

Prepositions of Place: at, in, on

In general, we use:

- **at** for a POINT
- **in** for an ENCLOSED SPACE
- **on** for a SURFACE

at	in	on
POINT	ENCLOSED SPACE	SURFACE
at the corner	in the garden	on the wall
at the bus stop	in London	on the ceiling
at the door	in France	on the door
at the top of the page	in a box	on the cover
at the end of the road	in my pocket	on the floor
at the entrance	in my wallet	on the carpet
at the crossroads	in a building	on the menu
at the front desk	in a car	on a page

Look at these examples:

- Jane is waiting for you **at** the bus stop.
- The shop is **at** the end of the street.
- My plane stopped **at** Dubai and Hanoi and arrived **in** Bangkok two hours late.
- When will you arrive **at** the office?
- Do you work **in** an office?
- I have a meeting **in** New York.
- Do you live **in** Japan?
- Jupiter is **in** the Solar System. (The Earth is in...)
- The author's name is **on** the cover of the book.
- There are no prices **on** this menu.
- You are standing **on** my foot.
- There was a "no smoking" sign **on** the wall.
- I live **on** the 7th floor **at** 21 Oxford Street **in** London.

Notice the use of the prepositions of place **at**, **in** and **on** in these standard expressions:

at	in	on
at home	in a car	on a bus
at work	in a taxi	on a train
at school	in a helicopter	on a plane
at university	in a boat	on a ship
at college	in a lift (BrE) (elevator US)	on a bicycle, on a motorbike
at the top	in the newspaper	on a horse, on an elephant
at the bottom	in the sky	on the radio, on television
at the side	in a row	on the left, on the right
at reception	in Oxford Street	on the way

at the top, at the bottom, in the middle

Prepositions of place – *in, on or at*?

1. London is **in** the south-east of England.
2. Bournemouth is **on** the south coast of England.
3. Gothenburg is **on** the west coast.
4. Gothenburg is **in** the west of Sweden.
5. We waited **at** the train station **on** platform 9.
6. You must always stop **at** a red light.
7. There is a spider's web **on** the ceiling.
8. If you drop something **on** the floor, pick it up.
9. There was a knock **on** the door and she went to open it.
10. Please don't walk **on** the grass.
11. We waited for 20 minutes **at** the bus stop.
12. She lives **in** the centre of the city.

13. I watched an old film **on** TV last night.
14. I saw the latest Mission Impossible movie **at** the cinema last night.
15. I listened to the news **on** the radio on my way to work.
16. Where is Debbie? She's **at** home.
17. Where is Debbie? She's gone **X** home.
18. George arrived **at** work early today.
19. George came to work **on** foot.
20. I'm **on** my way. Don't wait for me.

Discussion

1. What do you keep **in** your wallet/purse/bag?
2. What do you have **on** your balcony?
3. What do you find **in** people's gardens?
4. What can you find **on** your shelves?
5. Name at least 5 things you can find **in** your bathroom.
6. Describe what is **in** your kitchen cupboards.
7. What do you see **in** the sky at night?
8. Imagine you're sitting **in** front of the most delicious dinner **in** the world. What is **on** your plate?
9. Is it better to raise children **in** the town or **in** the countryside/ **in** the country?
10. Where did you last go **on** holiday/**on** vacation?
11. Do you prefer to watch films **at** home or **in/at** the cinema?
12. Show your partner a photo **on** your phone. What is happening **in** the photo?