

# Prepositions after expressions

## Introduction



Jack is the HR manager. He's responsible **for** recruiting new employees.

## Uses

We often use prepositions after verbs and adjectives and as a part of fixed expressions and phrasal verbs. Here are some examples we can use to talk about work:

Expression	Preposition	Examples
to be responsible	for	Kim is responsible <b>for</b> quality control.
to be in charge	of	Tony's in charge <b>of</b> accounts and payroll.
to be involved	in/with	Michelle's involved <b>in/with</b> the new e-learning project.
to be qualified	as for	Teri is qualified <b>as</b> a doctor but not <b>as</b> a surgeon. [job title] Larry was over qualified <b>for</b> the job.
to report	to	Chloe reports <b>to</b> Bill. [he's her boss]
to consist	of	David's department consists <b>of</b> one manager, an assistant and three technicians.
to work	as in for	Sherry works <b>as</b> a personal assistant. [job title] Nina works <b>in</b> advertising. [general e.g. education, finance] George works <b>for</b> a big engineering company. [employer]

<b>to specialise</b>	<b>in</b>	<b>Audrey's company specialises <b>in</b> telecommunications.</b>
<b>to deal</b>	<b>with</b> <b>in</b>	<b>Wayne and his team deal <b>with</b> all our travel arrangements.</b> <b>Karen's company deals <b>in</b> fruit and vegetables.</b>
<b>to take care</b>	<b>of</b>	<b>Edgar takes care <b>of</b> hospitality and catering.</b>
<b>to look</b>	<b>after</b>	<b>Morris looks <b>after</b> our overseas investments.</b>
<b>to qualify</b>	<b>as</b>	<b>After studying for three years, Aaron qualified <b>as</b> a marine engineer.</b>

### Note that

1. 'responsible' is an adjective, not a noun, so:

I'm a responsible of IT. ❌

I'm an IT manager. ✔️

2. 'specialise' is a verb and 'specialist' is a noun so:

I'm specialise/specialised in pharmaceutical research. ❌

I specialise **in** pharmaceutical research. ✔️

I'm a specialist **in** pharmaceutical research. ✔️

3. Sometimes, more than one preposition is possible. There might be no difference in meaning or a subtle difference.

For example:

He's involved **in** local politics. [he participates in activities related to politics]

He's involved **with** a campaign for more recycling. [suggests an emotional link]

She's involved **with** someone in the accounts department. [in a personal relationship.]

If you are not sure which preposition to use, look in a good dictionary. And when you learn a new verb or adjective, try to learn the correct preposition at the same time. You will remember it better in an example sentence.

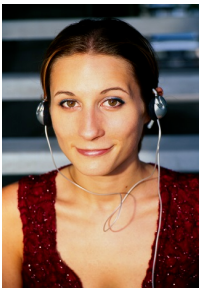
## Feelings

We use adjectives to talk about how we feel and we need prepositions if we want to give extra information. Here are some examples:

Adjective	Preposition	Examples
afraid	of	Paul's afraid <b>of</b> spiders.
angry	about [something] with [someone] at/with [someone]...for + gerund	Ethan's angry <b>about</b> the new regulations. Allison's angry <b>with</b> Olivia. Martha was angry <b>at/with</b> Charles <b>for</b> lying to her.
annoyed	about [something] with [someone] at/with [someone]...for + gerund	Lynne's annoyed <b>about</b> the delay. Mike's annoyed <b>with</b> Noah. Nadia's annoyed <b>at</b> Ryan <b>for</b> not believing her.
anxious	about	Curtis is anxious <b>about</b> the situation.
excited	about	James is excited <b>about</b> his promotion.
happy	with  about	Tom's happy <b>with</b> the results and his team's performance. [satisfied]  Kayla's really happy <b>about</b> her new job. [feeling pleasure or contentment]
interested	in	Janis is interested <b>in</b> new technology.
nervous	about	Adam's nervous <b>about</b> his interview.
proud	of	Renée is proud <b>of</b> everyone in her team.

<b>satisfied</b>	<b>with</b>	Chase wasn't satisfied <b>with</b> the service they provided.
<b>sorry</b>	<b>about</b> <b>for</b>	I'm sorry <b>about</b> all the problems you're having. Cole feels sorry <b>for</b> Dana because she lost her job.
<b>worried</b>	<b>about</b>	Paul's worried <b>about</b> losing his job.

## Other expressions



"Do you enjoy listening **to** the radio?"  
"It depends **on** the kind of programme."

We need to use prepositions after some verbs and expressions when we add information.  
For example:

We're **waiting for** a train.  
They **laughed at** the joke.

There was a misunderstanding **about** the meeting room.  
We didn't get a response **to** our complaint.

### Note that

1. The verbs in the above examples are **not phrasal verbs**. They only need a preposition if we add extra information. Unlike phrasal verbs, they can also be used alone:

We're waiting.  
They laughed.

1. Some phrasal verbs are also followed by a preposition when adding information. For example:

We're **running out of** paper.

After the break, we'll **go on with** our discussion.

Here are some more examples of prepositions after verbs and expressions. If you are not sure which preposition to use, look in a good dictionary. And when you learn new expressions, try to learn the correct preposition at the same time. You will remember it better in an example sentence.

sb = somebody/someone

sth = something

Expression	Preposition	Examples
adjust	to	We need to adjust <b>to</b> the new situation.
agree	to  with sb about/on sth	The team agreed <b>to</b> the revised working hours.  The team agreed <b>with</b> the boss <b>about</b> working longer hours. They agree <b>on</b> most topics but disagree <b>on</b> the question of working hours.
apologise	to sb/for sth	He apologised <b>to</b> the chairman <b>for</b> interrupting.
argue	with sb/ about/over sth	The team argued <b>with</b> the boss <b>about</b> working longer hours. We argued <b>over</b> where to go on holiday.
be aware	of	Andy wasn't aware <b>of</b> the company's safety regulations.
be capable	of	Elaine is capable <b>of</b> solving any problem.
be convinced	of  by	Edwin isn't convinced <b>of</b> the importance of this project.  He isn't convinced <b>by</b> anyone's arguments.  <b>Note that</b> 'of' and 'by' are not used in the same way. We use 'by' in a passive way. For example, we are convinced 'by' an argument or 'by' the results of a survey or experiment. That is to say, the argument or results convince us 'of' something:  I was convinced <b>by</b> the conclusions in the report <b>of</b> the necessity to make some changes.

<b>be/get married</b>	<b>to</b>	Emma's married <b>to</b> a doctor and her sister Samantha's getting married <b>to</b> a dentist.
<b>be made</b>	<b>of</b> <b>from</b> <b>by</b>	Malcolm's shoes are made <b>of</b> leather. Wine is made <b>from</b> grapes. [there's a transformation] The car was made <b>from</b> the strongest materials available. [components] The cake is made <b>by</b> beating eggs and sugar. [method]
<b>belong</b>	<b>to</b>	Tony belongs <b>to</b> the Climbers' Club. [is a member] This book belongs <b>to</b> Robin. [possession]
<b>benefit</b>	<b>from</b>	Jim benefited <b>from</b> more exercise.
<b>blame</b>	<b>sb for sth</b> <b>sth on sb</b>	Sue blamed Ben <b>for</b> their late arrival. Sue blamed their late arrival <b>on</b> Ben.
<b>borrow</b>	<b>(sth) from sth/sb</b>	Kate borrowed £500 <b>from</b> her parents.
<b>complain</b>	<b>to sb/ about sth</b>	We are going to complain <b>to</b> the manager <b>about</b> the service.
<b>cope</b>	<b>with</b>	We're not coping <b>with</b> the crisis.
<b>depend</b>	<b>on</b>	The decision to move to a new office depends <b>on</b> the cost. She depends <b>on</b> him for honest advice. [different meaning of 'depend' = 'to rely']
<b>describe*</b>	<b>sth/sb to sb</b>	She described her new boyfriend <b>to</b> her colleagues.
<b>discuss</b>	<b>sth with sb</b>	They discussed the plans <b>with</b> us. [Do not use 'about' with this verb because 'discuss' = 'talk about']

<b>explain*</b>	<b>sth to sb</b>	<b>He explained the problem <b>to</b> his team.</b>
<b>hear</b>	<b>about</b>	<b>Did you hear <b>about</b> the traffic problems? - lots of people are going to be late. [receive information on a topic]</b>  <b>Note that</b> there are two phrasal verbs which might be confused with this:  <b>I've never <u>heard of</u> chili-flavoured ice-cream! [have knowledge of sth or sb]</b>  <b>Did you <u>hear from</u> Keira when she was on holiday? [receive a phone call, email etc.]</b>
<b>invest</b>	<b>in</b>	<b>The company invested <b>in</b> some new IT equipment.</b>
<b>invite</b>	<b>sb to sth</b>	<b>Let's invite the new employees <b>to</b> lunch.</b>
<b>participate</b>	<b>in</b>	<b>I'd like everyone to participate <b>in</b> the debate.</b>
<b>provide</b>	<b>sb with sth sth for sb</b>	<b>We provided the delegates <b>with</b> agenda. We provided an agenda <b>for</b> the delegates.</b>
<b>recommend*</b>	<b>sth to sb</b>	<b>They recommended a new Italian restaurant <b>to</b> us.</b>
<b>recover</b>	<b>from</b>	<b>Ian's recovering <b>from</b> his illness. Our company is recovering <b>from</b> the losses we suffered last year.</b>
<b>rely</b>	<b>on</b>	<b>Can I rely <b>on</b> you to finish this by Friday?</b>
<b>reply</b>	<b>to</b>	<b>I need to reply <b>to</b> three emails this afternoon.</b>
<b>respond</b>	<b>to</b>	<b>Did they respond <b>to</b> our request?</b>
<b>return</b>	<b>sth to sb</b>	<b>I returned the component <b>to</b> the manufacturer because it was faulty.</b>

<b>say</b>	<b>(sth) to sb</b>	<b>I said <b>to</b> him that I wanted the report by Friday.</b> <b>He said something <b>to</b> me about the report.</b>
<b>talk</b>	<b>to sb about sth/sb</b>  <b>with sb [mostly US]</b>	<b>They talked <b>to</b> the architects <b>about</b> the plans.</b> <b>I'm not talking <b>to</b> Ian at the moment - I'm so angry with him.</b> <b>She's always talking <b>about</b> her boyfriend.</b> <b>We need to talk <b>with</b> the manager <b>about</b> this.</b>
<b>tell</b>	<b>sb about sth</b>	<b>The suppliers told us <b>about</b> the delay.</b>
<b>worry</b>	<b>about sth/sb</b>	<b>I'm worried <b>about</b> Natalie; she seems unhappy.</b>

### Note that

1. People often make mistakes with the verbs marked \* above and others that function in a similar way. This is the correct way to use these verbs:

He explained us the problem. ❌	He explained the problem ( <b>to</b> us). ✔️
Can you describe me the car? ❌	Can you describe the car ( <b>to</b> me)? ✔️
They delivered the company the parcel. ❌	They delivered the parcel ( <b>to</b> the company). ✔️
She demonstrated the audience the new model. ❌	She demonstrated the new model ( <b>to</b> the audience). ✔️
	<b>Note that</b> if it is obvious from the context, it isn't necessary to mention ' <b>to</b> sb'.

However, there are verbs with two correct structures. Here are some examples:

He gave David the report.  
Or  
He gave the report **to** David/him.

I'll send you the information as soon as possible.  
Or  
I'll send the information (**to** you) as soon as possible.

She showed the audience the new model.

Or

She showed the new model (**to** the audience).

## 2. We do not use 'to' in English with 'ask sb' or 'answer sb or sth':

I asked **to** my assistant why she was late. ❌

I asked my assistant why she was late. ✔️

Can I ask **to** you a question? ❌

Can I ask you a question? ✔️

She answered **to** all his questions. ❌

He doesn't like answering his emails. ✔️

## Making comparisons

Note the different prepositions with these expressions:

Japan is different **from/to/than** Germany.

'from' - the most common.

'to' - used more in the UK than the US.

'than' - used more in the US than the UK.

My car is the same **as** yours.

This building is similar **to** that one.

See also **gerunds and infinitives** and **phrasal verbs**.

## To depend on

'To depend' is conjugated in the same way as other verbs and is followed by 'on' plus a noun:

It depends **on** the weather. ✔️

It's depend **of** the weather. ❌

We're going to use either the boardroom or the conference room - it'll depend **on** the number of people who come.

For me, getting to work on time in my last job always depended **on** the traffic.  
Depending **on** my workload, I'd like to see you next week.

**Note that** the preposition isn't always necessary. Here are some guidelines:

With these words		Examples
<b>If</b>	<b>No preposition</b>	"Shall we go out tomorrow?"  "It depends <b>on</b> if it rains or not."
<b>Whether</b>	<b>The preposition is possible but not necessary</b>	"Shall we go out tomorrow?"  "It depends ( <b>on</b> ) whether it rains or not."
<b>What, when, where, which, why, who, how</b>	<b>The preposition is possible but not necessary</b>	"Shall we go out tomorrow?"  "It depends ( <b>on</b> ) where you want to go and what you want to do."

## Expressions with in, on, and at

These prepositions can be used in expressions which are not about time, physical places or movement. Here are some examples:

Preposition	Use/expression	Examples
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<b>in</b>	<b>in a film/a book</b>	Robert de Niro is <b>in</b> comedies as well as gangster movies. I love the characters <b>in</b> <i>Lord of the Rings</i> .
	<b>in love</b>	They fell <b>in</b> love <b>at</b> first sight.
	<b>in time</b>	We didn't arrive <b>in</b> time to see Richard at the party - he left before we got there.
	<b>in bed</b>	At weekends, he stays <b>in</b> bed till 10.00.
	<b>in general</b>	He's occasionally late for meetings but, <b>in</b> general, he's quite reliable.
<b>on</b>	<b>on the phone</b>	Sorry, he can't see you; he's <b>on</b> the phone to a client.
	<b>on a number</b>	Could you ask him to call me back <b>on</b> 020 7513 0513 <input type="text" value="x"/> 020 7513 0513? [ <b>at</b> + phone number in US]
	<b>on duty</b>	I'll be <b>on</b> duty at the hospital until 8 o'clock.
	<b>on tv/radio</b>	Some people think there's too much violence <b>on</b> tv. The news is <b>on</b> at 9 o'clock.
	<b>on a cd/dvd</b>	I think you'll like the songs <b>on</b> this cd. I missed the last James Bond film at the cinema so I'm going to watch it <b>on</b> dvd.
	<b>on a hard drive</b>	Don't worry - all the information is stored <b>on</b> the hard drive.
	<b>on the internet/a website</b>	Some children spend too much time <b>on</b> the internet. There's a lot of useful information <b>on</b> our website. I read it <b>on</b> Wikipedia.
	<b>on time</b>	I want to start the meeting <b>on</b> time so please don't be late.

<b>at</b>	<b>at once</b>	<b>Let's start <b>at</b> once - we don't have much time.</b>
	<b>at ease</b>	<b>I like the new manager. I felt <b>at</b> ease when I met him.</b>
	<b>at first</b>	<b><b>At</b> first, the new system was confusing but it's easy now.</b>
	<b>at last</b>	<b>We waited an hour for the bus. When it arrived <b>at</b> last, it was full!</b>
	<b>at all</b>	<b>We don't have any more printer paper <b>at</b> all. I don't understand the instructions <b>at</b> all.</b>

See also [phrasal verbs](#), [prepositions of place](#) and [get](#).



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