

Prepositions of place: in, on, at, next to

Introduction



The laptop is **on** the desk. The cup is **next to** the laptop. The flowers are **in** a vase.

Definition

We use the prepositions 'in', 'on', 'at' and 'next to' to for location and position.

Uses

	Uses	Examples
in	An enclosed space	in a box, a bag, a room, a cupboard, a cup
	Towns, cities, states, countries, continents etc.	in Birmingham, Kent, California, Japan, Asia
	Other large areas	in the countryside, a neighbourhood, a district, a park, a car park, a garden, the world
	Roads	in a street, a road, an avenue, the High Street, Bingley Road [UK]
	Pictures and documents	in a picture, a photo, a painting, a report, an email, a contract, a newspaper, a magazine, a book, a film
	Some (smaller) forms of transport	in a car, a taxi, a helicopter, an open boat
on	A surface - horizontal or vertical	on the table, the wall, a shelf, a screen, a plate, a face, a head, page 2, the front cover of the book, the menu
	Transport and travel	on a bus, train, a boat, a ship, a flight, a trip, a journey, a picnic, a bike ride, a break, holiday
	Some locations	on the left, the right, the side, the coast, the beach, the 2 nd floor on an island, a farm, a college campus on a road/street/avenue etc. [mainly US] on a motorway, the High Street, Oxford Street [i.e. main roads]

	Uses	Examples
on (the) top of	At the highest point of something tall or high	on top of a cupboard, wardrobe, a hill, a mountain
at	Some locations that are buildings	at the cinema, the theatre, the pub, a restaurant, work, home, school, university
	Some other locations	at the beach, the lake
	A point on a journey	at a junction, traffic lights, a corner, a bus stop
	An address	at 88 Bingley Road, 10 Downing Street
	Positions	at the back, the front, the top, the bottom, the end

Examples



They're **in** an office.



She's **in** London.



She's **at** the reception desk.



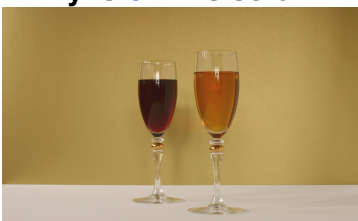
They're **at** work.



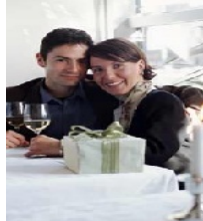
Emily is **on** the sofa.



The pictures are **on** the wall.



The red wine is **next to** the white wine.



Sue's **next to** Jim.

'In' and 'out'

As adverbs, these can be used alone to mean 'here' or 'not here':

- “Can I speak to Jack, please?”
- “Sorry, he's not **in** today. Can I take a message?” [not at work]
- I'm the only person at home today. Everyone else is **out**. [not at home]
- We're going* **out** later, maybe to the cinema; we're not sure yet.
- I didn't hear you come **in** last night; what time was it?



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