

Prepositions of Time

Prepositions are words that precede a noun or pronoun and express a relationship between it and another word. A preposition of time can express when something happens at one point in time or when something happens over an extended period of time.

Prepositions Expressing One Point In Time		
Preposition	How It's Used	Examples
On	Used with days.	We are meeting for lunch <i>on</i> Friday. The midterm is <i>on</i> Tuesday. Finals start <i>on</i> the 12th.
At	Used with times of the day, including noon, midnight, and night.	I will arrive <i>at</i> 7 p.m. Most animals sleep <i>at</i> night. I woke up <i>at</i> noon.
In	Used with other parts of the day (<i>not</i> night, noon, or midnight), with months, with years, and with seasons.	I brew coffee <i>in</i> the morning. He graduated <i>in</i> 2008. They got married <i>in</i> June. The roads get icy <i>in</i> winter.

Prepositions Expressing Extended Time		
Preposition	How It's Used	Examples
Since	Expresses an action or state that was started and is still happening.	He has been working on it <i>since</i> last year. She has lived here <i>since</i> 1988.
For	Expresses the duration of an action or event.	I will be gone <i>for</i> a day. She was sick <i>for</i> a week.
From & To/Until	Expresses the beginning and end of a period of time.	I will be here <i>from</i> Monday <i>to</i> Friday. He lived in San Jose <i>from</i> 1995 <i>to</i> 2005. My office hours are <i>from</i> 12 p.m. <i>to</i> 3 p.m. The road is closed <i>from</i> March <i>until</i> June.
During	Expresses a period of time over which an action occurs.	I read a book <i>during</i> my lunch break. Owls sleep <i>during</i> the day.
Within	Used to show something will take place before a certain time.	He will graduate <i>within</i> a year of entering the program. (No later than one year from his entry.) I will be there <i>within</i> 30 minutes.

Activity

Choose the correct preposition in the following sentences.

1. I will complete all my chores _____ Saturday.
2. We went on vacation _____ two weeks.
3. You must complete the in-class essay _____ one hour.
4. I normally go to bed _____ 10 p.m. sharp.
5. Helen has been a vegetarian _____ 2006.
6. Paul could not stay _____ the presentation.
7. The keynote speaker arrives _____ noon.
8. Tim and Alice got married _____ 1997.
9. The play runs _____ January _____ July.
10. My dog likes to go for a walk _____ the afternoon.

Answer Key for Activity

- 1) on
- 2) for
- 3) within
- 4) at
- 5) since
- 6) during
- 7) at
- 8) in
- 9) from, to/until
- 10) in

References

Berry, Chris, Allen Brizee, and Elizabeth Angeli. "Prepositions for Time, Place, and Introducing Objects." *The Purdue Online Writing Lab*. 23 Mar. 2011. Web. 4 Aug. 2014.