**German Prepositions**

Here is a list of the dative-only prepositions. You should memorize them with their meanings.

|  |
| --- |
| **Dative Prepositions** |
| **Deutsch** | **Englisch** |
| **aus** | from, out of |
| **außer** | except for, besides |
| **bei** | at, near |
| **gegenüber** | across from, opposite |
|   **Gegenüber** can go before or after its object. |
| **mit** | with, by |
| **nach** | after, to |
| **seit** | since (time), for |
| **von** | by, from |
| **zu** | at, to |
| NOTE: The genitive prepositions **statt** (instead of), **trotz** (in spite of), **während** (during) and**wegen** (because of) are often used with the dative in spoken German, particularly in certain regions. If you want to "blend in" and not sound too stuffy, you can use them in the dative also. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Two-Way Prepositions****Dative/Accusative** |
| NOTE: The meaning of a two-way preposition also depends on whether it is in the accusative or dative. See below for the grammar rules. |
| **Deutsch** | **Englisch** |
| **an** | at, on, to |
| **auf** | at, to, on, upon |
| **hinter** | behind |
| **in** | in, into |
| **neben** | beside, near, next to |
| **über** | about, above, across, over |
| **unter** | under, among |
| **vor** | in front of, before;ago (time) |
| **zwischen** | between |

The basic rule for determining whether a two-way preposition should have an object in the accusative or dative case is **motion** (*wohin?*, where to?) versus **location** (*wo?*, where?, at rest). If there is motion towards something or a specific location, then usually that is accusative. If there is no motion at all or random motion going nowhere in particular, then that is usually dative. Remember, this applies only to the two-way prepositions!

|  |
| --- |
| **Accusative Prepositions** |
| **Deutsch** | **Englisch** |
| **bis**\* | until, to, by |
| **durch** | through, by |
| **entlang** | along, down |
| NOTE: The accusative preposition **entlang**, unlike the others, usually goes after its object, as in the example above. |
| **für** | for |
| **gegen** | against, for |
| **ohne** | without |
| **um** | around, for; at (time) |
| \*NOTE: The German preposition **bis** is technically an accusative preposition, but it is almost always used with a second preposition (*bis zu, bis auf,* etc.) in a different case, or without an article (*bis April, bis Montag, bis Bonn*). |

For more on the accusative-only prepositions, with examples, see German for Beginners [Lektion 14B - The Acccusative Prepositions](http://german.about.com/library/anfang/blanfang14b.htm).

|  |
| --- |
| **Two-Way Prepositions****Accusative/Dative** |
| NOTE: The meaning of a two-way preposition often depends on whether it is used with the accusative or dative case. See below for the grammar rules. |
| **Deutsch** | **Englisch** |
| **an** | at, on, to |
| **auf** | at, to, on, upon |
| **hinter** | behind |
| **in** | in, into |
| **neben** | beside, near, next to |
| **über** | about, above, across, over |
| **unter** | under, among |
| **vor** | in front of, before;ago (time) |
| **zwischen** | between |

The basic rule for determining whether a two-way preposition should have an object in the accusative or dative case is **motion** versus **location**. If there is motion towards something or to a specific location (*wohin?*, where to?), then usually that is **accusative**. If there is no motion at all or random motion going nowhere in particular (*wo?*, where (at)?), then that is usually **dative**. This rule applies only to the so-called "two-way" or "dual" prepositions in German. (For example, a[dative-only preposition](http://german.about.com/library/blcase_dat2.htm) like **nach** is always dative, whether there is motion or not.) Here are two sets of examples:

**Wir gehen ins Kino.** (*in das, accus.*)
We're going to the movies/cinema. (motion towards)
**Wir sind im Kino.** (*in dem, dat.*)
We're at the movies/cinema. (location)

**Legen Sie das Buch auf den Tisch.** (*accusative*)
Put/Lay the book on the table. (motion towards)
**Das Buch liegt auf dem Tisch.** (*dative*)
The book's lying on the table. (location)

A single German two-way preposition—such as *in* or *auf*—may have more than one English translation, as you can see above. In addition, you'll find many of these prepositions have yet another meaning in common everyday idioms and expressions: **auf dem Lande** (in the country),**um drei Uhr** (at three o'clock), **unter uns** (among us), **am Mittwoch** (on Wednesday), **vor einer Woche** (a week ago), etc. Such expressions can be learned as vocabulary without worrying about the grammar involved.