

A

Some verbs are frequently followed by particular prepositions:

	<i>about</i>	<i>for</i>	<i>of</i>	<i>on</i>	<i>with</i>
<i>agree</i>	✓			✓	✓
<i>argue</i>	✓	✓			✓
<i>ask</i>	✓	✓	✓		
<i>care</i>	✓	✓			
<i>know</i>	✓		✓		
<i>learn</i>	✓		✓		
<i>talk</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓

B

about usually means 'concerning a particular thing':

- They began to **learn about** nutrition when they were at primary school.

We use **care about** to talk about something we are (not) concerned about:

- He doesn't seem to **care about** the effect a poor diet has on him.

for is used with **ask** to talk about what people want:

- He finished the drink quickly and **asked for** another.

with **argue** when we talk about giving reasons why something is true or right:

- Many people are **arguing for** a big tax cut.

and with **care** to talk about doing the necessary things for someone or something in order to keep them in good health or condition:

- Jo **cared for** her disabled mother until her death last year. (or Jo **took care of** ...)

or to mean 'like', particularly in negative sentences, and to mean 'want' in offers. Both of these uses of **care for** are rather formal:

- I don't **care for** the theatre much.
- Would you **care for** a cup of coffee?

of is used with **talk**, **know**, and **learn** to talk about discussing, having or getting information:

- Mira went recently to Laos and can **talk of** nothing else. (or less formally ... **talk about** ...)
- The whole country **knew of** Churchill's love of cigars. (or less formally ... **knew about** ...)
- I have just **learnt of** the death of Dr Ramirez. (or less formally ... **learnt about** ...)

We use **ask of** when we make or talk about requests:

- I have a favour to **ask of** you and your sister.

on is used with **talk** and **agree** to mean 'concerned with a particular topic':

- I was asked to **talk on** my research. (or ... to **talk about** ...)
- We **agreed on** a time to meet. (usually there has been previous discussion or disagreement.)

Note that we use **agree to** to say that someone allows something to happen:

- Once the government **agreed to** the scheme it went ahead without delay.

with is used with **argue** and **talk** when we go on to mention the person involved:

- I used to **argue / talk with** Pedro for hours.

We use **agree with** to say that two people have the same opinion:

- Adam thinks we should accept the offer, and I **agree with** him.

and to say that we approve of a particular idea or action:

- I **agree with** letting children choose the clothes they wear. (or I **agree about / on** ...)

or to say that two descriptions are the same:

- Stefan's story **agreed with** that of his son.

Exercises

92.1 Cross out any incorrect prepositions. **A**

- 1 I only advertised the car for sale on Wednesday, but by the end of the week ten people had phoned to ask *of / for / about* it.
- 2 We can learn a great deal *after / about / for* the oceans by studying even a small piece of coral.
- 3 I didn't agree *about / for / with* a word of what she said.
- 4 Professor Owen is giving a talk *of / with / on* the Romans in Lecture Hall 1.
- 5 I had to care *for / after / about* my elderly parents when they both became ill.
- 6 For many years we have been arguing *for / on / with* changes in the way the college is managed.
- 7 She didn't know *of / about / on* her stepbrother's existence until her mother died.

92.2 Complete the sentences using the correct or most appropriate preposition from section A. Sometimes two answers are possible. **A & B**

- 1 On the website they ask your email address.
- 2 I first learnt his decision to resign on the radio last night.
- 3 We're going to talk the council about planting some new trees in the park.
- 4 I don't care pop music at all. I much prefer classical music.
- 5 The teacher says we've got to do the test, so there's no point in arguing it.
- 6 Scientists do not agree the origin of the universe.
- 7 If you know any reasons why you should not be given medical insurance, you must declare them here.
- 8 A: Josh can be really stupid sometimes.
B: You shouldn't talk your brother like that.
- 9 She's always arguing her parents about what to watch on television.
- 10 I know it's a lot to ask you, but would you look after the children while I'm in Japan on business?
- 11 The course was brilliant. We learnt using the Internet in teaching writing.
- 12 A: Dan said he'll try to fix my car.
B: What does he know cars?
- 13 I don't think the government cares enough nursery education to fund it properly.
- 14 After days of discussion, the committee agreed the amount of money to donate.

92.3 These pairs of sentences include more verbs that are commonly followed by the prepositions in A. Can you explain the difference in meaning? Use a dictionary if necessary.

- 1 a The police *acted on* the information very quickly.
b I couldn't be at the meeting, so my solicitor *acted for* me.
- 2 a I've been *thinking* a lot *about* your idea, and I've decided I'd like to support you.
b What do you *think of* the colour in the bedroom?
- 3 a Doctors have *called on* the Health Minister to resign.
b Campaigners have *called for* a referendum on the issue.
- 4 a They say he *worked for* the CIA in the 1980s.
b She *works with* computers.
- 5 a We're *counting on* Julia to supply the food for the party.
b Playing exciting basketball *counts for* little if the team isn't winning.