Prepositions: At, In, and On

Prepositions are words or phrases that indicate agency, comparison, concession, manner, place and time, purpose, etc. They include words like:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>about</th>
<th>before</th>
<th>from</th>
<th>regarding</th>
<th>toward(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>according to</td>
<td>but</td>
<td>in addition to</td>
<td>regardless of</td>
<td>unlike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after</td>
<td>by</td>
<td>in order to</td>
<td>since</td>
<td>until</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>among</td>
<td>contrary to</td>
<td>in relation to</td>
<td>such as</td>
<td>with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as</td>
<td>despite</td>
<td>like</td>
<td>throughout</td>
<td>without</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The correct use of prepositions comes with practice. Many prepositions can be used to express the same relationship between two ideas, and the same verb can be used with many prepositions depending on the context.

At

To specify the place, use "at" before a specific location.

I was not at home when you called yesterday.
Sam will be at school until 3 o'clock.

To specify the time, use "at" before a specific time (including noon, night, and midnight).

I have to get up at 6 a.m. every morning.
They left the library at midnight.

In

To specify the place, use "in" before countries, states or provinces, cities or towns, and enclosed places.

My entire family lives in Canada.
The dog is not allowed to go in the house.

To specify the time, use "in" before years, seasons, months, parts of the day, and periods of time.

He prefers to shower in the morning than before going to bed.
My final exams are in three weeks.

On

To specify the place, use "on" before a surface or street.

They looked in bewilderment at the poster on the wall.
I bumped into Steve on Sparks Street today.

To specify the time, use "on" before a specific day or date.

You two should have supper together on Friday.
We are celebrating Norman's birthday on May 9.

To know more, see Checkmate, the Oxford Collocations Dictionary, the Oxford Learner's Grammar, or similar writing guides.

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