A | 28) C | 29) D | 30) A |
| 31) A | 32) C | 33) D | 34) D | 35) A | 36) C |
| 37) D | 38) A | 39) B | | | |

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