Prepositions are used to establish relationships between nouns, between nouns and verbs, and between different parts of a sentence.

À (to) and de (from, about) are the most common prepositions in French. They form **contractions with definite articles**: Tex parle aux étudiants. Il parle des devoirs. Il regarde la question en haut du tableau. (Tex talks to the students. He is talking about homework. He is looking at the question at the top of the blackboard.)

When prepositions have literal, spatial meanings, using them is straightforward: sur (on), sous (under), avec (with), sans (without). There are, in addition, many idiomatic uses of prepositions, especially à and de. Dictionaries include listings of idiomatic meanings.

In addition to prepositions + noun (or pronoun) objects, discussed here, there are specific guidelines for using **prepositions with place names**. Finally, many prepositions, including some on this page, may be followed by **infinitives**.

1. a-b-c
2. d-e-f
3. g-h-i-j-k-l
4. m-n-o-p
5. q-r-s-t-u-v

- **à** = to, at
  See **contractions with definite articles**, the use of à with **place names**, and à + infinitive.
  Tex parle à ses amis au café. Ils vont à Opelousas.
  Tex is talking to his friends at the café. They're going to Opelousas.

- **à cause de** = because of, due to
  The preposition à cause de is followed by a noun, whereas the conjunction parce que (because) is followed by a subordinate clause.
  Ils vont en Louisiane à cause de la fête.
  They're going to Louisiana because of the celebration.

- **au centre de** = at the center of
  Opelousas se trouve au centre de la Louisiane.
  Opelousas is in the center of Louisiana.
• à côté de = beside

  Bette veut s'asseoir à côté de Tex.  
  Bette wants to sit beside Tex.

• à droite de = to the right of, on the right of

  Tammy est à droite de PawPaw Louis.  
  Tammy is on PawPaw Louis’ right.

• à gauche de = to the left of, on the left of

  Tex est à gauche de PawPaw.  
  Tex is on PawPaw’s left.

• après = after (temporal)

  Après le dîner, ils vont danser.  
  After dinner, they're going dancing.

• à travers = across, through

  Tammy voit Bette à travers la foule.  
  Tammy sees Bette through the crowd.

• au milieu de = in the middle of

  PawPaw danse au milieu de la salle.  
  PawPaw is dancing in the middle of the room.

• au sujet de / à propos de = on the subject of; about

  Paw-Paw parle au sujet de la Résistance et à propos de sa longue vie de séducteur.  
  PawPaw is talking about the Resistance and about his long life as a womanizer.

• autour de = surrounding, around

  Les amis sont assis autour de la table.  
  The friends are seated around the table.

• avant = before [temporal]

  Ils ne vont pas se coucher avant cinq heures du matin.  
  They are not going to bed before five o'clock in the morning.

See also après used in past infinitive constructions.
• *avec = with*

Avec + noun is often translated as an '-ly' adverb: *avec* joie (joyfully).

> Tex est en Louisiane *avec* ses amis. Ils dansent *avec* joie à l'anniversaire de PawPaw.

Tex is in Louisiana *with* his friends. They are dancing *joyfully* at PawPaw's birthday celebration.

• *chez = 'at X's (house), at the house of, at the store of; to X's (house), to the store of'*

*Chez* may refer to individual's homes as well as to someone's shop, as in the first example below. When applied to larger groups of people, such as nationalities, it means among: *Chez* nous les Texans, on adore la sauce piquante = "We Texans love hot sauce" (literally: Among us Texans we love hot sauce).

> Le lendemain matin, ils vont acheter des croissants *chez* le boulanger.

> Tout le monde a adoré le séjour *chez* Paw-Paw.

> Après un an à Austin, Tex se sent vraiment *chez* les Texans.

The next morning they are going to buy croissants at the baker's.

Everyone loved their stay at Paw-Paw's.

After a year in Austin, Tex really feels at ease *among* Texans.

• *contre = against*

*Contre* is used in several idiomatic expressions.

> Bette a dansé tout *contre* Tex.

> Tammy est en colère *contre* Bette; elle se fâche *contre* Tex.

> Tammy est *contre* la bigamie.

Bette danced right *against* Tex.

Tammy is mad *at* Bette; she's getting angry *with* Tex.

Tammy is *against* bigamy.

• *dans = in*

*Dans* is always followed by a determiner (definite, indefinite or possessive). See also *en*.

> Tammy est *dans* la cuisine. Elle prépare le dîner pour Tex qui arrive *dans* une heure.

Tammy's *in* the kitchen. She's cooking dinner for Tex who's coming *in* one hour.

• *d'après = according to*

*D'après* Edouard, les Américains mangent très mal. Mais Tammy cuisine bien!

According to Edouard, Americans eat very poorly. But Tammy cooks well.
• **de** = of, from, about
  See also the use of **de** with place names and **de** + infinitive.

  Au dîner, Tex et Tammy parlent **de** leur voyage en Louisiane.  
  At dinner, Tex and Tammy talk **about** their trip to Louisiana.

• **de l’autre côté de** = on the other side of

  Puis ils font une promenade et regardent les gratte-ciel **de l’autre côté du** fleuve.  
  Then they take a walk and look at the skyscrapers **on the other side of** the river.

• **derrière** = in back of, behind (spatial)

  Ils admirent le soleil se coucher **derrière** les collines.  
  They admire the sun setting **behind** the hills.

• **devant** = in front of, before (spatial sense)
  Contrast **devant** with **avant** (temporal sense).

  Enfin, ils s’embrassent passionément **devant** le Capitole.  
  Finally, they kiss passionately **in front of** the Capitol.

• **en** = in
  **En** means ‘in’ and immediately precedes the noun (i.e., it does not require a determiner; it is followed directly by its object, for example, **en** France). It is also used in many idiomatic expressions: Tex roule **en** voiture (Tex is driving in a car); Trey vient **en** vélo (Trey comes on a bike); and in some time expressions: **en** automne (in the fall); **en** août (in August). Compare with **dans**.

  See also the use of **en** with place names and **en** with a present participle.

• **en bas de** = at the bottom of, at the end of

  Ils prennent un verre dans un bar **en bas de la** cinquième rue.  
  They have a drink in a bar **at the end of** Fifth Street.

• **en dehors de** = outside of, excluding

  **En dehors de** Tammy, Tex ne connaît pas beaucoup de Texans.  
  **Outside of** Tammy, Tex doesn’t know many Texans.

• **en dépit de** = in spite of

  **En dépit de** l’alcool, Tex se conduit en **In spite of** the alcohol, Tex behaves like a
• en face de = in front of, across from
  Tex est assis en face de Tammy.  Tex is (seated) across from Tammy.

• en haut de = at the top of; to the top of
  Tout d'un coup Bette apparaît en haut de l'escalier.  All of a sudden, Bette appears at the top of the staircase.

• entre = between
  Entre means 'between' and it is used when referring to two people or things (or two groups of people or things). Contrast with parmi ('among').
  Puis elle vient s'asseoir entre Tammy et Tex.  Then she comes and sits down between Tammy and Tex.

• envers = toward (figurative sense)
  Envers means 'toward' in a figurative sense, indicating an attitude or gesture toward someone. Contrast with vers, which means toward in a spatial or temporal sense.
  Tammy ressent une certaine antipathie envers Bette.  Tammy feels a certain animosity toward Bette.

• grace à = thanks to
  Tex a découvert son grand-père grace à l'album de photos de Rita.  Tex discovered his grandfather thanks to Rita's photo album.

• hors de = outside of, out of (idiomatic)
Paw-Paw habite hors de la ville d'Opelousas. Il est hors de question que Tex vive à Opelousas.

• jusqu'à = until
Distinguish between the preposition jusqu'à and the conjunction jusqu'à ce que.

Tex et Tammy vont jusqu'à Opelousas.
Tex and Tammy are going as far as Opelousas.

• loin de = far from

Tex habite loin de son grand-père Paw-Paw Louis.
Tex lives far from his grandfather Paw-Paw Louis.

• malgré = in spite of

Malgré la distance, Tex aime aller voir son grand-père.
In spite of the distance, Tex likes to go see his grandfather.

• par = by, through, per
Par has several idiomatic meanings. It means 'by' when it is used with the passive voice. See also the use of par + infinitive.

Tex va à Opelousas une fois par mois.
Tex goes to Opelousas once a month (one time per month).

Tex est invité à Opelousas par Paw-Paw.
Tex is invited to Opelousas by Paw-Paw.

Pour aller à Opelousas, Tex passe par Houston.
Tex goes through Houston to get to Opelousas.

• parmi = among
Parmi means 'among' and it is used when referring to three or more people or things (or groups of people or things). Contrast with entre (between).

Tex compte beaucoup de Cajuns parmi ses cousins.
Tex counts many Cajuns among his cousins.
pendant = during

Pendant son séjour chez Paw-Paw, Tex mange des écrevisses. 
During his stay with Paw-Paw, Tex eats crawfish.

pour = for, in favor of

See also the use of pour + infinitive.

Paw-Paw est pour la défense du Cajun. Pour lui, le français est la plus belle langue du monde.

Paw-Paw is in favor of the defense of Cajun. For him, French is the most beautiful language in the world.

près de = near to

Opelousas est près de Baton Rouge.

Opelousas is near Baton Rouge.

quant à = as for

Paw-Paw est content de voir Tex. Quant à Tex, il est heureux de pouvoir enfin parler français.

Paw-Paw is happy to see Tex. As for Tex, he is happy to finally be able to speak French.

sans = without

Sans doute, le français se parle dans sa famille depuis longtemps.

Without doubt, French has spoken in his family for a long time.

sauf = except

Toute sa famille parle français, sauf son oncle Elmer, qui habite en Californie.

Everyone in his family speaks French, except Uncle Elmer, who lives in California.

selon = according to

Selon Paw-Paw, Tex a un drôle d'accent français.

According to Paw-Paw, Tex has a funny French accent.
• sous = under, in (idiomatic)
Sous means 'under,' but it is often translated by 'in' in expressions such as sous la pluie (in the rain); sous le soleil (in the sun).

En route pour Opelousas, Tex et Tammy ont vu un alligator sous un pont. On the road to Opelousas, Tex and Tammy saw an alligator under a bridge.

• sur = on, upon, on top of
Sur means 'on,' but it is also used in several idiomatic expressions: un sur deux (one out of two); tourner son attention sur quelque chose (to turn one's attention to something); sur le moment (at the time); sur invitation (by invitation). etc.

En Louisiane, on sert souvent des écrevisses directement sur la table, sans assiette. In Louisiana, crawfish are often served directly on the table, with no plate.

• vers = toward(s)
Vers means 'toward, around' in both a spatial and a temporal sense. Contrast with envers, which has a figurative sense.

Vers midi, Tex et Tammy repartent vers Austin. Around noon, Tex and Tammy head back towards Austin.

Bette et Tammy entrent dans un restaurant ensemble. Elles ont toutes les deux pris rendez-vous avec Tex sans le savoir! Elles regardent autour de la salle. En même temps, elles aperçoivent Tex assis à une table. Elles se précipitent vers lui. Elles se regardent, hésitent un moment, puis s’asseyent. Tammy s’assied à droite de Tex et Bette s’assied à gauche de lui. Elles se regardent à nouveau d’un air confus. Tex s’amuse malgré le drame entre Bette et Tammy.

Bette et Tammy enter a restaurant together. Unknowingly, they both have a date with Tex. They look around the room. At the same time they see Tex seated at a table. They rush towards him. They look at each other, hesitate a moment, then sit down. Tammy sits on Tex’ right and Bette sits down to his left. They look at each other again, confused. Tex is having fun in spite of the drama between Bette and Tammy.

fill in the blanks
Fill in the blank with the correct preposition.

1. Tex et Tammy vont _____ Opelousas pour rendre visite à Paw-Paw. (à, de, pour)
2. Opelousas se trouve _____ la Louisiane. (à droite de, au centre de, devant)
3. Bette adore danser ______ Tex. (à, avec, par)

4. ______ Paw-Paw, le français est la plus belle langue du monde. (sauf, selon, vers)

5. Tammy se fâche ______ Tex, quand il offre des fleurs à Bette. (à, de, contre)

6. Opelousas se trouve ______ Baton Rouge. (dans, derrière, près de)

7. Edouard prend toujours un café ______ son dîner. (après, dans, devant)

8. Paw-Paw parle souvent ______ ses aventures pendant la deuxième guerre mondiale. (à, de, avec)

9. Edouard est serveur. Il travaille ______ un restaurant français. (dans, en, sur)

10. Il y a un écureuil et un escargot ______ les copains de Tex. (parmi, pour, quant à)

11. Paw-Paw arrose des fleurs qui poussent dans le jardin ______ sa maison. (avant, devant, entre)

12. Tex et ses amis restent ______ Paw-Paw en Louisiane. (à, chez, vers)