

Prepositions of place and time (at, in, on)

Prepositions of place

In general, we say:

- **at** a POINT
- **in** an ENCLOSED SPACE
- **on** a SURFACE

at POINT	in ENCLOSED SPACE	on SURFACE
at the bottom of the page	in a box	on the page
at the bus stop	in a building	on the carpet
at the corner	in a car	on the ceiling
at the crossroads	in France	on the cover
at the door	in my pocket	on the door
at the end of the path	in my wallet	on the floor
at the entrance	in Paris	on the menu
at the front desk	in the garden	on the wall

Here are some examples:

- Do you live in Italy?
- I have a meeting in Birmingham next week.
- I live on the 6th floor in the flats at 21 High Street in Portbury.
- My train arrived at the main station in Liverpool and departed for Manchester after a 5 minute wait.
- Peter is waiting for you at the cinema.
- Someone has spilt wine on this menu.

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- Susan works in an office.
- The church is at the end of the street on the right.
- The Earth is in the Solar System.
- The title is on the cover of the book.
- There are spotlights on the wall.
- When will you arrive at the hotel?
- You are standing on his foot.

Notice the use of **at**, **in** and **on** in these **standard expressions**:

at	in	on
at home	in a car	on a bus
at work	in a taxi	on a train
at school	in a helicopter	on a plane
at university	in a boat	on a ship
at college	in a lift in an elevator	on a bicycle, on a motorbike
at the top	in the newspaper	on a horse, on a camel
at the bottom	in the sky	on the radio, on television
at the side	in a row	on the left, on the right
at reception	in Oxford Street	on the way

In general when we talk about travelling in a **small vehicle** (car, taxi, helicopter...), we use "**in**"

When we travel in a **large vehicle** (bus, plane, ship...), we use "**on**".

Travelling on **animals**, and vehicles which we ride similarly to a horse, we use "**on**".

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Prepositions of time

We use:

- **at** a PRECISE TIME
- **in** MONTHS, YEARS, CENTURIES and LONG PERIODS
- **on** DAYS and DATES

at PRECISE TIME	in MONTHS, YEARS, CENTURIES and LONG PERIODS	on DAYS and DATES
at 3 o'clock	in May	on 25 Dec. 2010
at 10.30am	in summer	on 6 March
at noon	in the summer	on Christmas Day
at dinnertime	in 1990	on Independence Day
at bedtime	in the 1990s	on my birthday
at sunrise	in the next century	on New Year's Eve
at sunset	in the Ice Age	on Sunday
at the moment	in the past/future	on Tuesdays

Here are some examples:

- Do you think we will go to Mars in this century?
- Do you work on Mondays?
- Her birthday is on 20th November.
- I have a meeting at 10.30 am.
- In Norway, it often snows in December.
- The supermarket closes at midnight.
- There will be many political problems in this century.
- Where will you be on your birthday?

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Notice the use of **at** in the following standard expressions:

Expression	Example
at Christmas / Easter	I am visiting my parents at Christmas .
at night	All cats are grey at night .
at present	She's not in at present .
at the moment	I'm watching a video at the moment .
at the same time	We finished eating at the same time .
at the weekend	I don't often work at weekends .

Notice the use of **in** and **on** in these common expressions:

in	on
in the morning	on Tuesday morning(s)
in the mornings	on Sunday afternoons
in the afternoon(s)	on Monday evening
in the evening(s)	on time

When we say **last, next, every, this** we do **not** also use **at, in, on**.

- I went to London **last** June. (*not in last June*)
- He's coming back **next** Tuesday. (*not on next Tuesday*)
- I go home **every** Easter. (*not at every Easter*)
- We'll call you **this** evening. (*not on this evening*)

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Exercises Fill in the blank with the correct preposition
(**at, in, on, every, next, last, this**):

1. The books are _____ the shelf in the lounge.
2. Dad always keeps his wallet _____ the drawer.
3. There is a long mirror _____ the hall wall.
4. The school is _____ the park.
5. There is an old castle _____ the hill.
6. I arrived _____ Paris last night.
7. The pan is _____ the stove.
8. I am getting _____ the express train in London.
9. The baby crawled _____ the table.
10. There is a cup of orange juice _____ the fridge.
11. We get up _____ the morning, we go to bed _____ night.
12. The flight left London _____ time, but arrived half an hour late.
13. I have a class _____ Monday morning.
14. _____ week, I have a training course in Madrid.
15. Electricity prices are going up _____ October.
16. I'm busy right now, but I'll be with you _____ a minute.
17. Peter is a teacher, but he doesn't have a job _____ the moment.
18. I left home _____ 5 o'clock _____ the morning.
19. They always go out for dinner _____ their wedding anniversary.
20. I can't come _____ evening, I have a doctor's appointment.

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21. There was a long queue of people _____ the bus stop.
22. The ducklings were walking _____ a line behind their mother.
23. Most countries drive _____ the right, but there are some exceptions.
24. Is there anything interesting _____ the newspaper today?
25. Is there anything interesting _____ the television today?
26. When I'm a passenger in a car, I prefer to travel _____ the front.
27. Paris is _____ the river Seine.
28. I live in a very small village, you probably won't find
it _____ your map.
29. I don't like towns, I much prefer to live _____ the country.
30. My office is _____ the tenth floor, it's _____ the left as
you come out of the lift.
31. I'm going to be late tonight, I'll meet you _____ the cinema just
before the film starts.
32. Write your name _____ the top of the first page.
33. There was a list of names, but my name wasn't _____ the list.
34. The TV is _____ the corner of the room.
35. I waited for her _____ the corner of Main Street and 5th Avenue.
36. I didn't feel very well this morning, so I stayed _____ bed.
37. The butcher's is _____ the end of the street, _____ the
right-hand side.
38. I left the washing out _____ the rain by mistake today.
39. The AVE was traveling _____ 280 km/h.