

By

A

We use **by** in many expressions to say how we do something. For example, you can:

send something **by mail** do something **by hand**

pay **by check / by credit card** (*but* pay in cash)

or something can happen **by mistake / by accident / by chance** (*but* do something on purpose):

■ Did you pay **by check** or in cash?

■ We hadn't arranged to meet. We met **by chance**.

In these expressions we use **by + noun** without "a" or "the." We say **by chance / by check**, etc. (*not* by a chance / by a check).

B

In the same way we use **by** to say how somebody travels:

by car / by train / by plane / by boat / by ship / by bus / by bicycle, etc.

by road / by rail / by air / by sea / by subway

■ Liz usually goes to work **by bus**.

■ Do you prefer to travel **by air** or **by train**?

But we say **on foot**:

■ Did you come here **by car** or **on foot**?

You cannot use **by** with **my car / the train / a taxi**, etc. We use **by + noun** without "a/the/my," etc.:

by car *but* **in my car** (*not* by my car)

by train *but* **on the train** (*not* by the train)

We use **in** for cars and taxis:

■ They didn't come **in their car**. They came **in a taxi**.

We use **on** for bicycles and public transportation (buses, trains, etc.):

■ We came **on the 6:45 train**.

C

We say that something is done **by** somebody/something (*passive* – see Units 39–41):

■ Have you ever been bitten **by a dog**?

■ The program was watched **by millions of people**.

Compare **by** and **with**:

■ The door must have been opened **with a key**. (*not* by a key) (= somebody used a key to open it)

■ The door must have been opened **by somebody with a key**.

We say: a play **by Shakespeare** / a painting **by Rembrandt** / a novel **by Tolstoy**, etc.

■ Have you read any books **by Agatha Christie**?

D

By also means "next to / beside":

■ Come and sit **by me**. (= beside me)

■ "Where's the light switch?" "By the door."



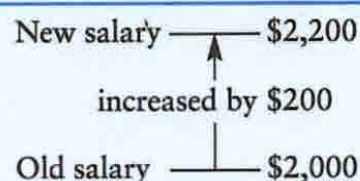
← light switch

E

Note the following use of **by**:

■ Claire's salary has just gone up from \$2,000 a month to \$2,200. So it has increased **by \$200 / by ten percent**.

■ John and Roger ran a 100-meter race. Roger won **by about five meters**.



Exercises

124.1 Complete the sentences using *by* + one of the following:

chance chance check hand mistake satellite

1. We hadn't arranged to meet. We met *by chance* _____.
2. I didn't mean to take your umbrella. I took it _____.
3. I didn't put the sweater in the washing machine. I washed it _____.
4. If you haven't got any cash, you can pay _____.
5. The two cities were connected _____ for a television program.
6. I never suspected anything. It was only _____ that I found out what had happened.

124.2 Put in *by*, *in*, or *on*.

1. Liz usually goes to work *by* _____ bus.
2. I saw Jane this morning. She was _____ the bus.
3. How did you get here? Did you come _____ train?
4. How did you get here? Did you come _____ the train?
5. I decided not to go _____ car. I went _____ my bike instead.
6. I didn't feel like walking home, so I came home _____ a taxi.
7. How long does it take to cross the Atlantic _____ boat.
8. Sorry we're late. We missed the bus, so we had to come _____ foot.

124.3 Write three sentences like the examples. Write about a book, a song, a painting, a movie, etc.

1. *War and Peace* is a book *by* Tolstoy.
2. *Romeo and Juliet* is a play *by* Shakespeare.
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

124.4 Put in the correct preposition: *by*, *in*, *on*, or *with*.

1. Who is that man standing *by* _____ the window?
2. I managed to put the fire out _____ a fire extinguisher.
3. The plane was badly damaged _____ lightning.
4. These photographs were taken _____ a friend of mine.
5. These photographs were taken _____ a very good camera.
6. I don't mind going _____ car, but I don't want to go _____ your car.
7. Should we get a taxi, or should we go _____ foot?
8. What's that music? I know it's _____ Beethoven, but I can't remember the name of the piece.
9. There was a small table _____ the bed _____ a lamp and a clock _____ it.
10. Our team lost the game because of a mistake _____ one of our players.

124.5 Complete the sentences using *by*.

1. Karen's salary was \$2,000 a month. Now it is \$2,200.
Her salary has increased *by* \$200 a month _____.
2. The daily newspaper used to cost 50 cents. Starting today, it costs 60 cents.
The price has gone up _____.
3. There was an election. Amy got 25 votes and John got 23.
Amy won _____.
4. I went to Lauren's house to see her, but she had gone out five minutes before I arrived.
I missed her _____.