Lesson 4: Prepositions (Time, Place, Movement)

1. Prepositions of time

   a) *At* is used:
      i) to show an exact point of time
         e.g. *I got up at 8 o'clock.*
         *What are you going to do at the weekend?*
      ii) for festivals which are usually celebrated for more than one day:
         e.g. *We usually have holidays at Christmas.*
         *I shall go to Paris at Easter.*

   b) *On* is used:
      i) for a specific day, such as a date (1st April), a day of the week (Monday), a festival or a day
         with a name of its own (Christmas Day)
         e.g. *We shall have a test on Tuesday.*
         *Father bought a big turkey on Christmas Day last year.*

   c) *In* is used:
      i) before words which show a relatively long period of time (months, seasons, years)
         e.g. *I was born in 1970.*
         *He often goes swimming in winter.*
      ii) to show the total length of time taken for the completion of some activity
         e.g. *He can finish the work in 30 minutes.*
      iii) to state a period at the end of which something will happen
         e.g. *He will return in an hour.*
         *The train will leave in a few seconds.*

   d) *By* is used to show the latest time by which something should be done. The use of *by* emphasizes
      that the action must be done before the time mentioned.
      e.g. *You must hand in your project by next Monday.*
      *He should have finished all his work by tomorrow.*

   e) *For* is used to show the total amount of time during which something takes place.
      e.g. *I have studied for three hours.*
      *She has been waiting at the bus stop for an hour.*

   f) *Since* is used to show that an action started at a certain time in the past or has been true since a
      certain time in the past.
      e.g. *She has been watching TV since this morning.*
      *She has been working as a clerk since she left school last year.*
2. Prepositions of place

a) *AT* is used:
   i) for an address in which the number of the house in the street is mentioned
      e.g. John lives at 12 Stanley Street.
      The new post office is at 92 Princess Road.

   ii) with the names of special buildings, hotels, theatres, etc.
      e.g. We shall meet at the Royal Theatre.
      My friend is working at the Connaught Centre.

b) *ON* is used:
   i) for the place where a person lives or works when that place is not in a building
      e.g. My uncle works on a ship.
      That boy lives on a farm in the New Territories.

   ii) to tell on which floor of a building a certain thing is located
      e.g. His office is on the 12th floor.
      We live on the 9th floor of this building.

c) *IN* is used:
   i) for streets and roads
      e.g. He lives in King’s Road.
      His office is in Boundary Street.

   ii) for large areas such as countries, continents, provinces, large cities and towns
      e.g. I wish I could live in France.
      There is a famous statue in America.

   iii) for a particular room or department in a building or company
      e.g. The students are having their lessons in the Music Room.
      He works in the personnel department of a British firm.

3. Prepositions of movement

a) *FROM* is used:
   i) to introduce the place, point, person, etc. that is the starting point
      e.g. The frog is jumping from one place to another.
      I traveled from London to Rome last year.

   ii) to indicate the starting point of a length of time
      e.g. She learned piano from childhood.
      Our summer holidays will start from 1st July.

   iii) to indicate the source from which something is taken
      e.g. She has copied the sentence from a dictionary.

   iv) to indicate separation, removal, prevention, escape, etc.
      e.g. Take that knife away from the baby.
      What prevented you from coming?

   v) to indicate change
      e.g. The price has been increased from $2 to $3.
b) **TO / TOWARDS** is used to show direction.
   e.g. She is falling to the ground.
   The bus has turned to the right.
   She is walking towards the sea.

c) **INTO** is used:
   i) to indicate motion or direction to a point within
      e.g. Come into the house.
      Throw the stick into the fire.
   ii) to indicate change of condition
      e.g. Don't get into trouble.
      She burst into tears.

d) **ALONG** means from one end to the other end.
   e.g. We walked along the road.
   There are trees all along the river banks.

e) **PAST** means up to and farther than.
   e.g. He walked past the house.

f) **ACROSS** means from one side to the other side.
   e.g. There is a bridge across the river.
   He rowed the old lady across the lake.

**Exercise 1**

*Complete the table with the correct words from the box.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>April</th>
<th>Easter</th>
<th>midnight</th>
<th>my birthday</th>
<th>the fifth day</th>
<th>13 December</th>
<th>the morning</th>
<th>20 years old</th>
<th>5 p.m.</th>
<th>1970</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>at</th>
<th>on</th>
<th>in</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Easter</td>
<td>(5) my birthday</td>
<td>(9) April</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(8)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Exercise 2**

*Fill in the blanks in the sentences below with prepositions of time.*

1. Mary will arrive ____________ Monday afternoon.
2. I often stay at home ____________ the morning and go to school ____________ the afternoon.
3. Were you born ____________ 3rd January?
4. I am afraid I can’t finish the work ____________ an hour.
5. We had a long holiday ___________ Easter last year.

6. Cats sleep ___________ the daytime and catch rats ___________ night.

7. John has been waiting for you ___________ an hour.

8. She has been sleeping ___________ 10 o’clock last night.

9. We have known each other ___________ 10 years.

10. He can always finish his homework ___________ supper time.

**Exercise 3**
*Fill in the blanks in the sentences below with prepositions of place.*

1. Many people like to live ___________ villages.

2. We spent last weekend ___________ the seaside.


4. Mary lives ___________ 23 King’s Road.

5. We had a picnic ___________ Sai Kung last Saturday.

6. He works ___________ the accounts department of a firm.

7. I met John ___________ the Lee Theatre yesterday.

8. She lives ___________ Mongkok ___________ Kowloon.

9. My brother was born ___________ a hospital ___________ Shatin.

10. Jenny and Don traveled ___________ Japan ___________ Korea.

**Exercise 4**
*Complete the following phrases with prepositions of movement.*

1. jump ___________ a river

2. run ___________ the road

3. drive ___________ the right

4. cycle ___________ Shatin to Taipo

5. walk ___________ the stairs

6. fall ___________ the sea

7. travel ___________ east to west

8. walk ___________ the seaside

9. migrate ___________ Italy

10. escape ___________ prison
**Exercise 5**

*Complete the following sentences with the appropriate prepositions.*

1. Whose picture is hanging ____________ the wall?

2. The letter B comes ____________ A and C.

3. The rain is pouring ____________ steadily.

4. I saw him go ____________ the room.

5. I can't see the chair because it is ____________ me.

6. I saw a kitten ____________ beautiful blue eyes.

7. All matter is made up ____________ molecules.

8. This book is written ____________ John Lee.

9. She cannot see clearly ____________ her glasses.

10. We must put all our rubbish ____________ a litter bin.