



LEGAL ENGLISH CENTRE

# Prepositions in Legal Use & More

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**Networks of Meaning**

**Sample Download**

**the TOLES Advanced Level**

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First edition

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the TOLES Advanced Level

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# INTRODUCTION

## Aims

This glossary has the following aims:

- to help learners memorise prepositions more effectively
- to increase students' language accuracy and mastery
- to provide a quick revision before the TOLES examinations
- to encourage students to build up their own glossaries.

The glossary is not meant as an exact dictionary-like source of reference. Although it presents **over 1100 phrases**, it is not an exhaustive list of prepositional phrases required at this level.

The primary idea behind this compilation is to:

- find common areas of meaning among the phrases students may already know
- categorise phrases by networks of meaning for ease of reference
- put into practice the modern findings of how information is stored and memorised best.

## Who can benefit

- students at the upper-intermediate, FCE or higher levels of English (CEF B2-C1)
- candidates for the TOLES Advanced examination
- students who wish to revise prepositions in a systematic and meaningful way.

## Types of phrases

This glossary includes the following types of phrases:

- prepositional phrases used after and before nouns, after adjectives and verbs
- phrasal verbs (multiword verbs)
- adverbial phrases
- prepositional phrases in idioms and metaphors
- fixed phrases (collocations)
- prepositions used in **legal, business and general English** contexts.

The main focus of this glossary is on putting words into broad categories and meaningful lexical groups, and not on adopting a strictly grammar-based approach.

Therefore, words from different word classes may be found grouped together according to similarities of structure, image, context and so on.

Why business and general English contexts? If you already know some prepositions which form a network of meaning, it is easier for the brain to add new items to such a network. The more associations and links between the phrases, the faster it is to memorise and recall new ones.

## Why prepositions matter

The correct use of prepositional phrases is vital for a few reasons.

- Prepositions may change the meaning of the phrase.  
e.g. a claim **for** compensation BUT a legal claim **to** land
- If used correctly, they make you sound natural and professional in English.
- They increase precision of your language. e.g. within 7 days v in 7 days

## Grammar brief

There are a few basic grammar terms used in this booklet.

How to recognise word classes:



## Phrasal verbs – a quick reminder

These are combinations of a verb plus a preposition or two prepositions, where the meaning of a phrasal verb is not the same as the independent parts of the phrase.

Phrasal verbs may be:

- intransitive – where they do not take a direct object  
“the car broke down”
- transitive – where they require a direct object and can form a passive voice  
“draw up the contract” or “draw the contract up”  
“the contract was drawn up”  
**BUT** “draw it up” – if the object is a pronoun, it usually separates the phrasal verb
- transitive / inseparable – where they require a direct object but it can't go between the verb and the preposition: “look after the children”

## Organisation

- The prepositions are presented alphabetically.
- Within each preposition there are categories of closely or loosely related phrases because of their meaning or a common idea.
- The categories have been created according to **purely subjective criteria**.
- The examples of sentences follow, which serve a further illustration of the grammar of the phrase. They also provide a meaningful context for effective learning.
- Examples for the most basic phrases like “on Monday” have been omitted.
- Polish translations are used only in a few instances where it is crucial to get the correct meaning.

## How to use this glossary

It depends on your personal approach.

- Read through the categories
- Look for any common thread of meaning
- Study the examples to see the phrases in action
- Imagine the context in which YOU can use the phrase
- Add your own comments or phrases
- Mark or underline anything YOU consider important or useful

## Symbols used in the glossary

= shows the meaning for clarification

≠ opposite

AmE / BrE where the distinctions between these varieties are important

(law) = if a phrase is particularly common in legal use or has a strictly legal meaning

sth = something

sm = someone

**BUT** shows that something may be tricky in a given phrase, or because prepositions change depending on the part of speech

/ = shows that different prepositions are possible, but frequently the choice may depend on the part of speech in use

(fml) = formal register

(infml / colloquial) = informal register

-ing = shows that you need to put a gerund after a phrase, e.g. going, visiting

## From the author

*As a teacher of English I have been designing and conducting legal English courses for over ten years. My students have often complained how difficult it is to learn random phrases by heart. This compilation is my effort to help students memorise and use prepositional phrases correctly, be it in business or legal English contexts.*

*I hope that by uncovering similarities or common patterns in the troublesome area of memorising vocabulary, this glossary will make the task more manageable and attainable.*

*Enjoy a read.*

**Agnieszka Chojecka**

# ABOUT

## 1. concerning or relating to a particular topic, on the topic of

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>a book about</b></li> <li>○ <b>complain about</b></li> <li>○ <b>lie about</b></li> <li>○ <b>information about / on</b></li> <li>○ <b>inform sm about / of</b><br/><b>BUT notify sm of sth</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>know about</b><br/><b>BUT usually knowledge of / awareness of / aware of</b></li> </ul> |
|--|---|

This is **a book about** the English legal system.

Garry never **complains about** his salary. Doesn't he care about money?

She **lied about** her age in the CV she so meticulously prepared.

His recent publication is a mine of **information about / on** taxes.

The company **informed us about / of** the unforeseen delays in completing the project.

**BUT** You will be **notified of** any changes immediately.

He failed his traineeship entrance exam because he didn't **know much about** constitutional law.

**BUT** They did not seem to be fully **aware of** the danger.

Common **verbs** used:

- **agree about / on a plan** (jointly)  
**BUT agree to a proposal** = consent  
**BUT agree with sm**
- **argue about / over / with sm**
- **ask about** = have a question  
**BUT ask for advice** = make a request
- **boast about / of** = talk with pride
- **complain about / of**
- **disagree about / over / on**
- **forget about**
- **enquire about**
- **hear about**  
**BUT hear from sm** = have news from
- **learn about**
- **quarrel about / over**
- **tell about**
- **think about** = consider sth **BUT think of** = have an opinion
- **wonder about**
- **write about**

I don't always **agree about** everything when it comes to business advice.  
 Were they all **agreed on** this at the Board meeting?  
 Tracy **agreed** with him **on** a date for the elections.  
 The senior partners **argue** endlessly **about** money.  
 They were **arguing over** who should have the greater share in the business.  
 Visitors usually **ask about** the history of the firm.  
 Steve is **boasting** openly **about** how much money he has made on the Stock Exchange.  
 All the delegates **complained about** the noise coming from the hall.  
 Several women in the team **complained** publicly **of** sexual harassment.  
 The managers **disagree about** everything concerning the future of the firm.  
 A few local politicians **disagree over** the scale of the pilot project.  
 I'm sorry but I must strongly **disagree on** this point.  
 How could she **forget about** their wedding anniversary?  
 I am writing to **enquire about** your job advertisement in the recent issue.  
 Have you already **heard about** the auditor's decision?  
 Terry **learned about** his formal appointment to the Supervisory Board yesterday.  
 Let's not **quarrel about** money. We haven't won the lottery yet.  
**Tell** me all **about** your new top-secret assignment.  
 I can't tell you now, I'll **think about** it.  
 Sometimes I **wonder about** his bizarre behaviour towards junior staff.  
 Can you **write about** something other than derivatives and exchange rates?

## 2. to show why you are angry, happy etc.

*grammar note*

**about sth, at -ing, with sm for -ing**

- **angry about**
- **annoyed about / by sth**
- **certain about**
- **concerned about** = anxious, worried
- **excited about / at**
- **happy about**
- **irritated about / at -ing / by**
- **serious about**
- **strict about sth with sm**
- **worried about**

You can't even imagine how **angry** I am **about** your secret plans.  
 The boss was **angry with** him **for** ruining the surprise party.  
 I was **annoyed about** his total indifference to our corporate culture.  
 Are you **certain about** that hostile takeover bid?  
 They were **concerned about** the accident and its impact on the share price.  
 Fiona looked tremendously **excited about** the exotic trip promised by the president.  
 She was so **excited at** the positive reaction of the audience.  
 I'm not particularly **happy about** your change of heart.  
 The vice-president was **irritated by** all her tricky questions about his finances.  
 Are you absolutely **serious about** giving up your highly paid job?  
 Our new superior is pretty **strict about** punctuality.  
 They were always excessively **worried about** safety issues in the workplace.

### 3. cause to happen

- **bring about changes**

Their ruthless plans **brought about** the inevitable government crisis.

### 4. words connected with giving information / opinion etc.

*note*

**ABOUT** » usually ordinary, general kind of information

**ON** » *more serious information, for specialists*

- **advice about / on**
- **questions about / on / of**
- **a debate on / about / over**
- **a decision on / about**
- **detail about / of**
- **evidence about / of / for**
- **an idea about / on / of -ing**
- **a lecture on / about**
- **an opinion about / on / of sm**
- **a prediction about / on / of**

This educational centre can **advise** parents **about** further education of their children.

Mr Phillips will **advise** you **on** any complex tax matters.

The department desperately needs practical **advice about** the new computer software purchase.

I think you need professional **advice on** saving energy.

The interviewer asked me a lot of probing **questions about** my executive experience.

To our astonishment the survey included **questions on** religious beliefs and smoking habits.

**BUT** We discussed the question of confidentiality. (= a subject, a problem)

A few similar points were raised during the heated **debate on** media reform.

The management finally came to a **decision on** childcare facilities at work.

Mrs White refused to reveal any concrete **details about** what had happened.

Sally disclosed every tiny **detail of** her plan.

Further **details of** the course can be found on our website.

The team were gathering any shred of compelling **evidence about** fraudulent trading.

The auditors are looking for **evidence of** insider dealing.

There is no solid **evidence for** your claim brought against my client.

I have come up with an innovative **idea about** how to tackle this problem.

Our trainee had the most ridiculous **idea of** advertising on the internet.

We were requested to put forward **ideas for** improving information flow efficiency.

His father gives **lectures on** IP law infringement issues.

The partner gave him a long **lecture about** the dangers of professional negligence.

Unfortunately, we hold conflicting **opinions on** genetically modified food.

What's your personal **opinion of** his creativity?

It's too early to make any safe **predictions about** the outcome of the case.

There are grim **predictions of** a next double-dip recession.

# AT

## 5. phrases connected with money / prices

- |  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| ○ <b>at a cost of</b>                        | ○ <b>at a loss</b>    |
| ○ <b>at a discount</b>                       | ○ <b>at a price</b>   |
| ○ <b>at sm's disposal</b>                    | ○ <b>at a profit</b>  |
| ○ <b>at the expense of / at sm's expense</b> | ○ <b>at a rate of</b> |
|  | ○ <b>be valued at</b> |

A brand new security system has been installed **at a cost of** \$80,000.

The bookshop employees can purchase books **at a discount**.

She had her hard-earned cash **at her disposal** at any time.

Mr Jones kept making cruel jokes **at his wife's expense**. She filed for divorce eventually.

Both of our family-owned companies are running **at a loss**.

I can't possibly afford to dine in this restaurant **at that price**.

They quickly sold their tech start-up at **a healthy profit**.

We only pay tax on these commodities **at a rate of** 5%.

The stolen jewellery was **valued at** £1,000,000.

## 6. when sm has power to decide

- |  |
|--|
| ○ <b>at sm's request / at the request of</b><br><b>BUT (organise sth) on request</b> = if you ask for it |
| ○ <b>at sm's discretion / at the discretion of</b>   |

**At his written request** we issued his course certificate.

It remains **at the discretion of** the court to award damages.

**BUT** Additional copies will be made available **on request**.

## 7. other phrases

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| ○ <b>an attempt at</b>   | ○ <b>at any rate</b> = anyway            |
| ○ <b>at large</b> = free | ○ <b>at random</b>                       |
| ○ <b>at risk</b>         | ○ <b>be at fault</b> = be blamed for sth |
| ○ <b>at least</b>        |  |

A new trainee made a clumsy **attempt at** copying the whole court justification.

The escaped prisoners are still **at large**.

As a sole trader your personal assets may be **at risk**.

**At least**, he didn't lie to me on this occasion.

You usually select an examination topic **at random**.

The party **at fault** in a court case usually covers the opponent's legal costs.

# FOR

## 3. exchange, payment, making good

- **(to) charge sm for sth**  
**BUT a charge of \$10**
- **in exchange for sth**  
**BUT (law) on exchange of contract** = after having signed
- **(to) exchange sth for sth**
- **in return for**
- **(to) substitute sth for sth**
- **barter with sm for sth**
- **pay for**
- **payment for**
- **in consideration for** = (law) as payment for sth
- **for the consideration of** = (law) for payment, services etc (świadczenie)  
**BUT in consideration of** = considering sth, taking into consideration
- **reimburse for**
- **reimbursement for**
- **a cheque for**
- **compensate for**
- **compensation for**
- **a remedy for breach**  
**BUT to remedy the situation – no preposition**
- **a cure for**  
**BUT to cure sm of sth**

How much do they **charge** their clients **for** specialist services?

He offered to restructure the business **in exchange for** invaluable know-how in various high-tech fields.

Where can I **exchange** my valuable knowledge **for** a decent salary?

She used to publish their medical books **in return for** substantial discounts on her orders for other titles.

It is claimed that there can be **no substitute for** hard work.

The coach had to find **a substitute for** Tim.

Before the era of money they **bartered** their farm produce **for** raw materials.

On signing the retainer agreement, the client was obliged to **pay for** the legal services provided on a monthly basis.

**In consideration for** the services rendered, the Company is obliged to pay \$100,000.

The employer always **reimbursed** workers **for** travel expenses.

You don't remember who sent you **a cheque for** \$100? You've got a memory like a sieve.

The firm had to **compensate** the injured person **for** the damage caused to the property.

The prevailing party was **awarded** a huge sum **in compensation for** the injuries sustained.

The well thought-out programme may be just one **remedy for** discrimination.

They haven't discovered an effective **cure for** hangover.

# FROM

## 4. to say what is prevented or forbidden, you decide not to do

- **abstain from, abstention from**
- **be banned from**  
    **BUT a ban on sth**
- **be barred from raising an action** = (law) you can't take sth to court
- **conceal from**
- **deter from**  
    **BUT a deterrent against**
- **hide from**
- **prevent from**  
    **BUT prevention of**
- **refrain from**
- **restrain from**  
    **BUT a restraint on sth**

Junior staff must **abstain from** harshly criticising the board for any decision.

The motion was passed by 20 votes to 3 with 5 **abstentions from** voting.

Jerry has been **banned from** holding a managerial position for a year.

**BUT** They imposed a total **ban on** smoking on the business premises.

You are **barred from** raising an action because your claim is subject to limitation period.

She was **withdrawing** small sums **from** the cash machine and trying to **conceal** it **from** me.

The camera has been installed in the hall to **deter** people **from** stealing petty items.

There is no point in trying to **hide** evidence **from** the police unless you want to be fined for obstruction to justice.

The employees who went on strike were **prevented from** entering the factory floor.

Please **refrain from** chatting in this area because the examination is in progress.

The executive could barely **restrain herself from** hitting the tabloid journalist.

**BUT** The government imposed regulatory **restraints on** international corporate mergers.