Prepositions of time and place

**The Prepositions of time**

The preposition ***at*** is used in the following descriptions of time:

**With clock times**

* My last train leaves at 10:30.
* We left at midnight.
* The meeting starts at two thirty.

**With specific times of day, or mealtimes**

* He doesn’t like driving at night.
* I’ll go shopping at lunchtime.
* I like to read the children a story at bedtime.

**With festivals**

* Are you going home at Christmas/Easter?

**In certain fixed expressions which refer to specific points in time**

* Are you leaving at the weekend?\*
* She’s working at the moment.
* He’s unavailable at present.
* I finish the course at the end of April.
* We arrived at the same time.

The preposition ***in*** is used in the following descriptions of time:

**With months, years, seasons, and longer periods of time**

* I was born in 1965.
* We’re going to visit them in May.
* The pool is closed in winter.
* The weather is hot ….. Summer. (on, in, at)
* He was famous in the 1980’s.
* The play is set in the Middle Ages.
* They’ve done work for me in the past.

**With periods of time during the day**

* He’s leaving in the morning.
* She usually has a sleep in the afternoon.
* I tried to work in the evening.

**To describe the amount of time needed to do something**

* They managed to finish the job in two weeks.
* You can travel there and back in a day.

**To indicate when something will happen in the future:**

* She’ll be ready in a few minutes.
* He’s gone away but he’ll be back in a couple of days.

The preposition ***on*** is used in the following descriptions of time:

**With days of the week, and parts of days of the week**

* I’ll see you on Friday.
* She usually works on Mondays.
* We’re going to the theatre on Wednesday evening.

**With dates**

* The interview is on 29th April.
* He was born on February 14th, 1995.

**With special days**

* She was born on Valentine’s Day.
* We move house on Christmas Eve.
* I have an exam on my birthday.

Prepositions of place

The preposition ***at*** is used in the following descriptions of place/position:

**With specific places/points in space**

* She kept the horse at a nearby farm.
* I had a cup of coffee at Helen’s (house/flat).
* Angie’s still at home.
* I’ll meet you at reception.
* There’s a man at the door.
* I saw her standing at the bus stop.
* Turn right at the traffic lights.
* The index is at the back of the book.
* Write your name at the top of each page.

**With public places and shops**

* Jane’s at the dentist.
* I studied German at college/school/university.
* Shall I meet you at the station?
* We bought some bread at the supermarket.

**With addresses**

* They live at 70, Duncombe Place.

The preposition ***on*** is used in the following descriptions of place/position:

**With surfaces, or things that can be thought of as surfaces**

* The letter is on my desk.
* There was a beautiful painting on the wall.
* The toy department is on the first floor.
* Write the number down on a piece of paper.
* You’ve got a dirty mark on your jumper.
* He had a large spot on his forehead.
* She placed her hand on my shoulder.

**With roads/streets, or other things that can be thought of as a line, e.g. rivers**

* The bank is on the corner of King’s Street.
* Koblenz is on the Rhine.
* Bournemouth is on the south coast.
* It’s the second turning on the left.

The preposition ***in*** is used in the following descriptions of place/position:

**With geographical regions**

* Driving in France is very straightforward.
* Orgiva is a very small village in the mountains.

**With cities, towns and larger areas**

* Do you like living in Nottingham?
* They were having a picnic in the park.
* She works somewhere in the toy department.

**With buildings/rooms and places that can be thought of as surrounding a person or object on all sides**

* Can you take a seat in the waiting room, please?
* I’ve left my bag in the office.
* There’s a wedding in the church this afternoon.
* Lots of people were swimming in the lake.

**With containers**

* There’s fresh milk in the fridge.
* I think I’ve got a tissue in my pocket.
* The money is in the top drawer of my desk.

**With liquids and other substances, to show what they contain**

* Do you take milk in your coffee?
* I can taste garlic in this sauce.
* There’s a lot of fat in cheese and butter.

Modal verbs and their meaning

What are modal verbs?

Modals (also called **modal verbs, modal auxiliary verb**s, **modal auxiliaries**) are special verbs that behave irregularly in English. They are different from normal verbs like "work, play, visit..." They give additional information about the ***function*** of the main verb that follows it. They have a great variety of ***communicative functions***.

Here are some characteristics of modal verbs:

* They never change their form. You can't add "s", "ed", "ing"...
* They are always followed by an infinitive without "to" (e.i. the bare infinitive.)
* They are used to indicate modality and allow speakers to express certainty, possibility, willingness, obligation, necessity, ability

**List of modal verbs**

Here is a list of modal verbs:

|  |
| --- |
| ***can, could, may, might, will, would, shall, should, must*** |

The verbs or expressions ***dare*, *ought to*, *had better*,**and ***need not*** behave like modal auxiliaries to a large extent and may be added to the above list

**Use of modal verbs:**

Modal verbs are used to express functions such as:

1. Permission
2. Ability
3. Obligation
4. Prohibition
5. Lack of necessity
6. Advice
7. possibility
8. probability

**Examples of modal verbs**

Here is a list of modals with examples:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Modal Verb** | **Expressing** | **Example** |
| **must** | Strong obligation | You must stop when the traffic lights turn red. |
| logical conclusion / Certainty | He must be very tired. He's been working all day long. |
| **must not** | Prohibition | You must not smoke in the hospital. |
| **can** | Ability | I can swim. |
| Permission | Can I use your phone, please? |
| Possibility | Smoking can cause cancer. |
| **could** | ability in the past | When I was younger I could run fast. |
| polite permission | Excuse me, could I just say something? |
| Possibility | It could rain tomorrow! |
| **may** | Permission | May I use your phone, please? |
| possibility, probability | It may rain tomorrow! |
| **might** | polite permission | Might I suggest an idea? |
| possibility, probability | I might go on holiday to Australia next year. |
| **need not** | lack of necessity/absence of obligation | I need not buy tomatoes. There are plenty of tomatoes in the fridge. |
| **should/ought to** | 50 % obligation | I should / ought to see a doctor. I have a terrible headache. |
| Advice | You should / ought to revise your lessons |
| logical conclusion | He should / ought to be very tired. He's been working all day long. |
| **had better** | Advice | You'd better revise your lessons |