

## PREPOSITIONS

Autor: Enrique Hinojosa

- Las preposiciones pueden tener más de un significado:

He came *by* car / He stood *by* me / I had to be there *by* 2 pm / It was done *by* me  
(instrumental) (de lugar) (de tiempo) (agente)

- También aparecen en muchas expresiones idiomáticas y combinadas con adjetivos:

learn *by* heart / be *by* oneself / be interested *in* / be good *at* / listen *to* / look *for*

- No tienen un significado fijo cuando comparamos los dos idiomas (español-inglés), como se puede ver en los siguientes ejemplos, donde todas las preposiciones se traducen por "de":

it's time *to* eat / my return *from* Boston / he came *by* day / the girl *with* long hair  
the best thing *in* the world / we were talking *about* you / the shop *at* the corner ...

### A. - PREPOSITIONS OF PLACE

#### ➤ IN / AT / ON

**IN:** el lugar es considerado tridimensionalmente (We swam *in* the lake)

**AT:** el lugar es considerado como un punto (I'll meet you *at* the lake)

**ON:** el lugar es como una superficie (The moon was reflected *on* the lake)

#### ➤ OVER / ABOVE / UNDER / BELOW

**OVER:** por encima de una superficie (The horse jumped *over* the fence)

**ABOVE:** por encima pero a más distancia (I could see the clouds *above* us)

**UNDER:** por debajo de una superficie (The cat was *under* the table)

**BELOW:** por debajo pero a más distancia (By plane, you see the people *below*)

#### ➤ BEHIND / BEYOND / IN FRONT OF / OPPOSITE / AGAINST

**BEHIND:** detrás de (He was hidden *behind* the door)

**BEYOND:** más allá, a más distancia (The plane disappeared *beyond* the clouds)

**IN FRONT OF:** delante de (John is sitting *in front of* Mary)

**OPPOSITE:** en frente de, cara a cara (There is a beautiful house *opposite* mine)

**AGAINST:** contra o en contra de algo (There is a conspiracy *against* the king)

#### ➤ (A)ROUND / BY / NEXT TO / BETWEEN / AMONG / NEAR / FAR (FROM)

**(A)ROUND:** alrededor de (He put his arm *around* me)

**BY:** junto a o cerca de (I prefer to sit *by* the fire)

**NEXT TO:** sinónimo de "by" (I'll sit *next to* you)

**BETWEEN:** entre dos (Sit *between* Mary & John)

**AMONG:** entre varios (He shares his money *among* the poor)

**NEAR/FAR (FROM):** cerca / lejos de (He lives *near/far from* the hospital)

## B. - PREPOSITIONS OF MOVEMENT

### ➤ ACROSS / THROUGH / ALONG

<b>ACROSS:</b> cruzar por la superficie o por encima	(We went <b>across</b> the road)
<b>THROUGH:</b> cruzar tridimensionalmente	(We went <b>through</b> some tunnels)
<b>ALONG:</b> a lo largo, siguiendo una línea	(We walked <b>along</b> the beach)

### ➤ FROM / TO / TOWARDS / ONTO / INTO / (A)ROUND

<b>FROM:</b> procedencia, desde	(He came <b>from</b> the Highlands)
<b>TO/TOWARDS:</b> dirección, hacia, a	(I ran <b>to/towards</b> the door)
<b>ONTO:</b> dirección hacia superficie	(The cat jumped <b>onto</b> the table)
<b>INTO:</b> dirección hacia dentro	(They went <b>into</b> the pub)
<b>ROUND:</b> por, alrededor de	(I was cycling <b>round</b> the park)

## C. - PREPOSITIONS OF TIME

### ➤ IN / AT / ON

<b>IN:</b> <i>in</i> the afternoon; <i>in</i> 1976; <i>in</i> summer; <i>in</i> September
<b>AT:</b> <i>at</i> 5 pm; <i>at</i> Easter; <i>at</i> Christmas; <i>at</i> the weekend; <i>at</i> lunch(time); <i>at</i> night
<b>ON:</b> <i>on</i> Monday; <i>on</i> June the first; <i>on</i> Monday morning; <i>on</i> Christmas Day

### ➤ SINCE / FOR / DURING / FROM-TO / BEFORE / AFTER / (UN)TIL / BY

<b>SINCE:</b> desde un tiempo pasado	(I haven't seen him <b>since</b> Sunday)
<b>FOR:</b> durante periodos de tiempo	(I have lived here <b>for</b> five years)
<b>DURING:</b> durante	(He woke up several times <b>during</b> the night)
<b>FROM-TO:</b> desde... hasta	(I worked <b>from</b> morning <b>to</b> night)
<b>BEFORE:</b> antes de	(I must leave <b>before</b> 7 pm / Look <b>before</b> crossing)
<b>AFTER:</b> después de	(I can't stay <b>after</b> 8 pm / Lock the door <b>after</b> leaving)
<b>(UN)TIL:</b> hasta	(I must stay <b>till</b> 6 pm / Don't leave <b>until</b> I arrive)
<b>BY:</b> para, no más tarde de	(She must finish the work <b>by</b> Tuesday)

## D. - OTHER PREPOSITIONS

### ➤ WITH / WITHOUT / FOR / OF / FROM / TO / BY / AT / ABOUT

<b>WITH:</b> junto con, con	(I'll go <b>with</b> you / She came <b>with</b> her mother)
<b>WITHOUT:</b> sin	(You can't do it <b>without</b> help)
<b>FOR:</b> para, por	(I'm doing it <b>for</b> you / She is responsible <b>for</b> that)
<b>OF:</b> de	(the windows <b>of</b> the house / Are you afraid <b>of</b> dogs?)
<b>FROM:</b> de	(I took the book <b>from</b> the library)
<b>TO:</b> a, para	(She lied <b>to</b> me / Happy birthday <b>to</b> you!!)
<b>BY:</b> de, por	(I learn lessons <b>by</b> heart / He's absorbed <b>by</b> his work)
<b>AT:</b> en, con	(I'm good <b>at</b> Maths / Why are you mad <b>at</b> me?)
<b>ABOUT:</b> alrededor de	(There were <b>about</b> a dozen students at the door)

## PREPOSITIONS OF PLACE & MOVEMENT

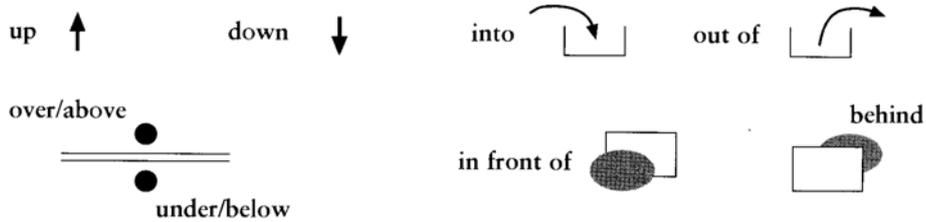
### A At, On, In

Learn these rules.

- at a point/place **x** e.g. I met her at the bus stop. She lives at 43 Duke Road.  
 He's at work (i.e. not at home). They're at a party tonight.
- on a surface **x** e.g. The book is on the desk. We sat on the floor.
- in an area or space **x** e.g. Malawi is a country in Africa. She lives in Milan. He's in the kitchen. The key's in my pocket. Put it in the box.

### B Opposites

Some prepositions form pairs of opposites.



*Note:* Over/above are often synonymous, so are under/below, but over and under sometimes suggest movement.

When we flew **over** Paris we couldn't see much because we were **above** the clouds. **Below** us was the river which ran **under** the bridge.

### C Here are some more common prepositions of place

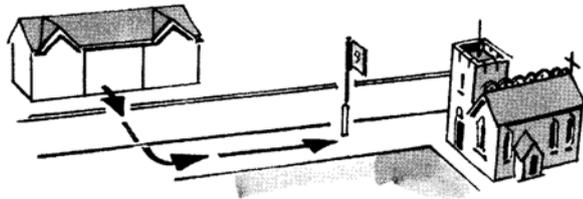
We drove **along** the river, **round** the lake, **past** the old castle, and **through** the village.



We came **over** the bridge, and parked **next to** the house, which was **opposite** the hotel.



Our house is **between** two shops and it is **near** a bus stop; you just go **across** the road and walk **along** the other side **towards** the church.



## IN / ON / AT

### PLACE

IN	ON	AT
<b>Countries and cities</b> (in France, in Paris...) <b>Rooms</b> (in the kitchen,...) <b>Buildings</b> (in a shop, in a museum...) <b>Closed spaces</b> (in a park, in a garden,...)	<b>Transport</b> (on a bike, on a bus, on a plane, on a ship,...) but " <i>in a car</i> " <b>A surface</b> (on the floor, on a table, on the border, on a shelf, on the wall..)	at school, at the door, at university, at home, at a bus stop, at work, at the airport, at the station,....

### TIME

IN	ON	AT
<b>Months</b> (in February, in May) <b>Seasons</b> (in winter, in summer) <b>Years</b> (in 2004...) <b>Times of day</b> (in the morning, in the evening, but " <i>at night</i> ")	<b>Dates</b> (on March 1 <sup>st</sup> ) <b>Days</b> (on Tuesday, on Monday, on New Year's Day, on Valentine's Day, on Friday morning...)	<b>Times</b> (at 6 o'clock, at 7.45,...) <b>Festival periods</b> (at Christmas, at Easter) <b>Other expressions</b> at night, at the weekend

### Algunas consideraciones

- "in/at/on" no se usan delante de "*this, next, last, tomorrow, yesterday, every*"  
(I leave school *this year*, Bob came *last Christmas*, We go there *every summer*)
- "on time/in time" "on time" = a la hora prevista / "in time" = con tiempo / a tiempo  
(The plane took off *on time* / I hope the film starts *on time*)  
(Hurry up if you want to be *in time* / I remembered the key just *in time*)
- También se utiliza "in" para hablar del tiempo que se tarda en hacer algo: (I did the crossword *in* five minutes) y cuando significa "dentro de" refiriéndonos al futuro:  
(The building will open *in* six weeks / *in* six weeks' time)
- "in/at" Utilizamos "*in*" cuando hablamos de un edificio considerando su naturaleza y tamaño, no su función (There are 40 seats *in the cinema* / We waited *in the pub*)  
Utilizamos "*at*" cuando nos referimos a la actividad que se realiza en un edificio  
(I was *at the cinema* last night / My parents are *at the pub* = tomando una copa)
- **Frases comunes:** in the country, in prison/hospital, in the sky, in a queue/line/row,  
in the middle, in this photo/picture, in a book/newspaper, in the back/front of a car;  
on the platform, on the farm, on this page, on the screen, on an island, on the beach,  
on the coast, on page 21, on the right/left, on the back of an envelope;  
at the station, at the airport, at home/work/school, at Mike's house, at the seaside,  
at the top/bottom of a hill, at the top/bottom of the page, at the front/back of a queue,  
at the end of a corridor,...

## EXERCISES

1.- Use "in/at/on" in the sentences below:

- a.- Stop \_\_\_\_\_ the traffic lights
- b.- Sit \_\_\_\_\_ that chair.
- c.- Hold the baby \_\_\_\_\_ your arms.
- d.- I met him \_\_\_\_\_ the bus.
- e.- We were \_\_\_\_\_ the bus stop.
- f.- Put this notice \_\_\_\_\_ the door.
- g.- Wait for me \_\_\_\_\_ the door.
- h.- There was snow \_\_\_\_\_ the road.
- i.- Bilbao is \_\_\_\_\_ the coast.
- j.- I saw it \_\_\_\_\_ TV.
- k.- Put it back \_\_\_\_\_ the shelf.
- l.- Put the milk \_\_\_\_\_ the fridge.
- m.- Leave it \_\_\_\_\_ the floor.
- n.- Write your name \_\_\_\_\_ the bottom of the page.
- o.- Write your name \_\_\_\_\_ the front page.
- p.- I'll put this table \_\_\_\_\_ the corner of the room.
- q.- She was standing \_\_\_\_\_ the corner of the street.
- r.- Don't put your dirty fingers \_\_\_\_\_ the photographs.
- s.- Look at the fountain \_\_\_\_\_ this photographs.
- t.- She looked at herself \_\_\_\_\_ the mirror.
- u.- She wrote a message \_\_\_\_\_ the mirror.

2.- Fill in the blank spaces using "since/for/during/from-to/before/after/until/by"

- a.- I have to come back home \_\_\_\_\_ 11 o'clock
- b.- We shouldn't wait \_\_\_\_\_ tomorrow; tomorrow will be too late.
- c.- I can only stay \_\_\_\_\_ another five minutes.
- d.- I've seen him several times \_\_\_\_\_ our holidays.
- e.- We weren't expecting you \_\_\_\_\_ Monday.
- f.- My parents are going away \_\_\_\_\_ a week.
- g.- Look to the right & the left \_\_\_\_\_ crossing the road.
- h.- The house was in a mess \_\_\_\_\_ the party.
- i.- The museums are open \_\_\_\_\_ nine \_\_\_\_\_ five.
- j.- \_\_\_\_\_ when do you give orders here?
- k.- I didn't see her again \_\_\_\_\_ last year.
- l.- She arrived the day \_\_\_\_\_ yesterday (two days ago).
- m.- \_\_\_\_\_ now to eternity sounds like a very long time.
- n.- I know he's going away, but I don't know \_\_\_\_\_ how long.
- o.- He hasn't visited us \_\_\_\_\_ then.
- p.- He should be here \_\_\_\_\_ Monday (not later than).
- q.- \_\_\_\_\_ the time we got to the theatre, the play had already started.
- r.- She has lived in Paris \_\_\_\_\_ 2 years.
- s.- The baby woke up twice \_\_\_\_\_ the night.
- t.- Jane began to feel ill \_\_\_\_\_ the meal.
- u.- I expect things will change \_\_\_\_\_ his arrival.
- v.- You must have this work finish \_\_\_\_\_ tomorrow.

3.- Fill in the blanks using "across/through/along"

- a.- The road goes \_\_\_\_\_ the river for the next ten kilometres.
- b.- We went \_\_\_\_\_ several tunnels.
- c.- The plane moved slowly \_\_\_\_\_ the sky.
- d.- We walked \_\_\_\_\_ the beach.
- e.- The ball rolled \_\_\_\_\_ the grass.
- f.- We visited all the little villages \_\_\_\_\_ the coast.
- g.- The boatman took us \_\_\_\_\_ the bay.
- h.- Is the door translucent? Can you see \_\_\_\_\_ it?
- i.- She walked \_\_\_\_\_ the room.
- j.- The door was locked, so we had to get in \_\_\_\_\_ the window.

4.- Choose the correct preposition in each example:

- 1.- The plane was flying *above/on* the clouds
- 2.- The red sun disappeared *behind/beyond* the horizon
- 3.- This train does not go *after/beyond* Kingston
- 4.- Don't leave the key *below/under* the doormat
- 5.- She was hiding *behind/beyond* a tree
- 6.- Our town is about six thousand feet *on/above* sea level
- 7.- Put this plastic *above/over* the typewrite when you finish
- 8.- Stand with your back *on/against* the wall
- 9.- We drove *by/along* a narrow road
- 10.- I'll be travelling *by/through* Europe next summer
- 11.- They have shelves all *through/round* the room
- 12.- I put my ear *on/to* the door and listened
- 13.- I only looked *in/into* the room, I didn't go in
- 14.- Keep your eyes *in/on* the road when you're driving
- 15.- I'd rather sit *by/round* the fire
- 16.- She wore a gold chain *round/by* her ankle
- 17.- He put his arm *around/about* me
- 18.- The baby's toys were all scattered *by/about* the room
- 19.- A tiny man dressed *of/in* black took me *for/by* the arm
- 20.- There's a bar *around/about* two miles down the road
- 21.- Who is she in love *of/with*?
- 22.- There's someone *on/at* the phone for you
- 23.- I know her *from/by* sight
- 24.- You must concentrate *in/on* your work
- 25.- Is it true that cats can see *in/through* the darkness?
- 26.- I always dream *of/with* horses
- 27.- They live *in/at* the end of the road
- 28.- We went down to the beach *by/in* my car
- 29.- We didn't go *in/by* car; we went *by/on* foot
- 30.- I was thinking *of/in* having another beer
- 31.- The accident was confirmed *by/for* railway officials
- 32.- We'll have to agree *about/with* the money
- 33.- He didn't agree *about/with* me
- 34.- His parents spend lots of money *on/for* him
- 35.- The theatre is not very far *of/from* the hotel
- 36.- He was killed *with/by* a bullet
- 37.- Have you borrowed this book *of/from* your friend?
- 38.- I don't know what's wrong *about/with* the car!
- 39.- He was still living *at/with* his parents' *in/at* that time
- 40.- *During/For* the period of Ramadhan, muslims can't eat or drink *by/until* the evening

5.- Use or omit the prepositions in the sentences below

- a.- I stayed near (of) the phone; I was expecting (for) a call
- b.- There are lots (of) things that need (to) be finished
- c.- You needn't (to) finish it today if you don't want (to)
- d.- I'd rather paint it (of) black
- e.- I'm leaving (from) Madrid tomorrow; this is my last day here
- f.- Does your plane leave (from) Madrid, or (from) Barcelona?
- g.- Amelia is an old friend (of) mine
- h.- My uncle married (with) a Scottish girl
- i.- Who did you give it (to)?
- j.- (Of) what is he complaining (about) now?

6.- Use one of the following prepositions in each group of sentences

> about/across/against/at/by/for/from/of/in/into/on/over/through/to/under/with/without

- a.- Hey! What's the matter \_\_\_\_\_ you?  
I found myself agreeing \_\_\_\_\_ him  
Can I have mine \_\_\_\_\_ tomato sauce?
- b.- My uncle was like a father \_\_\_\_\_ me  
The moon looked perfectly \_\_\_\_\_ me  
He is charming \_\_\_\_\_ everyone
- c.- Ann's not \_\_\_\_\_, but she'll be here soon.  
It's the easiest job \_\_\_\_\_ the world  
I'll be leaving London \_\_\_\_\_ two days
- d.- Do you want yours \_\_\_\_\_ sugar?  
I think I can manage \_\_\_\_\_ your help  
He left \_\_\_\_\_ saying any word
- e.- I'm thinking \_\_\_\_\_ buying a new PC  
Who does she remind you \_\_\_\_\_ ?  
What are you afraid \_\_\_\_\_?
- f.- I was \_\_\_\_\_ to leave when he called  
He's mad \_\_\_\_\_ you  
Ask him \_\_\_\_\_ last night
- g.- Eight years went \_\_\_\_\_  
She sat \_\_\_\_\_ the door  
He was all \_\_\_\_\_ himself
- h.- What have we got \_\_\_\_\_ dessert?  
I feel sorry \_\_\_\_\_ her  
I haven't had an ice-cream \_\_\_\_\_ ages
- i.- The taxi turned \_\_\_\_\_ a street  
The train disappeared \_\_\_\_\_ a tunnel  
Cut the cake \_\_\_\_\_ ten pieces
- j.- We have a sick person \_\_\_\_\_ our hands  
I saw that the house was \_\_\_\_\_ fire  
We walked \_\_\_\_\_ for another 2 hours
- k.- I won't do anything \_\_\_\_\_ the law  
She had her back \_\_\_\_\_ the wall  
He thinks there's a conspiracy \_\_\_\_\_ him
- l.- There's a grocery \_\_\_\_\_ the street  
The Post Office is \_\_\_\_\_ the road  
I came \_\_\_\_\_ him last year in Paris
- m.- The parcel weighed just \_\_\_\_\_ 20 kgs  
We sailed \_\_\_\_\_ sunny skies  
Do children \_\_\_\_\_ five need tickets??
- n.- Why are you mad \_\_\_\_\_ me?  
You could \_\_\_\_\_ least help me!!  
He's not very good \_\_\_\_\_ music
- o.- The burglars came in \_\_\_\_\_ the roof  
I'm \_\_\_\_\_ with you; I'm really angry!  
The bag was passed \_\_\_\_\_ a detector
- p.- I recognized him \_\_\_\_\_ the way he spoke  
I borrowed the books \_\_\_\_\_ the library  
They took all the money \_\_\_\_\_ us
- q.- I left as soon as the meeting was \_\_\_\_\_  
I've been looking \_\_\_\_\_ his biography  
We'd like you come \_\_\_\_\_ for a meal

7.- Fill in the blank spaces using the prepositions in bold-type print

➤ **of/about/by/for/in/with**

- a. What did you get \_\_\_\_\_ your birthday?
- b. We met \_\_\_\_\_ a drink the next Saturday
- c. There were \_\_\_\_\_ half a dozen \_\_\_\_\_ them
- d. Why are you always \_\_\_\_\_ such a hurry?
- e. I used to know that poem \_\_\_\_\_ heart
- f. I'm related \_\_\_\_\_ her; we're second cousins
- g. His face was red \_\_\_\_\_ anger
- h. Is this what I get \_\_\_\_\_ helping you?
- i. Do you know who the man \_\_\_\_\_ the beard is?
- j. Whoever is responsible \_\_\_\_\_ all this damage will have to pay
- k. He's completely absorbed \_\_\_\_\_ his work

➤ **into/on/against/among/between**

- a. He's very efficient; he always does things \_\_\_\_\_ time
- b. She has always lived \_\_\_\_\_ artists
- c. The little boy was sitting \_\_\_\_\_ his father & his mother
- d. He changed \_\_\_\_\_ his pyjamas as soon as he got home
- e. Smoking in the corridors is \_\_\_\_\_ regulations
- f. The church is \_\_\_\_\_ the post office & the supermarket
- g. We'll go to the match \_\_\_\_\_ Sunday morning
- h. They went \_\_\_\_\_ the house without saying a word
- i. It's more difficult to cycle \_\_\_\_\_ a strong wind
- j. He didn't receive any present \_\_\_\_\_ Christmas Day
- k. The dog ran fast \_\_\_\_\_ the park and escaped

➤ **at/from/to/of/-**

- a. My opinion is not very different \_\_\_\_\_ yours
- b. Now I understand why she lied \_\_\_\_\_ me
- c. Did you see him waiting \_\_\_\_\_ the door?
- d. I was afraid he would point his gun \_\_\_\_\_ me
- e. I haven't asked \_\_\_\_\_ her yet
- f. Look \_\_\_\_\_ what you've done \_\_\_\_\_ my new shirt!
- g. We bought five tickets \_\_\_\_\_ Amsterdam
- h. Happy birthday \_\_\_\_\_ you!!
- i. She pointed \_\_\_\_\_ the one she wanted
- j. They met \_\_\_\_\_ quarter past nine
- k. I have nothing to be ashamed \_\_\_\_\_
- l. She didn't go out \_\_\_\_\_ Easter; she had to study
- m. What time do you have to go \_\_\_\_\_ home?

## 8.- "on/in/at" as prepositions of time

- 1 I'll see you \_\_\_\_\_ Monday.
- 2 I met him \_\_\_\_\_ the holidays.
- 3 I'll pick you up \_\_\_\_\_ eight o'clock.
- 4 I'm going home \_\_\_\_\_ four.
- 5 They came to visit us \_\_\_\_\_ my birthday.
- 6 I can work \_\_\_\_\_ the morning but I don't like working \_\_\_\_\_ night.
- 7 Did you have a good time \_\_\_\_\_ Christmas?
- 8 School finishes \_\_\_\_\_ three o'clock \_\_\_\_\_ Thursdays.
- 9 We arranged to meet \_\_\_\_\_ seven \_\_\_\_\_ the morning.
- 10 We had a party \_\_\_\_\_ the last day of the course.
- 11 I often go skiing \_\_\_\_\_ winter.
- 12 What time do you get back \_\_\_\_\_ Tuesday?
- 13 She's going to visit her parents \_\_\_\_\_ Easter.
- 14 He was born \_\_\_\_\_ 8th June \_\_\_\_\_ 1968.
- 15 Stuart can come and see you \_\_\_\_\_ lunchtime.
- 16 I always send my wife flowers \_\_\_\_\_ our wedding anniversary.
- 17 The conference is \_\_\_\_\_ July.
- 18 Jane came round \_\_\_\_\_ Saturday evening
- 19 We usually take our holidays \_\_\_\_\_ September
- 20 They don't go out very often \_\_\_\_\_ the evenings
- 21 I always go and see her \_\_\_\_\_ her birthday
- 22 She phoned up \_\_\_\_\_ the beginning of the match on TV
- 23 They usually stay with us \_\_\_\_\_ the summer holidays
- 24 We moved here \_\_\_\_\_ 20<sup>th</sup> October
- 25 I used to study \_\_\_\_\_ nights

## 9.- Join the sentences with "before or until"

- 1 I should stay here. The snow stops.
- 2 I learnt to speak some Turkish. I went to Turkey.
- 3 They stayed awake. Their daughter came home.
- 4 I'm going to stay here. It's time to go home.
- 5 I'm going to finish working. I'm sixty.
- 6 The meeting started. I arrived.
- 7 We waited. The ambulance came.
- 8 Are you going to carry on working at the cafe? You can find a better job.
- 9 I'd like to visit the Acropolis. I leave Greece.
- 10 He usually has a big breakfast. He goes to work.

## 10.- Use one of these prepositions to complete the sentences below

**during / after / through / between / from / before / in**

- 1 I waited \_\_\_\_\_ nine o'clock and then went home.
- 2 If you come \_\_\_\_\_ seven, we'll catch the bus that leaves at 7.05.
- 3 Will you come and see me \_\_\_\_\_ a week or two?
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ the children left, the house was very quiet.
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ the holidays, we played tennis and did a lot of swimming.
- 6 I can't remember when we left the cinema: I think it was \_\_\_\_\_ ten and half-past.
- 7 I was ill \_\_\_\_\_ January to March.
- 8 We worked all \_\_\_\_\_ the holidays to finish painting the boat.

