

ENGLISH LANGUAGE SERVICES, INC.

# the key to english

## Prepositions 2



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## PREFACE

This manual, like its companion volume, *The Key to English Prepositions 1*, is intended for use by students working alone or as supplementary drill material in a class. The level of difficulty is intermediate. Books in THE KEY TO ENGLISH SERIES are designed to acquaint the learner of English with as many as possible of the grammatical patterns and idioms used by educated native speakers in carrying out their daily affairs. Usages that are restricted to formal or oratorical style have in general been omitted, except where it was necessary to include them in order to point out a contrast.

### What Is A Preposition?

Prepositions are an important class of **function** words. By "function word" we mean one that has little meaning in the dictionary sense, but whose main purpose in the language is to relate other words to each other and to form grammatical structures. The function of prepositions is to connect nouns (and noun-like constructions) to other parts of the sentence. This book treats those that are selected according to the construction *preceding* them or, in the case of certain nouns, according to the noun that follows. We find that prepositions in expressions of this type are often quite unpredictable. They seem to be chosen only secondarily according to their inherent meaning, and the learner must memorize a great many idioms. For instance, we depend *on* someone, but we have faith *in* him, we feel affection *for* him, and we are angry *at* or *with* him. We approve *of* something, but we believe *in* it. We are happy *about* something, but glad *of* it. We are proud (or suspicious, or resentful) *of* someone, but satisfied *with* him.



## How This Book Is Organized

The material in this book is organized into six units of unequal length, consisting of exposition and definition of the idioms covered, as well as practice exercises of various kinds. There are consecutive reading passages and dialogs.

Each unit is independent. Neither the content nor the difficulty of the units in sequence is cumulative, except that the exercises at the end of Unit 4 cover Units 2, 3, and 4, because these units treat similar material and were split up solely because of length.

A detailed index is provided, arranged according to the first word in the expression, or according to the following noun if it is the noun that determines the choice of preposition. For instance, if the user wants to know what preposition follows the adjective "positive," he will find the entry "positive *of*." If he wants to know what preposition is used in front of the noun "picnic," he will find under "picnic" the entry "*on* a picnic."

The vocabulary has not been rigorously controlled, so that the learner may need a bilingual dictionary along with this book, but in general the vocabulary is on the intermediate level.

The answers to all the exercises (except those for which no single right answer can be prescribed) are provided in a list at the back of the book.

This book is one of THE KEY TO ENGLISH SERIES prepared for the Collier Macmillan English Program by the Materials Development Staff of English Language Services, Inc., under the co-direction of Edwin T. Cornelius, Jr., and Willard D. Sheeler. *The Key to English Prepositions 2* is the work of Sara Withers and Earle W. Brockman, Jr.

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## Prepositions Following Verbs

This Unit consists of two kinds of verb + preposition combinations:

(i) those in which the student might have difficulty choosing the preposition according to the meaning (wait *at*, argue *with*); and

(ii) those that are always associated with each other when the verb is followed by a noun expression (depend *on*, succeed *in*).

So-called "two-word verbs" (*put on*, *put off*, *put out*) are not treated in this book unless their meaning needs to be distinguished from an example included for other reasons.

**1. Accuse of** (an action)

The policeman *accused* the motorist *of* speeding.  
Bluebeard was *accused of* murdering several wives.

**2. Agree about, on** (a thing); **to** (a proposal *or* plan); **with** (a person)

John and I *agree about* that book.  
I *agree with* John *about* that book.  
We seem to *agree on* almost everything.  
They *agreed to* our plan.

*Note: Agree to* is often followed by a verb.  
I *agree with* you about that movie.

**3. Approve of**

Older people rarely *approve of* the habits of the younger generation.



4. **Argue about, over** (a thing); **for** (*in favor of* something); **against** (something); **with** (an opponent)

Tom and Len are always *arguing about* politics.  
Bill and Jane *argued over* what color to paint the walls.

They *argued for* a longer school year.

They *argued against* a longer school year.

We *argued with* our friends about the common market.

5. **Ask about; for**

When I saw Jill today, she *asked about* you.

I *asked for* some information.

I *asked* the librarian *for* some information.

6. **Base on**

Mark Twain *based* the story *on* his experiences in the west.

The movie was *based on* a best-selling novel.

7. **Believe in**

*Note: Believe in* is used in three senses: 1) to believe that something is true, 2) to believe that something is right or desirable, and 3) to have confidence in, said of people.

Do you *believe in* mental telepathy?

Does he *believe in* capital punishment?

Mary *believes in* her husband and she is confident that his abilities will be recognized.

8. **Belong to**

That black car *belongs to* Mr. Sweeney.

9. **Boast about; of**

He is always *boasting about* his car.

The hero never *boasted of* his brave deeds.



**10. Build from; of; on**

The bridge was *built from* a design by a famous architect.

The house is *built of* brick. (*Most often used in the passive. Built out of is more informal than built of.*)

The bird is *building* its nest *of* straw.

He *built* the house *on* a firm foundation.

The house was *built on* a firm foundation.

**11. Buy at (a place); from (a person or organization)**

We *buy* our groceries *at* that store on the corner.

Those clothes were *bought at* a shop in Paris.

The diamond was *bought from* a dealer in Holland.

They *bought* the car *from* the Olds Motor Company.

**12. Change from; to; into (= be transformed into)**

Could you *change* the time of my appointment *from* 2:30 *to* 3 o'clock?

The actress *changed* her name *to* Marcia Mason.

In fairy stories, people often *change into* animals, or animals *change into* people.

At zero degrees Centigrade, water *changes into* ice.

**13. Consist of**

The water molecule *consists of* two atoms of hydrogen and one atom of oxygen.

**14. Correspond to (= be similar to); with (= exchange letters with)**

The Congress in the United States *corresponds to* Parliament in England

Jane and George *correspond with* each other regularly. They send each other letters once a week.

### 15. Depend on

Ed *depends on* his family for financial support.

He has no income of his own.

John is very reliable. You can *depend on* him to complete the job.

### 16. Develop from; into

John's business *developed from* an idea he had years ago.

He seems to *develop* all his ideas *into* money-making schemes.

After studying for several years, Miriam *developed into* an excellent pianist.

### 17. Die for (on behalf of); from, of (because of)

He *died for* the principles he believed in.

He *died from* the effects of a fall.

Nobody *dies of* a bad cold!

### 18. Disagree about, on, over (things, opinions); with (persons)

Sam and I *disagree about* the novel "Catcher in the Rye."

He *disagrees with* me *about* the novel "Catcher in the Rye."

Mr. and Mrs. Barrett *disagreed on* what to name the baby.

I'm afraid I *disagree with* the union *over* the length of the work-week.

I *disagree with* John *about* that movie.



**19. Disapprove of**

Mr. and Mrs. Johnson *disapproved of* the plan to cut down the trees and widen the street in front of their house.

**20. End at (a time or place); with**

The road *ends at* the river.

The meeting *ended at* four o'clock.

The concert *ended with* a song by Samuel Barber.

**21. Estimate at**

The jeweler *estimated* the value of the emerald *at* \$5,000.

I don't know exactly how many people were at the meeting, but I *estimate* the crowd *at* about a hundred.

**22. Fight about, over (things, opinions); against; for; with (an opponent); with (a weapon)**

The two countries were *fighting about* a little strip of land.

The little boys were *fighting over* a toy.

All his life he *fought against* poverty and slums.

He was always willing to *fight for* a principle.

They were *fighting for* their lives.

In ancient times, the Greeks *fought with* the Persians.

They *fought with* swords, not with guns.

**23. Forget about**

I *forgot about* that appointment.

**24. Hear about; of; from (= receive a letter from)**

We've *heard about* that movie, but we haven't seen it yet.

I had never *heard of* that writer until you mentioned him.

John never writes letters. We haven't *heard from* him since he left.

## 25. Hope for

We were *hoping for* a sunny day so that we could take some pictures.

## 26. Increase from; to

The price of that book has *increased from* \$3.95 *to* \$4.50.

He *increased* his speed *from* 30 *to* 35 miles per hour.

Our library has *increased from* 4,000 *to* 5,000 volumes.

He *increased* his reading speed *from* 250 *to* 500 words per minute.

## 27. Insist on (often used with the ing-form of a verb)

He *insisted on* taking us to lunch.

## 28. Jump at

*Note:* *Jump at* is sometimes used to refer to literal physical motion, but it is more often used in the phrase "jump at the chance," meaning *be very eager*.

The savage dog *jumped at* the man's throat.

Mary *jumped at the chance* to meet the famous actor.

## 29. Laugh about; at

*Note:* People laugh *at* or *about* things. To laugh *at* a person means to ridicule or make fun of him.

Afterward, I *laughed about* falling downstairs, but it didn't seem funny at the time.



They *laughed at* the story he told them.  
Everybody *laughed at* Joe when he couldn't remember his own address.

**30. Lie about** (something); **to** (a person)

I think Margaret *lies about* her age.  
Johnny *lied to* his mother *about* losing his watch.

**31. Listen to**

We like to *listen to* the news on the radio.

**32. Look at; in; into**

The student *looked at* the teacher, but he seemed to be thinking of something besides the lesson.  
Ann *looked in* the mirror and admired her new blouse.

*Note: Look into* is sometimes used literally; it is also used in a figurative sense meaning *to investigate or examine*.

Joan *looked into* the still water and saw a reflection of her face.

Let me *look into* his employment record before you give him the job.

**33. Pay for**

John wanted to *pay for* our coffee.  
The National Gallery of Art *paid* several thousand dollars *for* that drawing by Picasso.

**34. Pray for, to**

People are *praying for* peace.  
The Indians used to *pray for* rain.  
The Greeks *prayed to* many different gods.

**35. Quarrel about, over** (things); **with** (people)

Robert and Jean almost *quarreled about* where to plant the roses.

It was unfortunate that the brothers *quarreled over* the money that their father left them.  
He was so hard to get along with that he even *quarreled with* his best friends.

**36. Recover from**

Philip is *recovering from* his recent illness.

**37. Sell for** (an amount of money); **to** (a person)

He *sold* his car *for* a thousand dollars.

He's such a bad salesman that he couldn't *sell* meat *to* a starving man.

**38. Smile at**

Janie *smiled at* the boy sitting next to her.

*Note:* This expression is also used figuratively to mean *to judge with condescension or mild contempt*.

The city people *smiled at* Henry's country clothes and way of talking.

**39. Speak of; to**

Henry *spoke of* you very warmly.

We *spoke of* watching that TV program, but we forgot to turn the set on at the right time and missed it.

Fred has *spoken to* his boss about getting a raise in pay.

*Note:* *Speak to* often means *greet courteously*.

Jack doesn't know him very well, but he always *speaks to* him when they meet on the street.

Sometimes *speak to* means *reprimand*.

I wish you would *speak to* Charles about his bad manners.



40. **Succeed in** (often followed by the ing-form of a verb)  
Barbara finally *succeeded in* finding a good job.

41. **Suffer for** (a cause); **from, with** (a disease, injury)  
He *suffered for* his religious beliefs.  
He was willing to *suffer for* what he believed in.  
Mrs. Grant *suffers from* a rare disease.  
Helen is *suffering with* a headache today.

42. **Talk about, of** (things or people); **to, with** (people)  
We spent most of the evening *talking about* our vacation.

*Note: Talk about* can have the meaning *say unkind things about* when it refers to people.

I suppose the neighbors will *talk about* us after we move away.

We *talked of* getting tickets to the new play, but then we changed our minds.

Mary is in the living room now, *talking to* her mother.

I *talked with* Frank yesterday, and he told me what he thinks of our plans.

43. **Tell about**

He *told about* his adventures.

He *told us about* his adventures.

He *told us* fascinating stories *about* his adventures.

44. **Think about; of**

James is *thinking about* going on a trip around the world.

Do you get depressed when you *think about* the state of the world?

What are you *thinking of*?

I was *thinking of* my plans for tomorrow.

*Note:* *Think of* or *think about* can be used in questions meaning *What is your opinion of . . . ?*

What did you *think of* that movie?

What do you *think about* modern art?

I didn't *think much* of that book. I thought it was dull.

**45. Throw at** (as a weapon, in anger); **to** (a person, not in anger)

He *threw* the darts *at* the target.

The children were *throwing* rocks *at* the dog.

Nancy *threw* the ball *to* her brother.

**46. Translate from; into**

Ezra Pound *translated* the poem *from* Chinese.

The book was *translated from* German *into* English.

Would you please *translate* that *into* French?

He was happy because his book had been *translated into* seven languages.

**47. Vote against; for**

John *voted against* the Democratic candidate in the last election.

John *voted for* the Republican candidate in the last election.

**48. Wait on; for**

*Note:* *Wait on* refers to service given in a public place like a department store or in a restaurant. A clerk in a store, a waiter, or a waitress *waits on* people.

The clerk who *waited on* us was very pleasant.

Please *wait for* me after class.

I *waited for* the bus for about twenty minutes.



**49. Work for; at** (= *make an effort to do something*)

Jerry *works for* the Bell Telephone Company.

Lucy will *work for* any cause she believes in.

I'm *working at* solving the problem, but I don't think I'll succeed.

**50. Worry about**

Don't *worry about* your health.

**Readings****Mrs. Benson**

Yesterday, I was *talking with* my friend, Mrs. Benson. I'm very fond of her, but it seems to me that she worries too much about her health. She certainly *thinks of* it a great deal, and she *tells* her friends *about* all her symptoms. Now, she says, she is *suffering from* insomnia. She hardly sleeps at all. I told her that I had *heard of* a new drug that is quite safe and that makes one sleep soundly. She said that she would like to *look into it*, and that she would *ask* her doctor *about* it. As she was leaving, I mentioned the tremendous thunderstorm we had had the night before. "Thunderstorm?" asked Mrs. Benson. "What thunderstorm?" I didn't *laugh at* her, but I certainly decided that her friends didn't need to worry too much about her insomnia!

**Emily Mason and George Peters**

Emily Mason and George Peters have lived next door to each other as long as they can remember. When they were little children, they played together a great deal. They were good friends, although they sometimes *fought over* toys or *quarreled about* what game they would play. As they grew older, they played together less. Emily preferred to be with other girls, and George preferred to play with boys. When they were about fifteen years old, they