

## Section 13 prepositions

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#### language notes

Some languages have few or no prepositions. In such languages, space and time relationships may be expressed, for example, by adding endings to nouns. Students who speak these languages may tend to drop prepositions in English, though this is unlikely to happen often at advanced level:

*\*We arrived the airport an hour early.*

Prepositions are normally unstressed, and some of them have weak pronunciations (e.g. *at, of, to, for, from*); some students may have difficulty in perceiving these. The CD-ROM exercises will help with this.

#### possible further activities

**Personalisation** Ask students to write or say sentences about when they work best – in the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening or at night. They can also talk about what they like to do in the evenings, at weekends, in the summer etc.

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#### possible further activities

**Meeting up** Tell students to decide (without saying anything) that they will be at a particular café (for instance) at a certain time in the morning, afternoon or evening, on a certain day. (For example: at ten o'clock in the morning on Friday.) Then they walk round saying when they will be there (with all the prepositions!), and trying to find somebody else who will be there at the same time on the same day.

**Vocabulary expansion: 'in' or 'on'?** Get students to think of five or more places where *on* would be appropriate (e.g. the floor, a pavement, a counter), and five or more where *in* would be appropriate (e.g. a bowl, a cupboard, a hospital ward). Teach new vocabulary as necessary.

**The classroom** Get students to describe the classroom, finding as many examples of *in* and *on* as possible.

**Journeys** Ask students to write short descriptions of journeys they have made, using *at* where possible (e.g. *changed at, stopped for lunch at, stayed overnight at, arrived at*).

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#### language notes

To talk about the uses of things, we can either use the *for ... ing* structure practised here (*Have you got anything for getting fruit juice off clothes?*) or an infinitive (*Have you got anything to get fruit juice off clothes?*). The infinitive structure is preferred when we are talking about a particular one-time use (*I used this stuff to get the fruit juice off my shirt*).

#### possible further activities

**Extending Exercise 2** Teach/revise the names of some more useful things, and get students to write what they are for. Examples:

a paintbrush a file a hearing aid a bathmat a mower a curtain rail  
a picture hook a mop glue disinfectant a compass

**Internet** Ask students how they think these sentences might begin:

- ... by blowing bubbles.
- ... by standing on her head.
- ... by eating paper.

Then get them to check on the internet for some real examples, and report back to the class.

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### possible further activities

**Quizzes** Get students, individually or in groups, to prepare and ask quiz questions on the pattern 'Who was ... by?'. Possible verbs: *written, painted, composed, directed, built, made, discovered, invented*.

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### possible further activities

**Personalisation** Get students to complete one or more of these sentences:

- My teachers /employer / parents / paid no attention to the fact that I ...
- The fact that I could ... did not help me to ...

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### language notes

Students are sometimes told that *between* is used for a position in relation to two other things, and *among* when there are more than two. This is misleading.

Students' languages may have a single word corresponding to English *by* and *until* used to refer to time limits. This can lead to mistakes:

*\*Can you clean this suit until Thursday?*

Students' languages may also have a single word corresponding to English *for* (referring to time) and *during*:

*\*I lived in London during six years.*

### possible further activities

**Geography** Can students say what other countries these are between?

Switzerland Romania Austria Pakistan Mali Botswana Bolivia Brazil

**Predictions** Get students to complete the following two sentences:

- This government will stay in power until ... at the latest.
- We'll have a new government by ...

**Personalisation** Ask students to give estimated (or real) answers to some or all of the following questions, using *for*:

- How long can you hold your breath?
- How long can you run without stopping?
- How long can you go without sleep?
- How long can you stand on one leg?
- How long can you sing one note?
- How long can you keep your eyes open without blinking?

## language notes

*In front of* is a false friend for speakers of some languages such as Italian, Spanish or French: it looks like their expression for *opposite* (*di fronte a, enfrente de, en face de*). This can lead to occasional confusion even at advanced level:

\**They're building a hospital in front of our house.*

## possible further activities

**Exceptions** Get students to complete the following sentences in two or three different ways:

I like all ... except ...

I dislike all ... except ...

**Additions** Students think of an instrument or game they can play, or a language they can speak. Then they mention an additional one, like this:

Besides ..., I can play ...

Besides ..., I can speak (some) ...