

English Prepositions – Static and Movement

1) Static prepositions

- **in** inside (*dentro*)
- **out** outside (*fora*)
- **on** on top of (*em cima*)
- **off** not on top of (*não em cima*)

These prepositions indicate that there is no movement; that something is static.

Examples:

- My keys are **in** my pocket.
- The cat is **out** the house.
- I can see the book **on** the table.
- Your feet should always be **off** the sofa.

Note: For transport, we usually use “on” and “off”. For example:

- George is **on** the bus.
- A: Are you **off** the plane yet? B: No – we’re still on the runway.

2) Movement prepositions

- **into** to move in to (*para dentro*)
- **out of** to move out of (*de dentro para fora*)
- **onto** to move to the top of (*para cima*)
- **off of** to move from the top of (*de cima*)

These prepositions indicate that there is movement. We usually use a verb which indicates movement (for example: jump, go, walk, run, fly, take, put, move, throw).

Examples:

- The cat jumped **into** the box.
- The cat jumped **out of** the box.
- The cat jumped **onto** the table.
- The cat jumped **off of** the table.

Note: For transport, we usually use “onto” and “off of”. For example:

- George got **onto** the bus as soon as it arrived.
- We got **off of** the plane ten minutes ago.

Recommended video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oNQsh4G5qp8> (16 mins)

Exercise 1. Choose appropriate prepositions (static or movement).

1. Wait a minute – I'll just put my car _____ the garage.
2. A: Where's the cat?
B: I think it's _____ the kitchen.
3. Take your shoes _____ the sofa, right now!
4. I can't find my wallet. I'm sure that I left it _____ the drawer.
5. Please take your hands _____ your pockets, now!
6. Don't throw the plates _____ the table. Be gentle!
7. A: Where's the newspaper?
B: I left it _____ the sofa.
8. *On the telephone:*
A: Is Harry _____ or _____ at the moment?
B: He's _____. He's at the cinema with some friends.
9. How many times must I tell you? Always keep food _____ the floor!
10. *Sports commentary:*
“... and Beckham kicks the ball, and the ball flies _____ the goal!”

Phrasal Verbs

Many phrasal verbs use the prepositions “into” or “onto”. For example:

- change into (something/somebody)
- transform into (something/somebody)
- dive into (something)
- run into (somebody/problems)
- bump into (something/somebody) (=meet somebody unexpectedly)
- jump into/onto (something)
- push/pull into (something)
- crash into (something)
- translate (something) into (another language)
- divide (something) into (pieces/parts)
- break (something) into (pieces)
- grow into (something/somebody)
- look into (something)
- blend into (something)
- get into (something)
- delve into (something)
- rush into (something)
- turn (something) into (something/somebody)
- put (something) into/onto (something)
- cut (something) into pieces
- chop (something) into pieces

As can be seen from the examples above, the preposition ‘into’ is often used with a “transformation” verb - something is “transformed” into something else.

Exercise 2. Choose appropriate verbs and prepositions for the following sentences.

1. There are eight of us, so we need to _____ the cake _____ eight equal slices.
2. I need to _____ this document _____ French before tomorrow!
3. Chameleons are great at hiding, as they simply _____ the color of the background.
4. It's a big decision to make, so please don't _____ it. Take your time!
5. Guess who I _____ yesterday? Joshua!
6. The bus didn't stop, so I had to _____ it while it was still moving!
7. I'm so sad. I dropped my crystal vase yesterday and it _____ hundreds of pieces!
8. I love it when caterpillars _____ butterflies. I think it's amazing!
9. He lost control of the car and _____ a tree. Fortunately, he wasn't badly hurt.
10. Can you please _____ this book _____ the table for me?