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Are you using preposition 'by' and 'to' interchangeably?

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A preposition is one of the most important parts of speech. A preposition is a word that shows the relation between a word and a noun or a pronoun that comes after the preposition. Using it inappropriately can change the meaning of the sentence. Often people get confused between the preposition by and to and use it interchangeably. So understanding them well will make your English grammar skills strong. Today we will teach the difference between 'by' and 'to' and its usage.



There are three types of prepositions:

1. Preposition of place
2. Preposition of time
3. Preposition of movement

By and **to** belong to preposition of place. Let's understand the usage of **by** and **to**.

By

By is used to indicate a method or mean:

Examples

Please tell her to come by bus.
I am planning to visit my native place by train.

By is used to indicate an action with a particular purpose:

Examples

You can pass the exam by preparing for it.
I expressed my feeling toward her by proposing her for the marriage.

By is used to indicate proximity:

Examples

Neha was standing by me but still wasn't looking at me.
The railway station is by the bank.

By is used to indicate the person that does something in a passive voice sentence:

Examples

The flowers were delivered by a handsome boy.
The television was fixed by the mechanic.

To
To is used to indicate a limit or an ending point:

Examples

The flood water was up to the roof.
The stock prices rose up to 70 dollars.

To is used to indicate a time or a period:

Examples

I work nine to six, Monday to Friday.
It is now 10 to seven.

To is used to indicate the place, person, or thing that someone or something moves toward, or the direction of something:

Examples
Please send it back to me.
I am heading to the main entrance of the building.

To is used to indicate relationship:

Examples

Do not respond to his questions. He always asks stupid questions.
My answer to your question is in this letter.

Hope you have understood the difference between **by** and **to**. Take this quiz and test yourself:

1. It was my first trip (of, to, for) Hawaii.
2. I just found it! It was (with, over, by) the radio on my desk.
3. If she left at 4 p.m., she should be here (with, over, by) now.
4. Turn off the TV and go straight (of, to, for) bed.

Answers: 1. To 2. By 3. By 4. To

Keep practicing these prepositions and improve your communication skills by using them appropriately.

You can study them with the help of an online English guide that will help you improve and develop your English grammar skills.

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-By Chander Madan

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