Prepositions

Definition: Prepositions are words that indicate location and time, and they almost always come in phrases.

The puppy runs to the food bowl.  The tallest puppy is in the middle.

PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES
A prepositional phrase consists of a preposition plus a noun. Sometimes modifiers of the noun come in between, such as adjectives and articles.

Preposition + Optional Modifiers + Noun

In the spring, I always vow to plant tomatoes but end up buying them at the store.

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COMMON PREPOSITIONS

About  Between   In spite of  Round
Above   Beyond   Including  Since
According to  By   Inside  Through
Across  By means of  Instead of  Throughout
After  Concerning  Into  To
Against  Despite  Like  Toward
Along (with)  Down  Near  Under
Among  During  Next  Underneath
Apart from  Except (for)  Of  Unlike
Around  Excepting  Off  Until
As (for)  For  On  Up (to)
At  From  On top of  Upon
Because of  In  Onto  With
Before  In addition to  Out (of)  Within
Behind  In back of  Outside  Without
Below  In case of  Over
Beneath  In front of  Past
Beside  In place of  Regarding
PREPOSITIONS OF TIME

At designates specific times.

At designate specific times.

The train is due at 12:15 p.m.

On designates days and dates.

My brother is coming on Monday.
We’re having a party on the Fourth of July.

In designates nonspecific times during a day, a month, a season, or a year.

She likes to jog in the morning.
It’s too cold in winter to run outside.

For designates measuring time (seconds, minutes, hours, days, months, years).

He held his breath for two minutes.
The British and Irish have been quarreling for seven centuries.

Since is used with a specific date or time.

He’s worked here since 1970.
She’s been sitting in the waiting room since two-thirty.

PREPOSITIONS OF PLACE

At is used for specific addresses.

Neville Billingsworth lives at 55 Boretz Road in Durham.

On is used to designate names of streets, avenues, and lanes.

His house is on Boretz Road.

In is used for the names of land-areas (towns, counties, states, countries, and continents).

He lives in Durham.
Durham is in Windham County.

Note: With downstairs, downtown, inside, outside, upstairs, and uptown we use no preposition.

PREPOSITIONS OF MOVEMENT

To is used to express movement toward a place.

They were driving to work together.
She’s going to the dentist’s office this morning.

Toward and towards are also helpful prepositions to express movement. These are interchangeable, though toward is more common in the United States.

We’re moving toward the light.
This is a big step towards the project’s completion.