

15 Prepositions of movement



We can **come off** the motorway here and drive **along** this road **into** the town centre.

1 into, out of, onto, off



Into describes movement to the inside of something:
*It's raining. Let's go **into** the house now.*
*We can drive **into** the town centre this way.*



Out of is the opposite of *into*:
*Can you get my shoes **out of** the wardrobe?*
*Open the door and let me **out of** this room immediately!*



Onto expresses movement to a surface or 'line':
*The cat jumped **onto** the wall.*
*I think we should get **onto** the motorway here.*



Off is the opposite of *onto*:
*The cat jumped **off** the wall.*
*Let's get **off** the motorway and get something to eat.*

⚠ You may hear English speakers using *off of* rather than *off*, but many people think this is incorrect: [X *Please get off of the grass.*] ✓ *Please get off the grass.*

We get *into/out of* a car or taxi, but *on(to)/off* a bus, plane, train, ship, bike:
*Come on – jump **into the car**. We're late. I got **off the train** at the last stop.*

2 along, past, through

We use *along* when we follow the length of something (e.g. a path, a river, a road):
*We can drive **along** the Rhine to the south of Germany.*
*Walk **along** the path by the river – it's very pretty.*

We use *past* when we go up to something and then we pass it. We often use this with shops and buildings: *Go **past** the post office and the bookshop is on your left.*

We use *through* when we go from one side of something to the other side. We often use this with countries, open space, enclosed tunnels, etc. *We'll drive **through** Switzerland.*
*Go **through** the main entrance. I like to walk **through** the park on my way to work.*

3 across, over

Across and *over* both mean 'from one side to the other':
*Walk **across/over** the first bridge. We'll drive **across/over** the Alps.*

But we use *over* when we are not directly touching the surface we are crossing:
*X The horse jumped **across** the fence. ✓ The horse jumped **over** the fence.*

4 at, to

We usually use *to* to show direction: *Go **to** the bank and turn right. Give the book **to** Jamie.*
With some verbs (e.g. *throw, shout, point*), we can use *to* and *at*, but there is a difference in meaning:

*Throw those keys **to** me, will you? I need **to** lock the door. (I want the keys.)*
*She was so angry, she threw the keys **at** me. (to try and hit me)*