

Prepositions are words like *by*, *in*, *in front of*, *on*. Notice that you cannot always use English prepositions in the same way as in your own language. It is therefore not always possible to translate prepositions.

You can use a preposition + a noun when you say where you do something or where something is.

Example: I live *in* a flat.

In this example *in* is a preposition of place.

You can also use a preposition + a noun when you say when you do something or when something happens.

Example: My birthday is *in* June.

In this example *in* is a preposition of time.

So prepositions can have different meanings or uses.

Sometimes two or three words can make a preposition.

Examples: *next to*, *in front of*, *on top of*.

Prepositions of movement

Some prepositions describe the movement or action which takes place. They always follow a verb of movement, like *walk*, *run*, *drive*, *sail*, *jump*.

Examples:

We walked *up* the hill and cycled *down* the other side.

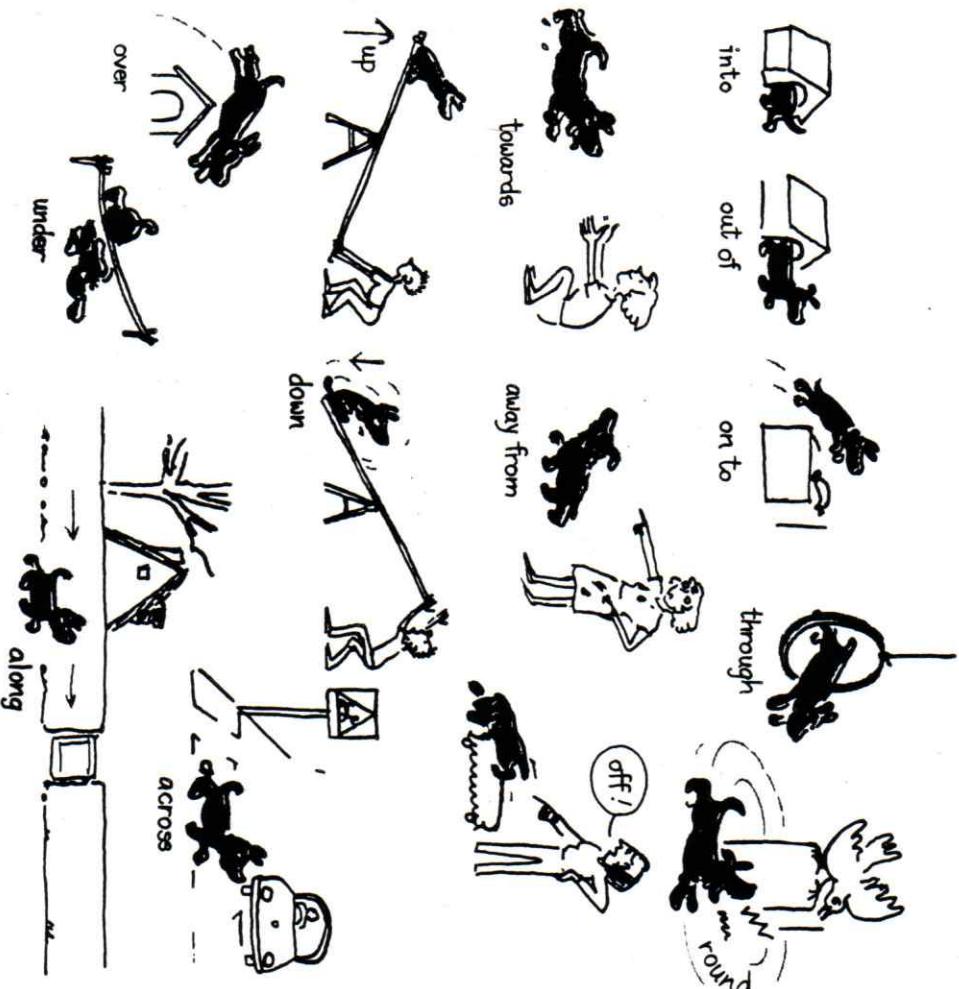
He climbed *over* the wall and got *into* the room *through* the window.

We flew *across* the Atlantic in five hours.

She walked *along* the road *past* the hospital. He threw his cigarette *out of* the window. Don't try to run *away from* me.

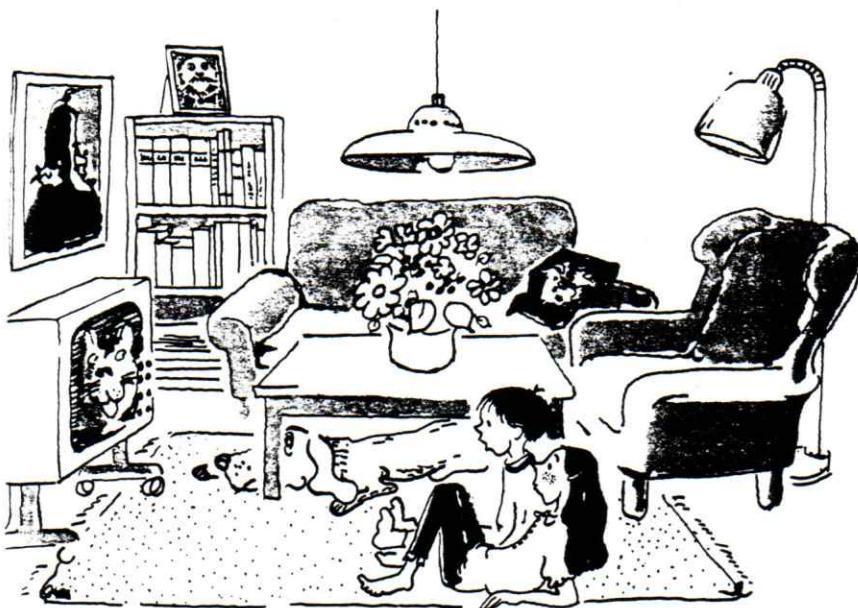
We drove *over* Brooklyn Bridge *towards* Manhattan. He jumped *on* to his motorbike and rode *round* Trafalgar Square *at* high speed.

The ship sailed *under* the Golden Gate Bridge *into* San Francisco Bay.



Prepositions of place

Some prepositions describe where something or someone is. They always follow a verb like *be, stand, lie and sit*.



Examples:

There's a picture *above* the television.
There are some flowers *on* the table.
There's a photograph *on top of* the bookcase.
There's a dog *under* the table.
There's a lamp *behind* the armchair.
There are two children *in front of* the television.
There's a light *over* the table.
There's a vase of flowers *below* the light.
There's a bookcase *beside* (*by, next to*) the sofa.
There are two children *in* the room.

Prepositions of time

Use the following prepositions of time when you talk about when something happens (times, dates, etc.).

in

1. With parts of the day.
2. With months.
3. With seasons.
4. With years.
5. With centuries.
6. To say how soon something will happen.

Examples:

We watch television *in* the evening.
My birthday's *in* July.
It snows a lot *in* winter.
I left school *in* 1984.
My grandfather was born *in* the 19th century.
I'll see you *in* two days.

at

1. With exact times.
2. With holidays/religious festivals.
3. With 'night'.
4. With 'the beginning' and 'the end'.
5. With 'the weekend'.

Examples:

I get up *at* 7 o'clock and go to bed *at* midnight.
I only see my parents *at* Christmas and sometimes *at* Easter.
I can't sleep *at* night.
I wasn't there *at* the beginning of the lesson.
What did you do *at* the weekend?

on

1. With days.
2. With dates.
3. With a day + morning, afternoon etc.

Examples:

I finish work early *on* Friday.
The meeting's *on* 2nd May.
I'll see you *on* Wednesday afternoon.

until/till

To mean 'up to' a certain time.

Examples:

I slept *until/till* 9.30.
We waited *until/till* they left.

by

To mean 'before' or 'not later than'.

Examples:

I'll be home *by* 4.
You must finish *by* the time I leave.

during

To mean 'in' or 'for' a period of time.

Example:

I woke up twice *during* the night.

Notice you can only use *during* with an expression which answers the question 'When?' (*during the morning, during the summer, during November*). You cannot use *during* with an expression which answers the question 'How long?' (*three days, ten weeks*).

for

Use *for* with a period of time. It answers the question 'How long?'.
for

Examples:

I've been here *for* six months.
They only stayed *for* five minutes.