

Prepositions of place and movement

1 In, on and at are used to talk about places:

- ▶ We use **in** with enclosed spaces (e.g. rooms, buildings) and limited areas (e.g. towns, parks, countries, continents):
in my pocket in her car in Germany
- ▶ We use **on** with surfaces (e.g. walls, floors, shelves) and lines (e.g. paths, coasts, the equator):
*on the grass on the sea
on the line on the third floor*
- ▶ We use **at** with a point (e.g. at the bus stop), and **at** with a building, when we mean either inside or outside:
A: *Let's meet **at** the cinema.*
B: *OK. Shall we meet **in** the cinema itself or **on** the pavement outside?*

2 Look at the illustration and read the sentences:



*There is a woman **in** the phone box.
There are people **outside** the cinema.
The people are **on** the pavement.
There is a clock **above** the cinema entrance.
The cinema entrance is **under** the clock.
The bank is **next to/beside** the cinema.
The phone box is **opposite** the cinema.
The bank is **between** the cinema and the café.
There is a hill **behind** the town.
The car is **in front of** the bank.*

3 Into, onto and to are used to talk about movement:

*We moved the chairs **into** my bedroom.
The actor ran **onto** the stage.
They walked **to** the next town.*

The opposites are **out of**, **off** and **from**:

*We moved the chairs **out of** my bedroom.
The actor ran **off** the stage.
We drove **from** London to Edinburgh.*

Here are other prepositions of movement:

*They ran **across** the field to the road.
Jim cycled **along** the road to the next town.
I walked **up** the hill and ran **down** the other side.
The bus went **past** the bus stop without stopping.
The train goes **through** three tunnels.*

Practice

A The sentences below describe the picture. Look at the picture and change the underlined words which are wrong. Tick (✓) the underlined words which are correct.

- ▶ There is a TV under on the table.
- ▶ There is a dog on ✓ the floor.
- 1 The dog is behind the table.
- 2 The cat is next to the flowers.
- 3 The keys are next to the flowers.
- 4 The flowers are in the vase.
- 5 There is a big book in front of the flowers.
- 6 There is a picture under the table.
- 7 The cat is above the table.
- 8 There is a bird on a cage.



B Put *in, on* or *at* in the gaps.

- Peter lives *in*..... Turkey.
- 1 There were some beautiful pictures the walls of their sitting room.
 - 2 The children are playing the grass the park.
 - 3 Does this bus stop the railway station?
 - 4 I live in a flat the fifth floor.
 - 5 Ecuador is South America; it lies the equator.
 - 6 There is a queue of people the bus stop.

C Put the words in the box in the gaps.

into (x3) onto (x2) to out of off

- The march started in the park. From there we marched *to*..... the Town Hall.
- 1 The tiger escaped from its cage and jumped the lake. It took a long time to get it the lake and back its cage.
 - 2 Stupidly, Simon drove his car the beach and then he couldn't move it, because the wheels sank the sand. In the end he needed eight people to push it the beach and back the road.

D Look at this picture of a town showing the route for a race.



Now fill the gaps using the words in the box.

across along at down in front of past from under through up

The race starts (►) *at*..... at the Town Hall. The runners go (1)..... the Town Hall and they run (2)..... the main square, to the river. Then they run over New Bridge and they go (3)..... the road beside the river for about 200 yards. They go (4)..... the theatre and (5)..... Castle Hill. They turn right (6)..... the castle, and they go (7)..... Steep Hill. Then they go (8)..... the tunnel (9)..... the river, and they finish at the station.