

## PREPOSITIONS

Prepositions are words which are used before nouns or pronouns to indicate a relationship between a noun or pronoun and another word. They can serve various purposes such as locating something in time and space, changing a noun or telling us when or where, or under what conditions, something happened.

Some common examples of prepositions are: *at, by, for, from, in, into, on, to, with, between, since*

**Here are some general rules about the use of the most common prepositions – for more help, consult with a HELPS Advisor.**

### Prepositions of time: *at, on, in, between, for, since*

We use **at** to designate specific times and **on** to designate days and dates.

**E.g.** *The Australian financial year ends **at** midnight **on** 31 June.*

We use **in** or **between** for non-specific times during a day, a month, a season, or a year.

**E.g.** *Changes to superannuation legislation were made **in** September 2007.*

**E.g.** ***Between** May 2006 and July 2007, individuals were allowed to make up to \$1 million in after-tax contributions.*

We use **for** when we measure time e.g. *seconds, minutes, hours, days, months, and years.*

**E.g.** *The survey ran **for** 30 minutes.*

We use **since** to describe the duration of an action from a specific date or time.

**E.g.** *The research project has been ongoing **since** March 2013.*

### Prepositions of place: *at, on, in*

We use **in** for the names of land areas, cities, states, countries and continents.

**E.g.** *The 2014 G-20 Summit will be held **in** Brisbane, Queensland.*

We use **at** for specific addresses or locations.

**E.g.** *It will be held **at** the Convention & Exhibition Centre in Brisbane.*

We use **on** to designate names of streets, avenues, etc.

**E.g.** *The Convention & Exhibition Centre is **on** Merivale Street, Brisbane.*

### Prepositions of movement: **to, toward, towards**

We use **to** in order to express movement towards a place.

**E.g.** *He went **to** the conference on implementation of sustainability in organisations.*

‘Toward’ and ‘towards’ are also used to express movement in the direction of a particular place or outcome. Both words are interchangeable. However, some references explain that ‘toward’ is more common in American English and ‘towards’ is British English.

**E.g.** *The research team travelled **towards** the top of the summit.*

### Prepositions with Nouns, Adjectives and Verbs

Sometimes prepositions are automatically linked with particular nouns, adjectives or verbs.

Some examples are:

Nouns and Prepositions	Adjectives and Prepositions	Verbs and Prepositions
approval of	aware of	argue for/against/with
belief in	familiar with	agree with
confusion about	interested in	belong to
reason for	similar to	find out

There are occasions in English when **no preposition** is used. Some examples of these words are: *inside, outside, downstairs* and *upstairs*.

For more help with preposition use, consult one of the many grammar resources in the UTS library, or seek help from a HELPS Advisor.

#### Recommended Reference:

Swan, M. 2005, *Practical English Usage*, 3rd edn, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK.