Prepositions: Time and Place

Prepositions are used to clarify and communicate many ideas by showing the relationship of nouns or pronouns to other parts of a sentence. Prepositions that identify time and place are the types of relationships described here.

1. A Specific Time: On, At, In

Days: On

- My final is on Friday
- My classes begin on Wednesday.

Noon, night, midnight, and specific times of day: At

- I ate lunch at noon.
- My class ends at 4:15 p.m.

Other parts of the day, months, years, seasons: In

- In winter, we usually go skiing in the mornings.

2. Extended time: Since, Within, For, By, During From/to, From/until

- I have lived in Stillwater since August. (I moved to Stillwater in August and am still living here.)
- I must find a job within the week. (Before the week ends, I have to find a job.)
- I stood in line for 2 hours. (I spent 2 hours standing in line.)
- I will have 32 credit hours by May. (When it is May, I will have earned 32 credit hours.)
- He was a cook during the war. (While the war was progressing, he was a cook.)
- The T.V. show ran from 1992 to 2002. (The show began in 1992 and ended in 2002.)
- The fall semester is from August until December. (It begins in August and ends in December.)

3. Location: In, Inside, On, At, Above, Over, Beneath, Under, Below, Underneath, Near, By, Next to, Between, Among, Opposite.

In: the place itself; Inside: within the place; On: the surface; At: the general area.

- I will meet you at the parking area. (The general area)
- I will meet you in the restaurant. (The place itself)
- The book is on the table. (On the surface)
- My coat is inside the car. (Within the place)

Above and Over: higher than a certain point.

- A bird flew over my head.
- I hung the mirror above the shelf.
- He was hiding under the table.
- I hung the shelf below the mirror.
- I found the assignment sheet underneath my notebook.
**Beneath, Under, Below, and Underneath:** lower than a certain point.

- The boxes are stored **beneath** the staircase.
- The child hid **under** the bed.
- He wears his nametag **below** the pocket of his shirt.
- They had a picnic **underneath** the branches of a willow tree.

**Next to, Between, Opposite, Near, By, Among:** close to a certain point.

- My book is **next to** the computer.
- I sit **between** John and Mary in my class.
- The building is **opposite** the big oak tree.
- I live **near** the university.
- There is a water fountain **by** the stairwell.
- There is a pen **among** those pencils.

Note: Be careful about confusing **near** and **by** when used together. Together, they do not make a preposition but actually form adverbs and adjectives. **Near by** is an adverb and **nearby** is an adjective:

- We can take my car because I parked near by. (Adverb)
- I grabbed a nearby pen and began writing down my ideas. (Adjective)

**Additional Resources:**

