
Prepositions of Direction or Motion

Introduction

1) A preposition is usually a short word used to link nouns, pronouns, or phrases to other words within a sentence.

*If I'm not mistaken, her birthday is **in** May.*

2) There are many types of prepositions. Among them there are prepositions of direction or motion. They are used to show movement from one place to the other. We usually use prepositions of direction or motion when we answer the question beginning with 'Where?'.

***Where** are you going? – I'm going **to** the supermarket.*

There are several commonly used prepositions of direction or motion:

a) *to* is used to show movement in a specific direction.

*I'll head off **to** work in a couple of minutes.*

*Kimberly moved **to** Florida a year ago.*

Note that you can also use *towards* in the meaning 'in the direction of'.

*Why are these policemen running **towards** Erick?*

b) *into* is used to show movement into something (enclosed space), while *onto* shows movement on top of something (surface).

*The dog jumped **into** the kennel, while the cat leaped **onto** the roof of the kennel.*

c) *across* is used to show movement from one side to the other side of something.

*You can't walk **across** the street wherever you want.*

d) *over* is used to show an upward and forward direction across something.

*The boys jumped **over** the fence and chased the cat.*

e) *through* is used to show movement within an enclosed space from one point to the other.

*I don't like driving **through** the tunnels. I feel a bit anxious then.*

f) *past* is used to indicate movement near something while you are on your way to another location.

*I waved at Mary but she walked **past** me.*

Short Story Dialogue

– *Excuse me, Sir, could you tell me how I can get **to** the nearest supermarket?*

– *Surely! You have to go **through** that small park over there. Then turn right and go **past** the cinema. Right on the corner you'll see a huge supermarket sign. Just go **across** the street and there will be the entrance.*

– *Thank you very much!*

Independent Practice - Prepositions of Direction or Motion

1) Underline the correct preposition.

- a. Sarah's cat always jumps *onto/to* her bed whenever she enters the bedroom.
- b. I usually go *over/through* the park on my way home.
- c. Walk *across/through* the street at the traffic lights.
- d. They walked *into/through* the room and stood frozen.
- e. You are highly motivated, when you are working *past/towards* your goals.
- f. I need to go *to/towards* the library to get some books for my research.
- g. This ferry can take you *across/over* the river.
- h. The dog jumped *through/over* the fence to greet its owner.
- i. Michael usually buys coffee in the morning but this time he was running late so he went *to/past* his favourite coffee place.
- j. The lady carefully stepped from the train *into/onto* the platform.

Independent Practice: Answers - Prepositions of Direction or Motion

1) Underline the correct preposition.

- a. Sarah's cat always jumps onto/~~to~~ her bed whenever she enters the bedroom.
- b. I usually go ~~over~~/through the park on my way home.
- c. Walk across/~~through~~ the street at the traffic lights.
- d. They walked into/~~through~~ the room and stood frozen.
- e. You are highly motivated, when you are working ~~past~~/towards your goals.
- f. I need to go to/~~towards~~ the library to get some books for my research.
- g. This ferry can take you across/~~over~~ the river.
- h. The dog jumped ~~through~~/over the fence to greet its owner.
- i. Michael usually buys coffee in the morning but this time he was running late so he went ~~to~~/past his favourite coffee place.
- j. The lady carefully stepped from the train ~~into~~/onto the platform.