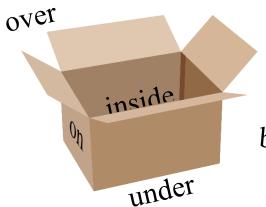# Prepositions

Prepositions can be a tricky thing. They are one of the units of speech we use the least consciously, and yet they are vital to understanding the way that other, more recognizable parts of speech (verbs, nouns, adjectives etc.) work together to convey meaning. But what are prepositions, and how do we know when to use them?

over

inside

on

beside

near

under

Towards

Preposition: A grammatical word specifying the **position** of a noun as it relates to the verb of the sentence. Prepositions are always placed **before** a noun they are describing.

Prepositions of Place (Locative) – Detailing *where* something happens.
  We went shopping *at* the supermarket.
  The cat was hiding *under* the couch.

Prepositions of Time (Temporal) – Detailing *when* something happens.
  The movie starts *at* 2:30 this afternoon.
  We're going to the amusement park *on* Monday.

Prepositions of Method (Manner) – Detailing *how* something happens.
  I ran *with* my legs tied together.
  Unlike Sally, Tom enjoys school.

Prepositions introduce **complements of verbs**. Some prepositions can be used to express different *kinds* of positions. For example:
- The defendant came *before* the court (locative) *before* 11:00am (temporal).
- We're passing *by* the Rocky Mountains (locative) *by* train (manner).

*   *   *

While there are rules about when you use certain prepositions and why, most of them are based on context. The easiest way to learn prepositions is in chunks, memorizing which prepositions go with which words in what context

*   *   *

Can you end a sentence with a preposition?
- Yes! Prepositions **can** end a sentence. It's good to avoid it if you can, but don't do so if it will make your sentence sound awkward or unnatural.
- But note: If you can leave a preposition off the end of a sentence without changing its meaning, you should leave it off.
  - i.e. Not "Where are you at?" but "Where are you?"

Need help knowing what prepositions to use with verbs? Try looking the word up on www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/.