

## PREPOSITIONS OF TIME: *IN*, *AT*, AND *ON*

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This week's Teacher's Corner introduces two activities during which students practice the prepositions *in*, *at*, and *on*. In these activities, students must act quickly to identify appropriate times to use the common prepositions *in*, *at*, and *on*. In Activity One, students will compete to physically swat the correct prepositions and use them correctly in sentences with times, days, and months of the year. In Activity Two, students ask and answer questions using prepositions in a moving circle. These activities require that students are already familiar with using these three prepositions to discuss time.

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### LEVEL

Intermediate and above

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### LANGUAGE FOCUS

Listening, speaking, and reading

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### GOALS

During the activities, students will:

- Listen to information and determine which preposition to use: *in*, *at*, or *on*
- Form oral questions and statements using the prepositions *in*, *at*, and *on*

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### MATERIALS

- Chalkboard or whiteboard with chalk or markers
- Two fly swatters or sturdy pointers
- Index cards
- Container to hold the index cards such as a hat, box, or empty coffee can

## PREPARATION

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- Prepare the index cards with the following (one per card):
  - Days of the week
  - Specific dates, such as June 26th, January 1st, etc.
  - Months of the year
  - Years, such as 1982, 2012, 2001, etc.
  - Times of day or night, such as 12:00pm, 7:30am, 10:45pm, etc.
  - Time phrases: \_\_\_ *the morning*, \_\_\_ *the afternoon*, \_\_\_ *the evening*, \_\_\_ *night*

Note: Each card will be used for one turn in the game, so be sure you make enough cards for your whole class to participate.

- Fold the cards, mix them up, and place them in the container.
- Review when to use each of the prepositions with your students, if needed.

## ACTIVITY ONE: SWAT IT

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1. Tell students they will play a game to review the prepositions *in*, *at*, and *on*. Divide the class into two equal teams.
2. In the middle of the board, write the prepositions *in*, *at*, and *on* in a column. Leave a bit of space vertically between each of the words.
3. Say, "In this container there are cards with days, months, dates, years, or times on them. To play the game, each team will send one member at a time to the board. Each person at the board will get a fly swatter/pointer to use. I will pull out a card and read what it says. The goal is for you to decide which preposition goes along with what I have said, and be the first person to hit the preposition you think is correct with your swatter/pointer. I will decide who hit the preposition first, and that person must then form a sentence correctly using the words on the card and the

preposition. If you choose the correct preposition and use it correctly in a sentence, you will earn a point for your team.”

4. Choose a student to help you model the procedure at the board. Ask another student to choose a card from the container and read it aloud.
5. Explain to students that if they choose the wrong preposition, a player from the other team will have a chance to make a sentence to earn a point for their team. If the player on the other team also does not create a correct sentence, the card will be placed back into the container. After both teams have attempted to answer, the students at the board sit down and a new player from each team comes up.
6. This game can be played until all the cards have been used, or until all students have had a chance to participate.

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### ACTIVITY TWO: INSIDE OUTSIDE CIRCLE

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1. Split the class in half. (If you have a very large class, you may wish to model the procedure beforehand and use four groups for the activity.)
2. Have one half of the class form a circle with everyone facing out. This is the inside circle. Give each one of these students one of the cards containing a date, time, month, etc.
3. Have the second half of the class form another circle around the inside circle, with everyone facing in. This is the outside circle.
4. Tell students, “Those of you in the inside circle have a card with a time, date, day of the week, or something similar on it. You are also facing one person. Your task is to ask the person facing you a question using the time on your card and the appropriate preposition.”
5. Provide some examples, such as:
  - a. Can you come to my house on Wednesday?
  - b. Are you going to travel in June?

- c. Did you eat breakfast at 7:30?
6. Say, "Those of you in the outside circle must answer the question you are asked. You must include the time and the preposition." Give examples, such as:
  - a. Yes, I can come to your house on Wednesday.
  - b. No, I am not going to travel in June. I am going to travel in July.
  - c. I did not eat breakfast at 7:30. I ate breakfast at 6:30.
7. Tell students they will have thirty seconds to complete the task (asking and answering questions) before the inside circle moves. After thirty seconds, the inside circle should shift one person to the right so that everyone has a new partner. The outside circle does not move.
8. When everyone has a new partner, students in the inside circle should ask their new partner a question using what is written on their card and the appropriate preposition. New partners should answer and then the inside circle shifts again.
9. Once everyone in the inside circle has had a chance to speak to all of the students in the outside circle, the roles should change. Collect cards from the inside circle. Distribute new cards to the outside circle and inform those students that they will now ask the questions and the inside circle will provide answers. The procedures for moving should remain the same.
10. During this activity, partners can provide feedback and corrections about how to use the prepositions if necessary. The circle can be repeated multiple times using different cards.