



PREPOSITIONS OF POSITION, PLACE AND MOVEMENT: IMPORTANT BASIC NOTES

Adapted from:

EASTWOOD, J. (2005). *Oxford Learner's Grammar*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

VINCE, M. (1996). *First Certificate Language Practice*. Oxford: Heinemann.

1. AT, IN

- What's the difference between?:
They met at the cinema. (Place; probably outside).
They met in the cinema. (Inside).
It was cold in the library (= inside the building)
We were at the library (= using the library, i.e., the normal purpose of the building).
We went to a concert at the Auditorio.
It was very hot in that theatre.

In: the "inside" of places.

At: the *purpose* of places.

2. AT, TO

- What's the difference between?:
We went to the cinema.
We arrived at the cinema.

At: not used with verbs of motion

- We travel FROM our starting point TO our destination
- We travel BY bus/car/bicycle/motorcycle/train/boat/sea/plane/air
- We travel ON foot/a bicycle/a bus/a motorcycle/a horse/a train/a ship/a plane.
- We travel IN a car/a taxi.
- We arrive IN a country or town.
- We arrive IN/AT a village.
- We arrive AT other destinations: address, hotel, station, bus-stop, meeting point...

3. IN, ON, INTO, ONTO

3.1. TRAVEL

- We get...
IN/ INTO a public or private vehicle (*enter it*)
ON/ ONTO a public vehicle, a horse (*mount*)
OUT OF a public or private vehicle (*alight*)
OFF a public vehicle, a horse (*alight or dismount*)
- What are the correct options here?:
● *Peter came running into/to the room and threw his books at/onto the floor.*

3.2. POSITION AND MOVEMENT

- What's the difference between?:
Position.
We were sitting in the café.
She stood on the balcony.
Movement.
We went into the café.
She walked onto the balcony.



- OTHER REMARKS ABOUT PREPOSITIONS:

*Above/over the door there was a sign saying, 'Mind your head'.
She put a quilt over the bed (very close or touching).*

- Across is related to *on* (it suggests that the movement is on a flat surface).
- Through is related to *in* (you move through a three-dimensional space).

Compare:

*I walked across the square to the cafe.
I pushed through the crowds to the bar.*