

IELTS GRAMMAR – PREPOSITIONS

Prepositions in English are a real nightmare, aren't they?!

Whether you are writing an IELTS Task 1 letter or a Task 2 essay, you need to be as careful as you can with prepositions.



Prepositions and time expressions

'At' – for times and night/dawn

At 5.30pm/at midnight/at noon/at night/at dawn

'Between' – for years

Between 2010 and 2012, for the years **between** 1990 and 2010, the statistics were...

'By' – for months/years/seasons/most parts of the day

By 2012/By September/2012 (*when writing about a series of months/years*)

'In' – for months/years/seasons/most parts of the day

In April/In 2012/In Spring/In the evening/...morning/...afternoon

'On' – for days/dates

On Monday/on the 6th

Prepositions (and one or two adverbs) for **STRETCHES** of time

She has been in France **since** 1999. (*She went there in 1999 and has not returned*)

I'm going on holiday to Florence **for** three weeks. (*I will spend three weeks in Florence*)

The exhibition lasted **from** September **to** December. (*It began in September and ended in December*)

The construction program lasted **from** summer **until** spring. (*It started in summer and ended in spring*)

I fell asleep **during** the performance. (*I was asleep for some part of the performance*)

He has to pay the fine **within** a month. (*No longer than a month*)

'A kaleidoscope' of prepositions with the word 'time'

I was **in time** for my interview.

At that time I was unemployed.

I always try to be **on time** for appointments.

Pain heals **with time/over time**.

From time to time/At times I get bored with my job.

I'll keep working **for the time being/for a long time**.

By the time you read this, I'll be in Istanbul.

Prepositions and statistics

The figure for men was very different, **with** 50% not eating breakfast

40 **to** 50% of the 25-30 age group didn't eat breakfast **on** working days

Up to 50% **of** men and close **to** 40% of women ate breakfast regularly

rose **to** 50%/fell **to** 30%/decreased **from** 45% **to** 40%

Prepositions and groups/categories

The figure **for** men/**for** France/**for** older age groups/**for** consumption of coffee ...

Consumption **in** Spain was very different, **with** 50%...

With the older age group.../**In terms of** the older age group, the data were different

The rate **of**/the growth **of**/an increase **in the percentage of**/a decrease **in the level of** coffee drinking among the middle-aged group continued **in** the next, ten-year period.

Men **with** part-time jobs ; countries **with** high incomes; cities **with** increasing populations

A slow down **in** the growth **of** coffee consumption occurred **in** 2012

Prepositions of location

Most shops are located **on** the east side...

...is located **in** the northern part of the town/shopping centre...

to the north **of** the cinema, there is...

in the centre **of** the town the market is situated...

Prepositions that are followed by “-ing” expressions

About

I'm **excited about** starting my new job.

They're **pleased about** moving to a new house.

She's **sad about** leaving her family.

At

I was **disappointed at** failing the driving test again.

I'm afraid I'm **not very good at** keeping my own accounts.

He's **useless at** cooking Italian food.

She's really **good at** making speeches.

By

He paid for it **by** working every night for 3 months.

By concentrating on preparing for the test, I improved my score.

I think it was **by** living cheaply that I was able to stay overseas for so long.

For

Thank you for letting me stay.

He's **responsible for** arranging the accommodation.

In

I'm **interested in** buying your car.

Of

I don't like **the idea of** travelling by plane.

I'm **fed up of** arguing with you.

I'm **tired of** going to the same restaurant.

He's **frightened of** losing his job.