

At/on/in (time)

A

Compare at, on and in:

- ☐ They arrived at 5 o'clock.
- ☐ They arrived on Friday.
- ☐ They arrived in October. / They arrived in 1968.

We use:

at for the time of day

at five o'clock at 11.45 at midnight at lunchtime at sunset etc.

on for days and dates

on Friday / on Fridays on 16 May 1999 on Christmas Day on my birthday

in for longer periods (for example: months/years/seasons)

in October	in 1988	in the 18th century	in the past
in (the) winter	in the 1990s	in the Middle Ages	in (the) future

B

We use at in these expressions:

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| at night | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't like going out at night. |
| at the weekend / at weekends | <input type="checkbox"/> Will you be here at the weekend? |
| at Christmas | <input type="checkbox"/> Do you give each other presents at Christmas? |
| at the moment / at present | <input type="checkbox"/> Mr Benn is busy at the moment / at present. |
| at the same time | <input type="checkbox"/> Emily and I arrived at the same time. |

C

We say:

- | | | |
|---|-----|--|
| in the morning(s) | but | on Friday morning(s) |
| in the afternoon(s) | | on Sunday afternoon(s) |
| in the evening(s) | | on Monday evening(s) etc. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I'll see you in the morning. | | <input type="checkbox"/> I'll see you on Friday morning. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do you work in the evenings? | | <input type="checkbox"/> Do you work on Saturday evenings? |

D

We do not use at/on/in before last/next/this/every:

- ☐ I'll see you next Friday. (*not* on next Friday)
- ☐ They got married last March.

In spoken English we often leave out on before days (Sunday/Monday etc.). So you can say:

- ☐ I'll see you on Friday. or I'll see you Friday.
- ☐ I don't go out on Monday mornings. or I don't go out Monday mornings.

E

In a few minutes / in six months etc.

- ☐ The train will be leaving in a few minutes. (= a few minutes from now)
- ☐ Andy has gone away. He'll be back in a week. (= a week from now)
- ☐ She'll be here in a moment. (= a moment from now)

You can also say 'in six months' time', 'in a week's time' etc. :

- ☐ They're getting married in six months' time. or ... in six months.

We also use in ... to say how long it takes to do something:

- ☐ I learnt to drive in four weeks. (= it took me four weeks to learn)

On/in time, at/in the end → Unit 122 In/at/on (position) → Units 123-125
 In/at/on (other uses) → Unit 127 American English → Appendix 7

On time and in time

At the end and in the end

On time and in time

On time = punctual, not late. If something happens **on time**, it happens at the time which was planned:

- ☐ The 11.45 train left **on time**. (= it left at 11.45)
- ☐ 'I'll meet you at 7.30.' 'OK, but please be **on time**.' (= don't be late, be there at 7.30)
- ☐ The conference was well-organised. Everything began and finished **on time**.

The opposite of **on time** is **late**:

- ☐ Be **on time**. Don't be late.

In time (for something / to do something) = soon enough:

- ☐ Will you be home **in time** for dinner? (= soon enough for dinner)
- ☐ I've sent Emma a birthday present. I hope it arrives **in time** (for her birthday).
(= on or before her birthday)
- ☐ I'm in a hurry. I want to be home **in time** to see the game on television.
(= soon enough to see the game)

The opposite of **in time** is **too late**:

- ☐ I got home **too late** to see the game on television.

You can say **just in time** (= almost too late):

- ☐ We got to the station **just in time** for our train.
- ☐ A child ran into the road in front of the car – I managed to stop **just in time**.

B

At the end and in the end

At the end (of something) = at the time when something ends. For example:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| at the end of the month | at the end of January | at the end of the game |
| at the end of the film | at the end of the course | at the end of the concert |

- ☐ I'm going away at the end of January / at the end of the month.
- ☐ At the end of the concert, there was great applause.
- ☐ The players shook hands at the end of the game.

You cannot say 'in the end of ...'. So you cannot say 'in the end of January' or 'in the end of the concert'.

The opposite of **at the end** (of ...) is **at the beginning** (of ...):

- ☐ I'm going away at the beginning of January. (*not* in the beginning)

In the end = finally.

We use **in the end** when we say what the final result of a situation was:

- ☐ We had a lot of problems with our car. We sold it **in the end**. (= finally we sold it)
- ☐ He got more and more angry. **In the end** he just walked out of the room.
- ☐ Alan couldn't decide where to go for his holidays. He didn't go anywhere **in the end**.
(*not* at the end)

The opposite of **in the end** is usually **at first**:

- ☐ At first we didn't get on very well, but **in the end** we became good friends.

In/at/on (position) 1

A

In



in a room
in a building
in a box



in a garden
in a town/country
in the city centre



in a pool
in the sea
in a river

- ☐ There's no-one in the room / in the building / in the garden.
- ☐ What have you got in your hand / in your mouth?
- ☐ When we were in Italy, we spent a few days in Venice.
- ☐ I have a friend who lives in a small village in the mountains.
- ☐ There were some people swimming in the pool / in the sea / in the river.

B

At



at the bus stop
at the door
at the window



at the roundabout

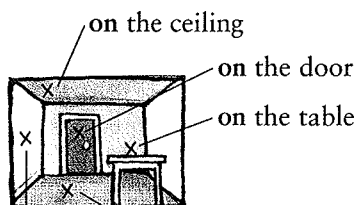


at reception

- ☐ Do you know that man standing at the door / at the window?
- ☐ Turn left at the traffic lights / at the church / at the roundabout.
- ☐ We have to get off the bus at the next stop.
- ☐ When you leave the hotel, please leave your key at reception. (= at the reception desk)

C

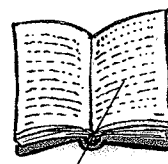
On



on the wall



on her nose



on a page



on an island

- ☐ I sat on the floor / on the ground / on the grass / on the beach / on a chair.
- ☐ There's a dirty mark on the wall / on the ceiling / on your nose / on your shirt.
- ☐ Have you seen the notice on the notice board / on the door?
- ☐ You'll find details of TV programmes on page seven (of the newspaper).
- ☐ The hotel is on a small island in the middle of the lake.

D

Compare in and at:

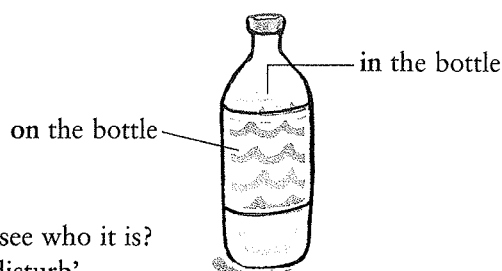
- ☐ There were a lot of people in the shop. It was very crowded.
Go along this road, then turn left at the shop.
- ☐ I'll meet you in the hotel lobby.
I'll meet you at the entrance to the hotel.

Compare in and on:

- ☐ There is some water in the bottle.
There is a label on the bottle.

Compare at and on:

- ☐ There is somebody at the door. Shall I go and see who it is?
There is a notice on the door. It says 'Do not disturb'.



In/at/on (position) 2

A

We say that somebody/something is:

in a line / in a row / in a queue	in bed
in the sky / in the world	in the country / in the countryside
in an office / in a department	in a photograph / in a picture
in a book / in a (news)paper / in a magazine / in a letter	

- ☐ When I go to the cinema, I like to sit in the front row.
- ☐ James isn't up yet. He's still in bed.
- ☐ It was a lovely day. There wasn't a cloud in the sky.
- ☐ I've just started working in the sales department.
- ☐ Who is the woman in that photograph?
- ☐ Have you seen this picture in today's paper?



in a row

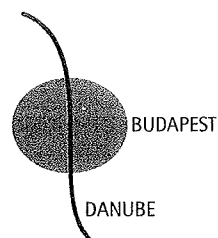
B

on the left / on the right	on the left-hand side / right-hand side
on the ground floor / on the first floor / on the second floor etc.	
on a map / on a menu / on a list	
on a farm	

- ☐ In Britain we drive on the left. (or ... on the left-hand side.)
- ☐ Our flat is on the second floor of the building.
- ☐ Here's a shopping list. Don't buy anything that's not on the list.
- ☐ Have you ever worked on a farm?

We say that a place is on a river / on a road / on the coast:

- ☐ Budapest is on the (river) Danube.
- ☐ Portsmouth is on the south coast of England.



Also on the way:

- ☐ We stopped at a small village on the way to London.

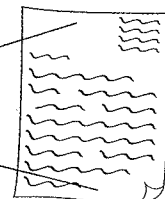
C

at the top (of) / at the bottom (of) / at the end (of)

- ☐ Write your name at the top of the page.
- ☐ Jane's house is at the other end of the street.

at the top (of the page)

at the bottom (of the page)



D

in the front / in the back of a car

- ☐ I was sitting in the back (of the car) when we crashed.

at the front / at the back of a building / theatre / group of people etc.

- ☐ The garden is at the back of the house.
- ☐ Let's sit at the front (of the cinema).
- ☐ We were at the back, so we couldn't see very well.

at the back



at the front

on the front / on the back of a letter / piece of paper etc.

- ☐ I wrote the date on the back of the photograph.

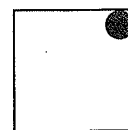
E

in the corner of a room

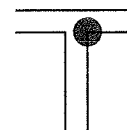
- ☐ The television is in the corner of the room.

at the corner or on the corner of a street

- ☐ There is a post box at/on the corner of the street.



in the corner



at/on the corner

In/at/on (position) 3

A

In hospital / at home etc.

We say that somebody is **in hospital** / **in prison** / **in jail**:

- ☐ Ann's mother is **in hospital**.

We say that somebody is **at home** / **at work** / **at school** / **at university** / **at college**:

- ☐ I'll be **at work** until 5.30, but I'll be **at home** all evening.
☐ Julia is studying chemistry **at university**.

Also **at sea** (= on a voyage). Compare **at sea** and **in the sea**:

- ☐ It was a long voyage. We were **at sea** for 30 days.
☐ I love swimming **in the sea**.

B

At a party / at a concert etc.

We say that somebody is **at an event** (at a party / at a conference etc.):

- ☐ Were there many people **at the party** / **at the meeting** / **at the wedding**?
☐ I saw Steve **at a football match** / **at a concert** on Saturday.

C

In and at for buildings

You can often use **in** or **at** with buildings. For example, you can eat **in a restaurant** or **at a restaurant**; you can buy something **in a supermarket** or **at a supermarket**. We usually say **at** when we say where an event takes place (for example: a concert, a film, a party, a meeting):

- ☐ We went to a concert **at the Royal Festival Hall**.
☐ The meeting took place **at the company's head office** in Frankfurt.

We say **at the station** / **at the airport**:

- ☐ Don't meet me **at the station**. I can get a taxi.

We say **at somebody's house**:

- ☐ I was **at Sue's house** last night. *or* I was **at Sue's** last night.

Also **at the doctor's**, **at the hairdresser's** etc.

We use **in** when we are thinking about the building itself. Compare:

- ☐ We had dinner **at the hotel**.
 All the rooms **in the hotel** have air conditioning. (*not* at the hotel)
☐ I was **at Sue's (house)** last night.
 It's always cold **in Sue's house**. The heating doesn't work very well. (*not* at Sue's house)

D

In and at for towns etc.

We normally use **in** with cities, towns and villages:

- ☐ Sam's parents live **in Nottingham**. (*not* at Nottingham)
☐ The Louvre is a famous art museum **in Paris**. (*not* at Paris)

But you can use **at** or **in** when you think of the place as *a point or station on a journey*:

- ☐ Does this train stop **at (or in) Nottingham**? (= at Nottingham station)
☐ We stopped **at (or in)** a small village on the way to London.

E

On a bus / in a car etc.

We usually say **on a bus** / **on a train** / **on a plane** / **on a ship** *but* **in a car** / **in a taxi**:

- ☐ The **bus** was very full. There were too many people **on it**.
☐ Mary arrived **in a taxi**.

We say **on a bike** (= bicycle) / **on a motorbike** / **on a horse**:

- ☐ Jane passed me **on her bike**.

At school / in hospital etc. → Unit 74 **In/at/on (position)** → Units 123–24 **To/at/in/into** → Unit 126
By car / by bike etc. → Unit 128B

In/at/on (other uses)

Expressions with in

in the rain / in the sun (= sunshine) / in the shade / in the dark / in bad weather etc.

- ☐ We sat **in the shade**. It was too hot to sit **in the sun**.
- ☐ Don't go out **in the rain**. Wait until it stops.

(write) in ink / in biro / in pencil

- ☐ When you do the exam, you're not allowed to write **in pencil**.

Also (write) in words / in figures / in BLOCK CAPITALS etc.

- ☐ Please write your name **in block capitals**.
- ☐ Write the story **in your own words**. (= don't copy somebody else)

(be/fall) in love (with somebody)

- ☐ Have you ever been **in love with anybody**?

in (my) opinion

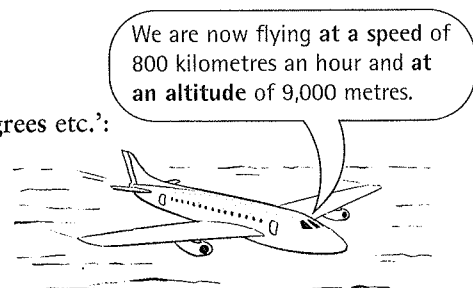
- ☐ **In my opinion**, the film wasn't very good.

B

At the age of ... etc.

We say 'at the age of 16 / at 120 miles an hour / at 100 degrees etc.':

- ☐ Tracy left school **at 16**. or ... **at the age of 16**.
- ☐ The train was travelling **at 120 miles an hour**.
- ☐ Water boils **at 100 degrees Celsius**.



C

On holiday / on a tour etc.

We say: (be/go) on holiday / on business / on a trip / on a tour / on a cruise etc.

- ☐ I'm going **on holiday** next week.
- ☐ Emma's away **on business** at the moment.
- ☐ One day I'd like to go **on a world tour**.

You can also say 'go to a place for a holiday / for my holiday(s)':

- ☐ Steve has gone to France **for a holiday**.

D

Other expressions with on

on television / on the radio

- ☐ I didn't watch the news **on television**, but I heard it **on the radio**.

on the phone/telephone

- ☐ I've never met her, but I've spoken to her **on the phone** a few times.

(be/go) on strike

- ☐ There are no trains today. The drivers are **on strike**.

(be/go) on a diet

- ☐ I've put on a lot of weight. I'll have to go **on a diet**.

(be) on fire

- ☐ Look! That car is **on fire**.

on the whole (= in general)

- ☐ Sometimes I have problems at work, but **on the whole** I enjoy my job.

on purpose (= intentionally)

- ☐ I'm sorry. I didn't mean to annoy you. I didn't do it **on purpose**.

In/at/on (time) → Unit 121 In/at/on (position) → Units 123-125