

## THE USE OF PREPOSITIONS IN ENGLISH AMONG ARAB STUDENTS

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Arab students face a real problem with using incorrect prepositions when they write compositions in English because of the quite difference in using prepositions in both languages. It is so important to acknowledge the great importance of the use of prepositions in English sentences. There are hardly any rules as to when to use which preposition. The only way to learn prepositions is looking them up in a dictionary, reading a lot in English literature and learning useful phrases by heart.

**Keywords:** *prepositions, English sentences, rules to use preposition, English literature, learning by heart.*

### FOLOSIREA PREPOZIȚIILOR ÎN LIMBA ENGLEZĂ DE CĂTRE STUDENȚII ARABI

Studentii arabi întâmpină dificultăți mari atunci când trebuie să folosească, corect, prepoziții în compunerile la limba engleză. Aceasta din cauza diferențelor de utilizare a prepozițiilor în ambele limbi. Importanța utilizării corecte a prepozițiilor în construcția frazelor în limba engleză este incontestabilă. Nu prea există reguli care să explice când să fie utilizată o anumită prepoziție. Ca modalități de a învăța utilizarea corectă a prepozițiilor sunt lucrul cu dicționarul, lectura literaturii artistice în limba engleză și învățarea pe de rost a frazelor utile.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** *prepoziții, fraze în limba engleză, reguli de utilizare a prepozițiilor, literatură engleză, învățare pe de rost.*

Arab students face a real problem with using incorrect prepositions when they write compositions in English because of the quite difference in using prepositions in both languages.

For example many of our students write (Wait me) instead of (Wait for me), that's because in the Arabic language there is no preposition after the verb (wait), it's not the case in Hebrew since they have a preposition after the verb (wait).

It is so important to acknowledge the great importance of the use of prepositions in English sentences.

Statistics show that one English page contains about 300 prepositions, 200 pronouns and 100 conjunctions and other form words. In other words, there are about 600 form words per 100 sentences [1]. "It is self-evident that omitting these words from the text might make it absolutely incomprehensible, and their wrong usage would lead to misunderstanding it" [2].

The number of prepositions in English is much more than in Arabic, hence many Arab students make a lot of mistakes in using one preposition like (**to**), as the following example, where they have to use another one.

"When they learn the implication or the direction of the prepositions "**up, down, to, at**" they also learn that while "**to**" and "**at**" can be expressed by one preposition in Arabic /ila /, yet they are independent of each other in English, and they usually follow different sets of verbs. The students also notice that "**up**" is the opposite of "**down**" [1, p.28].

Prepositions are short words (on, in, to) that usually stand in front of nouns (sometimes also in front of gerund verbs).

Even advanced learners of English find prepositions difficult, as a 1:1 translation is usually not possible. One preposition in your native language might have several translations depending on the situation.

There are hardly any rules as to when to use which preposition. The only way to learn prepositions is looking them up in a dictionary, reading a lot in English literature and learning useful phrases by heart.

The following table contains rules for some of the most frequently used prepositions in English: [3]

#### Prepositions – Time

English	Usage	Example
on	days of the week	on Monday
in	months / seasons time of day	in August / in winter in the morning

English	Usage	Example
	year after a certain period of time ( <i>when?</i> )	in 2006 in an hour
at	for <i>night</i> for <i>weekend</i> a certain point of time ( <i>when?</i> )	at night at the weekend at half past nine
since	from a certain point of time (past till now)	since 1980
for	over a certain period of time (past till now)	for 2 years
ago	a certain time in the past	2 years ago
before	▪ earlier than a certain point of time	before 2004
to	▪ telling the time	ten to six (5:50)
past	▪ telling the time	ten past six (6:10)
to / till / until	▪ marking the beginning and end of a period of time	from Monday to/till Friday
till / until	in the sense of <i>how long something is going to last</i>	He is on holiday until Friday.
by	in the sense of <i>at the latest</i> up to a certain time	I will be back by 6 o'clock. By 11 o'clock, I had read five pages.

### Prepositions – Place (Position and Direction)

English	Usage	Example
in	room, building, street, town, country book, paper etc. car, taxi picture, world	in the kitchen, in London in the book in the car, in a taxi in the picture, in the world
at	meaning <i>next to, by an object</i> for <i>table</i> for events place where you are to do something typical (watch a film, study, work)	at the door, at the station at the table at a concert, at the party at the cinema, at school, at work
on	attached for a place with a river being on a surface for a certain side (left, right) for a floor in a house for public transport for <i>television, radio</i>	the picture is on the wall London lies on the Thames. on the table on the left on the first floor on the bus, on a plane on TV, on the radio
by, next to, beside	left or right of somebody or something	Jane is standing by / next to / beside the car.
under	on the ground, lower than (or covered by) something else	the bag is under the table
below	lower than something else but above ground	the fish are below the surface
over	covered by something else meaning <i>more than</i> getting to the other side (also <i>across</i> ) overcoming an obstacle	put a jacket over your shirt over 16 years of age walk over the bridge climb over the wall

English	Usage	Example
above	higher than something else, but not directly over it	a path above the lake
across	getting to the other side (also <i>over</i> ) getting to the other side	walk across the bridge swim across the lake
through	something with limits on top, bottom and the sides	drive through the tunnel
to	movement to person or building movement to a place or country for <i>bed</i>	go to the cinema go to London / Ireland go to bed
into	enter a room / a building	go into the kitchen / the house
towards	movement in the direction of something (but not directly to it)	go 5 steps towards the house
onto	movement to the top of something	jump onto the table
from	in the sense of <i>where from</i>	a flower from the garden

#### Other important Prepositions

English	Usage	Example
from	who gave it	a present from Jane
of	who/what does it belong to what does it show	a page of the book the picture of a palace
by	who made it	a book by Mark Twain
on	walking or riding on horseback entering a public transport vehicle	on foot, on horseback get on the bus
in	entering a car / Taxi	get in the car
off	leaving a public transport vehicle	get off the train get off the bus
out of	leaving a car / Taxi	get out of the taxi
by	rise or fall of something travelling (other than walking or horse riding)	prices have risen by 10 percent by car, by bus
at	for <i>age</i>	she learned Russian at 45
about	for topics, meaning <i>what about</i>	we were talking about you

There are some common mistakes that our Arab students make when they write an essay or simple sentences that include prepositions, as an English teacher in the junior high school, I would like to mention some of them.

Our students write for example: My father works **in** a farm instead of **on**, Birds live **on** a tree instead of **in**, He is standing **on** the bus stop instead of **at**, We traveled **in** the boat instead of **on** and the same with a ship and bus.

The reason of these mistakes that in Arabic we have only **in** in the same meaning of at, and **on** when we mean something not inside but just as an opposite of under.

The same thing we have in prepositions of time we use just **in** in Arabic not **on** as it used for days and **at** as it used with time, so our weak students write **in** Monday instead of **on** and **in** 7 o'clock instead of **at**.

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