A2 GRAMMAR

Prepositions of movement

Show where someone or something moves

to · from · into · across · through · over

Lesson + practice + teacher key

Source: Test-English, “Prepositions of movement: Along, across, over, etc.”

What do prepositions of movement do?

They show the direction of a movement.

We usually use them after movement verbs:
walk, run, go, drive, cycle, fly, jump

The bird flew over the wall.
She walked towards the station.

Ask yourself:

1. Where does the movement start?
2. Where does it go?
3. Does it enter, cross, pass or go around something?

The dog ran into the garden.

Warm-up: Mime one movement. Your partner says the full sentence.

Destination, origin and direction

CORE WORDS

to	from	towards
a destination	a starting point	a direction

We walked to the café.
I flew from Madrid to Rome.
The children ran towards the sea.

Tip: “towards” means in the direction of, but the person may not arrive there.

Practice: to, from or towards

TRY IT

Complete each sentence with to, from or towards.

A. We drove _____ the airport at 5 a.m.

B. The train goes _____ London _____ Edinburgh.

C. The child ran _____ her mother when she saw her.

D. I walked _____ home after class.

E. The ball rolled _____ the window.

Compare answers in pairs. Explain your choice with destination, origin or direction.

Entering and leaving a place

into
Movement enters an enclosed space.

The cat jumped into the box.
We walked into the shop.

out of
Movement leaves an enclosed space.

He ran out of the house.
She took the keys out of her bag.

Use “in” for position: The cat is in the box. Use “into” for movement: The cat jumped into the box.

Practice: into or out of

TRY IT

Choose into or out of.

A. The football went _____ the goal.

B. She took her phone _____ her pocket.

C. A bird flew _____ the open window.

D. We came _____ the cinema after the film.

E. The children ran _____ the classroom when the bell rang.

A surface, height and a route

onto / off

The child climbed onto the chair.
The glass fell off the table.

up / down

We walked up the hill.
She ran down the stairs.

along / around

Walk along this road.
They drove around the city.

onto = to a surface. off = away from a surface.

Practice: onto, off, up, down, along or around

TRY IT

Choose the best preposition.

A. The cyclist fell _____ her bike.

B. Walk _____ the river until you see the bridge.

C. The monkey climbed _____ the tree.

D. Please come _____ the stairs carefully.

E. The dog jumped _____ the sofa.

F. We drove _____ the lake because the road was closed.

Crossing, passing and going above or below

across	through	over / under	past
across the road from one side to the other	through the tunnel inside one side and out the other	over a wall under a bridge	past the bank beyond it

We swam across the river.
The train went through the tunnel.
The plane flew over the mountains.
Walk past the pharmacy.

Practice: crossing and passing

TRY IT

Complete the route with across, through, over, under or past.

A. Go _____ the bridge and turn right.

B. The rabbit ran _____ the fence.

C. We walked _____ the park to get home.

D. The bus went _____ the museum. The museum was on our right.

E. Use the subway to go _____ the road safely.

Transport: get in, get out of, get on, get off

Cars, taxis and vans

get in / get out of

Get in the taxi.
We got out of the car.

Bikes, motorbikes and public transport

get on / get off

Get on the bus.
She got off her bike.

Why? We sit inside a car or taxi. We sit on a bike, bus, train or plane.

Practice: transport

TRY IT

Choose get in, get out of, get on or get off.

A. I need to _____ the bus at the next stop.

B. They _____ the taxi outside the hotel.

C. Please _____ the car. We are late.

D. She _____ her bicycle and rode away.

E. We _____ the plane in Barcelona.

How do you travel?

by + transport

by car
by train
by plane

on foot

I go to school
on foot.

verb of movement

I drive to work.
She cycles to school.
We took a bus to town.

We say “by car” but “on foot”. We do not use by with walk, drive, fly or cycle.

Practice: travel expressions

TRY IT

Correct the mistake in each sentence.

A. I go to work by foot.

B. She drives by work every day.

C. We went to Paris with plane.

D. He takes to school on foot.

E. They travelled to Italy by the train.

Write the corrected sentence. Then say it aloud.

Guided route challenge

SPEAKING

Start at the station. Walk _____ the street. Go _____ the bank, then walk _____ the bridge. Go _____ the tunnel. The museum is on your left.

Word bank: along past over through

Partner task: Change two places in the route. Read your new route aloud. Your partner follows it with a finger.

Possible answer: along / past / over / through

Story challenge

WRITE

Complete the story with one preposition in each gap.

Yesterday, Leo cycled _____ the park. He went _____ a small bridge and _____ a tunnel. A dog ran _____ the road, so Leo got _____ his bike. Then he walked _____ the dog and took it _____ the owner.

Use: across, along, around, down, from, into, off, on, over, past, through, to, towards, under

There is more than one possible answer in some gaps. Make the route logical.

Mixed review

TRY IT

Choose the best answer.

A. The waiter came (into / across) the kitchen.

B. The bird flew (over / along) the wall.

C. We got (in / on) the train at 8.

D. Drive (past / through) the supermarket. It is on your right.

E. I went to the office (by / on) foot.

F. The children ran (towards / from) the playground.

G. The hikers walked (through / onto) the forest.

H. She took the book (off / out of) the shelf.

Teacher key: slides 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12

4 A to B from, to C towards D home is a destination, so to
6 A into B out of C into D out of E into
8 A off B along C up D down E onto F around
10 A over B under C through D past E under
12 A get off B got out of C get in D got on E got off

For slide 4D, accept “home” without “to”: I walked home.

Teacher key: slides 14, 15, 16 and 17

14 A on foot B drives to work C by plane D walks to school E by train
15 along / past / over / through
16 Suggested: along, over, through, across, off, towards, to
17 A into B over C on D past E on F towards G through H off

Extension: Ask students to write a six-sentence route from home to a real place. They must use at least four different prepositions of movement.

Source adapted for teaching from Test-English A2 prepositions of movement page.