



# Using French Prepositions: In, On, and At

KS4 FRENCH

GRAMMAR

Ages 13-16 ⌚ 3 min read

## What Are Prepositions?

**Prepositions** are small words that show where something is, when something happens, or how things relate to each other. In English, we use words like 'in', 'on', and 'at' all the time without thinking about it. In **French**, these words are **prépositions**, and they work in very similar ways — but there are some important differences that can trip you up!

Think of it like: A preposition is a bridge between two ideas. Just as a bridge connects two sides of a river, a preposition connects a noun to the rest of a sentence, telling us where, when, or how things relate.

## The French Preposition 'En' (In)

The French word '**en**' means 'in' and is used for several different situations. You use '**en**' when talking about being inside something, like '**en classe**' (in class) or '**en ville**' (in town). You also use '**en**' when talking about months or years: '**en janvier**' (in January) or '**en 2024**' (in 2024). Interestingly, '**en**' is also used with countries that are feminine, like '**en France**' (in France) or '**en Italie**' (in Italy).

## The French Preposition 'Sur' (On)

The French word '**sur**' means 'on' and describes something resting on top of a surface. Use '**sur**' for phrases like '**sur la table**' (on the table) or '**sur le mur**' (on the wall). It's also used in the phrase '**sur mon téléphone**' (on my phone). '**Sur**' is straightforward because it really does mean something is sitting on top of something else.

Think of it like: If you're playing a board game, all the pieces are 'sur' the board. They're resting on top, not buried inside.

## The French Preposition 'À' (At)

The word '**à**' (pronounced 'ah') is probably the trickiest because it has many uses. Use '**à**' for locations where you do activities: '**à l'école**' (at school), '**au cinéma**' (at the

cinema), or '**au restaurant**' (at the restaurant). You also use '**à**' to talk about time: '**à trois heures**' (at three o'clock). Notice that '**à**' combines with '**le**' to become '**au**' and with '**les**' to become '**aux**'.

Think of it like: '**À**' is the 'meeting point' preposition. You're 'at' the place where something happens or where you meet someone.

## Quick Comparison

Remember: '**en**' = inside or within; '**sur**' = on top of a surface; '**à**' = at a location where an activity happens. With practice, these will feel natural!