

PREPOSITIONS A FEW USEFUL IDEAS ON THEIR MEANINGS

1► SPATIAL DIMENSIONS

If you know the intrinsic meaning of the prepositions (what they're usually designed to mean), then this could help you to better understand the meaning of the sentence, the relationships between the references in the sentence and of course, phrasal verbs. If the preposition is used idiomatically then this traditional meaning probably won't be of much use.

Here are some uses of prepositions where knowing their meaning helps you understand:

Consider how you can look at space and the position of something from a particular perspective.

A --We can often refer to a particular **POINT** in space (and time).

I'll meet you AT school. The show starts AT a quarter past six.

NOTE: There are two more prepositions if we're thinking of origin and destination.

I walk FROM (origin) my house TO (destination) work every day.

I work FROM (origin) 10 am TO (destination) 5 pm.

B --Some prepositions can refer to a **LINE**.

ACROSS FROM on the other side of a line ex: We live ACROSS the street (from you).

ALONG next to the line, for some duration ex: We walked ALONG the river.

ON the location is part of the line ex: (AmE) We live ON Green Street.

C --**SURFACE** (flat) area

The fly walked ON the ceiling. (ALSO: ACROSS) There's something ON your glasses.

D --an enclosed or surrounding **AREA**

We were stuck IN the elevator for ages. The children played IN the car.

You can play here but you can't go IN the park. (ALSO: INSIDE)

E **REVIEW OF CONCEPTS**

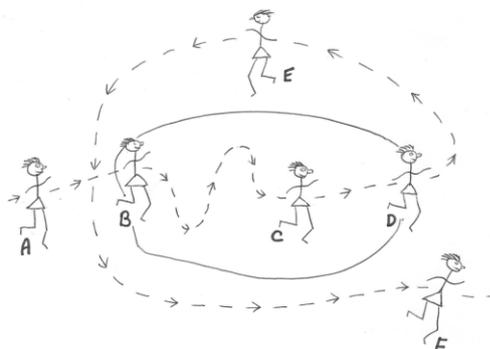
Look at these sentences and decide if they refer to a point, a line, a surface or an area or volume of something:

1) The paper boat floated **on the river.** (SURFACE)

2) We went **to the river.** (POINT: DESTINATION)

3) We swam **in the river.** (VOLUME)

4) It's **down the river.** (LINE)



2► RELATIONSHIP OF DIRECTION

Write the appropriate word(s) in the gap below:

- A) She's walking TO the park.
- B) She's walking INTO the park.
- C) She's walking THROUGH/ACROSS the park.
- D) She's walking OUT OF the park.
- E) She's walking AROUND/OUTSIDE/OUT OF the park.
- F) She's walking AWAY FROM the park.

He is FROM (origin) Canada. She is walking TO (destination) the park.

I work FROM (origin) eight TO/UNTIL/TILL (destination) five o'clock.

3► RELATIONSHIP WITH TIME REFERENCES

Give it to me

before

NOT at 6:30, only before

at

precisely then

after

NOT before or at, only after half past six.

by

at 6:30 or before

around

approximately, not necessary to be precise

4► DEGREES OF INTENSITY OR MANNER

Throw the ball	to	them.
	at	

gently or within acceptable limits
aggressively

They laughed	with	me.
	at	

accompany, together
aggressively

5► GENERAL OR SPECIFIC

This is	for writing.	<u>for + gerund general / frequent use no need to be very precise</u>
	to write with.	<u>to + infinitive specific purpose the defined clarity often 'demands' a preposition to complete the idea</u>