

Prepositions: How It Works

A preposition links a noun to the rest of the sentence. Most tell where or when.

1. A preposition shows where or when

The cat is **under** the bed.

Under tells where the cat is.

2. Where?

Prepositions that tell where:

in, on, under, over, behind, beside, between, near, through, across

The fox ran **across** the field.

3. When?

Prepositions that tell when:

before, after, during, until, at

We eat **after** the game.

4. The prepositional phrase

A preposition starts a group of words that ends with a noun.

across the field

preposition + the words that go with it

How to find a preposition

1

Find the verb.

What happened?

2

Ask where or when.

Where did it happen? When?

3

Find the first word of the answer.

That word is the preposition.

Common prepositions

about, above, across, after, around, at, before, behind, below, beside, between, by, down, during, for, from, in, inside, into, near, of, off, on, over, through, to, under, until, up, with

Watch out

Some words can be a preposition or an adverb. A preposition has a noun after it.

The cat ran **up** the tree.

Preposition: up the tree.

The cat looked **up**.

Adverb: no noun follows.