# Prepositions of place, direction, movement

## Introduction




Walk through Victoria Tower Gardens, go across Lambeth Bridge and around the roundabout towards Lambeth Palace.

## Prepositions of movement

**Prepositions of place indicate where something is and others tell us about movement from one place to another.**

**He's at work. [place]**
**He's going to work. ✔ [movement]**

**Some prepositions can perform both functions:**

**The bank is across the road. [place]**
**We walked across the road. [movement]**

**Here are some more examples:**

| | Uses | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| **onto [also 'on to']** | **Resulting in being 'on'** | **They got onto the train.<br>We loaded the goods onto the truck.** |
| **over** | **To go higher than<br>To cross something** | **We flew over the mountain.<br>We went over the river/the road/the bridge.** |

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| **across** | **With a verb like 'go' to mean 'to cross'** | **We went across the river/the road/the bridge.<br>We walked across the square to get to the cathedral.** |
| **into** | **Resulting in being 'in'**<br><br>**Resulting in being in direct contact with something** | **They got into the car.<br>Put the files into that cabinet, please.**<br><br>**He wasn't concentrating and he walked into the door.** |
| **out of** | **Resulting in being 'out'** | **They got out of the car.<br>He threw it out of the window.** |
| **inside** | **Resulting in being in an enclosed space** | **Go inside the station and wait for me there; I won't be long.** |
| **outside** | **Resulting in being not 'in' but 'near' an enclosed space** | **He went outside the building to smoke.** |
| **through** | **Moving into one side and out of another**<br><br>**Moving around in or from one side to another** | **You need to go through this door and through two offices to get to the canteen.**<br><br>**We walked through the park/forest/market.** |
| **up** | **From a lower to a higher part of something**<br><br>**To go further** | **We walked up the hill and found a nice café.**<br><br>**We went up the street/road/river/beach.** |
| **down** | **From a lower to a higher part of something**<br><br>**To go further** | **The children ran down the hill/the stairs.**<br><br>**We went down the street/road/river/beach.** |

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| **around**<br>**round [mostly UK]** | **To go to several places in an area**<br><br>**To go in an approximately circular direction** | **He travels around the world with his job.**<br><br>**Go round the next corner and you'll see the post office.** |
| **along** | **To move in a constant direction** | **We drove along the motorway for 40 miles.**<br>**I love walking along the beach at night.** |
| **past** | **To go further than something** | **You need to go past the bank and turn left.** |
| **from** | **Beginning a journey** | **We're coming from Heathrow.**<br>**I get home from work at 7.00.** |
| **to** | **Reaching a destination**<br><br>**Note that with the verb 'to arrive', we use 'at' or 'in':** | **They're getting a taxi to the airport and flying to Barcelona.**<br>**I go to bed at 11.00.**<br><br>**We arrived at the party/airport or in London/England etc.** |
| **towards [UK]**<br>**toward [US]** | **To go in the direction of [might not be destination]** | **Drive towards the town centre and turn left at the next traffic lights.** |
| **off** | **To move down or away from** | **Get your feet off the table.**<br>**The dog fell off the bed.** |
| **via** | **To travel to on the way to somewhere else** | **They flew to Australia via India.** |
| **aboard** | **To board some vehicles** | **We climbed aboard the boat/plane/helicopter/London Eye.** |
| **against** | **In the opposite direction** | **Driving into London at night is easy because it's against the commuter traffic.** |

# 'In'/'into' and 'on'/'onto'

**We often use 'in' and 'on' instead of 'into' and 'onto' to indicate movement. It can depend on the verb. For example, both can be used with 'get':**

**We got on/onto the train.**
**We got in/into the car.**

**With 'put', we are more likely to use 'in' and 'on':**

**I put my keys in my bag/on the table.**

**With 'go', 'walk', 'step' or 'jump', we use 'into' or 'onto':**

**He went into the boardroom 5 minutes ago.**
**She stepped onto the platform.**
**The cat jumped onto the table.**

**Sometimes, they are not interchangeable but have different meanings. For example:**

**We cycle in the village. [We cycle when we are in the village.]**
**We cycle into the village. [We cycle when we go to the village from another location.]**

# Expressions for giving directions

**We use prepositions of place and movement when giving directions. Here are some examples:**

**Drive past the church and take the first turning on the left. Go along this road for two miles and stop at the traffic lights. Go over the bridge and through a tunnel. Turn right when you come to a big shopping centre. Go round the roundabout and take the 3rd exit. Drive towards the town centre and park near the cathedral. Walk across the square and you'll find the tourist office on the corner next to a patisserie. I'll meet you there.**

# Other meanings and uses

**Some prepositions of place and movement also function as adverbs.**

**For more information, see Adverbs of time and place and if in doubt, check in a good dictionary.**
**Also see Prepositions with expressions.**



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