

English Prepositions List

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Introduction

This ebook contains a list of most English prepositions in use today.

The first section lists “one-word prepositions” (for example **before**, **into**, **on**). The second section lists “complex prepositions” (phrases of two or more words that function like one-word prepositions, for example **according to**, **but for**, **in spite of**).

The name “preposition” (pre + position) means “place before”. Prepositions usually come before another word, usually a noun or noun phrase:

- noun
- pronoun
- noun phrase
- gerund (verb in -ing form)

If a **preposition** does not come before **another word**, it is still closely linked to another word:

- **Who** did you talk **to**?
- **To whom** did you talk?
- I talked **to Jane**.

Many prepositions can also be adverbs:

- They are **in** the kitchen. **preposition**
- Please come **in**. **adverb**

A few prepositions can also be conjunctions:

- Everyone came **but** Tara. **preposition**
- I asked her **but** she didn't answer. **conjunction**

Abbreviations used in this ebook:

conj. = conjunction

UK = *mainly* British English

US = *mainly* American English

This ebook is written in British English.

Why 150 prepositions?

It is not possible to produce a definitive list of English prepositions. That means that nobody can create a list of prepositions and say: “Here are all the prepositions in the English language – no more and no fewer.” Why? Because complex prepositions can theoretically be added to the language at any time. This ebook lists all 94 one-word prepositions (which are unlikely to change or be added to) and 56 complex prepositions (which may possibly be added to as the language evolves). This total of 150 prepositions is comprehensive at the time of writing, and represents all the prepositions currently found in a good English dictionary such as the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*.

One-word Prepositions

- aboard**
- We went aboard the boat.
 - Is there a doctor aboard the plane?
- about**
- What do you think about Mary?
 - Let's talk about something different.
 - I've just read a book about President Kennedy.
 - The lion was pacing about its cage.
- above**
- We are flying above the clouds.
 - We live in the hills, 1,000 metres above sea-level.
 - It's only two degrees above freezing point. [+2°C]
 - Who came above you in the test results?
- across**
- We drove across the desert.
 - The dog ran across the road.
 - There is a bridge across the river.
- after** (also conj.)
- We had lunch [1pm] after the meeting [11am].
 - Let's meet the day after tomorrow.
- against**
- Did you vote for or against the suggestion?
 - He put his bicycle against the wall.
- along**
- We walked along the beach for two miles.
 - There are trees along the road.
 - The toilet is along the corridor.
- alongside**
- Their boat came alongside our boat.
 - Team A worked alongside Team B during construction.
- amid**
amidst (poetic)
- I couldn't hear her amid the noise.
 - We were lost amidst the trees.

- among**
amongst (UK)
- Is there a doctor among us?
 - There were secret police among the crowd.
 - I was amongst strangers. I didn't know anyone.
- anti**
- He seems to be anti my idea.
 - Some people are anti everything.
- around**
- We walked around the town for an hour.
 - They all sat around the camp fire.
 - There is a big fence around the house.
 - He was born around 1570.
 - Let's meet around 7pm.
- as** (also conj.)
- He is working as a waiter.
 - The risk is as nothing compared to the profit.
 - Ram is as tall as Anthony.
- astride**
- She sat astride the horse.
- at**
- He is at school.
 - We first met at a party.
 - Let's start the meeting at 9 o'clock.
 - He started work at 17 (years of age).
 - We are aiming at sales of \$1,000,000.
- atop** (poetic)
- The church is situated atop a hill.

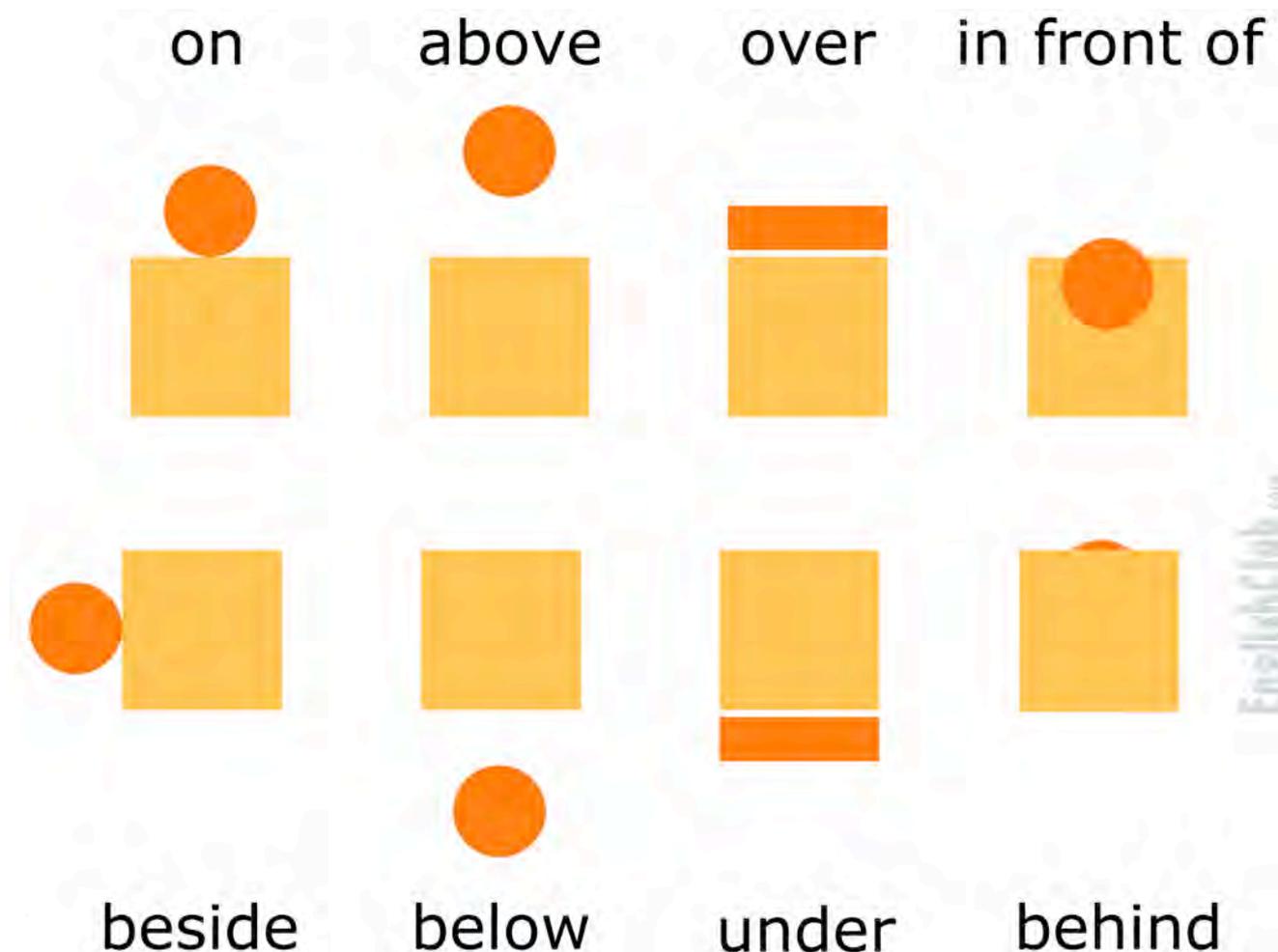
- bar**
- Everyone came bar Angela.
 - He is the best bar none.
- barring**
- Barring rain, we'll play tennis tomorrow.
- before** (also conj.)
- We had lunch [1pm] before the meeting [3pm].
 - We met the day before yesterday.
 - She was before me in the queue.
 - I would rather die before doing that.
- behind**
- There is a police car behind us. It's following us.
 - We have a garden behind our house.
 - The child was hiding behind the tree.
 - I am behind your project. I will support it.
 - Vonica finished behind Shirley in the race.
 - She is behind the other children in her class.
- below**
- Much of Holland is below sea-level.
 - There is a family in the flat below us.
 - The temperature is 5 degrees below freezing point. [-5°C]
 - I came below Vonica in the test.
 - You can buy it if it's below \$50.
- beneath**
- Our garage is beneath our house.
 - The tunnel runs beneath the sea.
 - Laurence is beneath the General Manager.
 - It was beneath his dignity to do that.
- beside**
- The river runs beside our house.
 - James was sitting beside Miriam.
- besides**
- What shall we have besides coffee?

Complex Prepositions

- according to**
- According to John, Mary was late. I believe John.
- ahead of**
- Anthony is ahead of Rachel in the race. He'll win.
 - We have a long day ahead of us. Let's get going!
- à la (from French)**
- It's a TV show à la CNN. Same style, similar content.
- along with**
- Do you want some pork along with the chicken?
- apart from**
- Nobody objected apart from you, so we did it.
- as for**
- As for Matt, he will arrive later.
- aside from**
- I have another car aside from this one. Both are red.
- as per**
- We must work strictly as per the law.
- as to**
- As to your behaviour, I think you were wrong.
- as well as**
- You should telephone as well as write, just to be sure.
- away from**
- The cat ran away from the dog and escaped.
- because of**
- We can't play tennis because of the rain.
- but for**
- It's your fault! But for you, I'd have been on time.
- by means of**
- You open a door by means of its handle.
- close to**
- My car is close to your car. About two cars away.
- contrary to**
- Contrary to expectations, the euro fell in value.
- depending on**
- We'll play tennis tomorrow, depending on the rain.

- due to**
- The cancellation was due to the rain. There was no other reason.
- except for**
- Everyone was present, except for Mary. She stayed at home.
- forward of**
- He was sitting forward of me in the plane. I could just see the back of his head.
- further to**
- Further to your letter, I have spoken to Mr Brown.
- in addition to**
- There were two people in addition to me. So that made three of us.
- in between**
- He is in between the two opinions. He wants to compromise.
- in case of**
- You can phone me in case of need. Day or night.
- in face of**
- He reacts bravely in face of danger.
- in favour of**
- I am not in favour of your idea. It won't work.
- in front of**
- You can park your car in front of my house.
 - I couldn't see the film because the woman in front of me was wearing a big hat.
- in lieu of**
- I don't have any dollars. Can I pay euro in lieu of dollars?
- in spite of**
- We went swimming in spite of the cold water.
- instead of**
- We don't have any tea. Would you like coffee instead of tea?
- in view of**
- In view of your illness, we will wait for a week.

Some Prepositions of Place



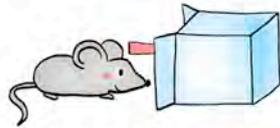
Please leave the report **on** my desk.
 Ram sat **beside** Tara in the cinema.
Beside the bed there was a small table with a clock **on** it.

The helicopter hovered **above** the house.
 A small stream runs **below** that bridge.
Above us the sky was blue and **below** us the river flowed in the valley.

The police placed a sheet **over** the body.
 He put the key **under** the doormat.
 The nurses placed a sheet **under** the patient and a thermal blanket **over** him.

She stood **in front of** the door and rang the doorbell.
 Anthony put his hands **behind** his back.
 There's a strange car **in front of** the house with a trailer **behind** it.

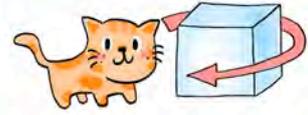
Some Prepositions of Movement 1



into the box



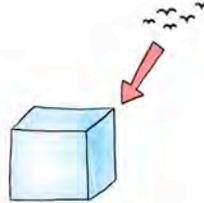
out of the box



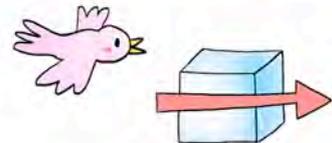
around the box



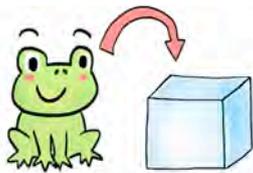
from the box



toward the box



past the box



on to the box



off the box



over the box

Tara has just gone **into** the post office.

The police are waiting for the suspect to come **out of** the house.

Can I take the car for a drive **around** the block?

The dog chased the cat **into** the room, **around** the sofa and **out of** the door.

After escaping, the convicts ran away **from** the prison as fast as possible.

We drove **toward(s)** the Canadian border and reached it after two hours.

He walked straight **past** me and didn't even say "hello".

I walked away **from** the house, **past** the gate and **toward** the main road.

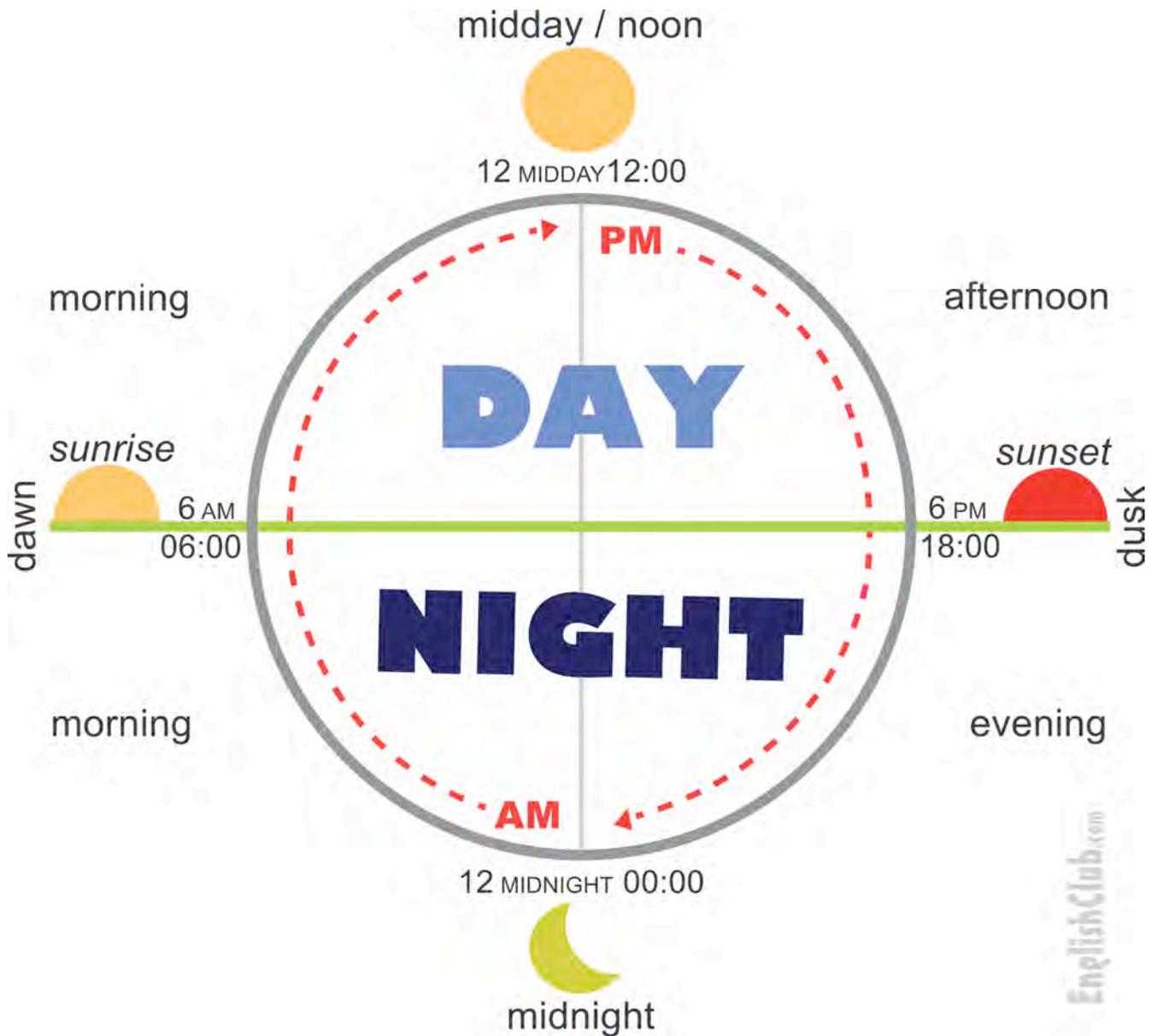
We went up **on to** the roof to watch the sunset.

My pen rolled **off** the table and fell on the floor.

The prisoners escaped by climbing **over** a wall.

The cat jumped **onto** the car's hood, **over** the roof and **off** the trunk.

Some Prepositions of Time



He has coffee **in** the morning, tea **in** the afternoon and wine **in** the evening.

I work **during** the morning/afternoon/evening/day/night.

Let's meet **at** 6pm.

The clock strikes twelve **at** midday/noon/midnight.

The condemned man was shot **at** sunrise/dawn.

The streetlights come on **at** sunset/dusk.

We can see the stars **at** night.

Quizzes

Try the quizzes on the following pages to check your understanding. In general there is only one possible answer to each question.

The answers are shown all together on a page at the end.

- Quiz score sheet 37
- One-word prepositions 38
- Complex prepositions 47
- Prepositions of place 53
- Prepositions of time 54
- Mixed one-word / complex prepositions 55
- Answers 58

Quiz Score Sheet

If you like, you can use the chart below to record your progress. If you don't get 10 out of 10 for one quiz the first time, revise your prepositions and try again later a second time, and a third time if necessary!

Quiz		My Score out of 10		
		1 st time	2 nd time	3 rd time
1	One-word prepositions			
2	One-word prepositions			
3	One-word prepositions			
4	One-word prepositions			
5	One-word prepositions			
6	One-word prepositions			
7	One-word prepositions			
8	One-word prepositions			
9	One-word prepositions			
10	Complex prepositions			
11	Complex prepositions			
12	Complex prepositions			
13	Complex prepositions			
14	Complex prepositions			
15	Complex prepositions			
16	Prepositions of place			
17	Prepositions of time			
18	One-word and complex prepositions			
19	One-word and complex prepositions			
20	One-word and complex prepositions			

Quiz 1

One-word prepositions

Choose the most suitable preposition (a, b or c) to fill the blank.

- 1 10 _____ 3 = 7.
a) pro b) against c) less
- 2 2 _____ 2 = 4.
a) despite b) plus c) circa
- 3 All _____ Mrs Jones were present.
a) off b) save c) given
- 4 Are you _____ capital punishment?
a) outside b) pro c) without
- 5 _____ rain, we'll play tennis tomorrow.
a) Barring b) Over c) Plus
- 6 Did you vote for or _____ the suggestion?
a) throughout b) by c) against
- 7 Everyone came _____ Angela.
a) by b) bar c) during
- 8 Everyone came _____ Andrea.
a) but b) amid c) inside
- 9 _____ the time, you ought to leave now.
a) Given b) Astride c) Cum
- 10 He broke his leg _____ getting out of the car.
a) till b) like c) upon

Quiz 11

Complex prepositions

Choose the most suitable preposition (a, b or c) to fill the blank.

- 1 He is _____ the two opinions. He wants to compromise.
a) in between b) up to c) instead of
- 2 He reacts bravely _____ danger.
a) up until b) in face of c) further to
- 3 He was sitting _____ me in the plane.
a) on board b) out of c) forward of
- 4 I am not _____ your idea. It won't work.
a) in favour of b) thanks to c) away from
- 5 I am writing _____ your order.
a) away from b) up to c) with reference to
- 6 I don't have any dollars. Can I pay euro _____ dollars?
a) opposite to b) in lieu of c) in spite of
- 7 I don't like it, _____ what you say.
a) up against b) close to c) irrespective of
- 8 I don't want it, _____ the price. Even if it's free.
a) away from b) prior to c) regardless of
- 9 I have another car _____ this one. Both are red.
a) aside from b) out of c) by means of
- 10 I made a graph _____ the meeting, so all was ready.
a) except for b) on top of c) preparatory to

Quiz 16

Prepositions of place

Choose the most suitable preposition (a, b or c) to fill the blank.

- 1 Don't stand _____ the television. I can't see!
a) on b) in front of c) above
- 2 Come and sit _____ me so that I can hear you better.
a) beside b) under c) on
- 3 From the plane we could see people in the fields _____ us.
a) beside b) below c) above
- 4 You'll have to turn round to see it. It's _____ you.
a) behind b) in front of c) over
- 5 The dead man was lying _____ the ground.
a) behind b) in front of c) on
- 6 Careful you don't scratch the table! Better put a cloth _____ it.
a) above b) beside c) over
- 7 It's dark where the road goes _____ a railway bridge.
a) on b) behind c) under
- 8 He looked up at the ceiling _____ him.
a) above b) under c) below
- 9 You can sit _____ that chair. Nobody is sitting there.
a) in front of b) on c) above
- 10 The police car came first. The president was in the car _____ it.
a) behind b) on c) under

Quiz 18 One-word and complex prepositions

Choose the most suitable preposition (a, b or c) to fill the blank.

- 1 _____ Ati, the film was good. But in my opinion it was boring.
a) Except for b) From c) According to
- 2 I have all my books _____ my dictionary, which I left at home.
a) regardless of b) through c) except for
- 3 He ran very fast and won the race _____ 10 seconds.
a) by b) on c) instead of
- 4 Nok bought her book _____ \$20 but mine cost me \$25.
a) for b) in c) save for
- 5 Who did you buy it _____? Have they got any more?
a) of b) from c) out of
- 6 It's always your fault if you hit the car _____ you.
a) on board b) in front of c) since
- 7 The ticket costs \$5 _____ age. No special price for children.
a) inside b) close to c) regardless of
- 8 Their meal arrived, _____ a free bottle of wine.
a) astride b) according to c) together with
- 9 Oil doesn't mix _____ water. It stays separated.
a) with b) further to c) at
- 10 It was good _____ her to help. She has her own problems.
a) forward of b) off c) of

Answers to Prepositions Quizzes

Quiz 1: 1c, 2b, 3b, 4b, 5a, 6c, 7b, 8a, 9a, 10c

Quiz 2: 1a, 2a, 3b, 4a, 5b, 6c, 7c, 8c, 9b, 10a

Quiz 3: 1c, 2b, 3b, 4a, 5b, 6a, 7c, 8a, 9c, 10b

Quiz 4: 1b, 2a, 3b, 4a, 5c, 6b, 7b, 8a, 9c, 10c

Quiz 5: 1c, 2b, 3a, 4a, 5c, 6a, 7c, 8a, 9b, 10b

Quiz 6: 1a, 2b, 3c, 4c, 5b, 6a, 7a, 8a, 9c, 10c

Quiz 7: 1c, 2c, 3a, 4a, 5c, 6a, 7b, 8c, 9b, 10c

Quiz 8: 1b, 2a, 3a, 4c, 5b, 6a, 7b, 8b, 9c, 10c

Quiz 9: 1a, 2a, 3b, 4b, 5b, 6a, 7c, 8a, 9c, 10b

Quiz 10: 1a, 2b, 3a, 4c, 5c, 6a, 7c, 8a, 9c, 10b

Quiz 11: 1a, 2b, 3c, 4a, 5c, 6b, 7c, 8c, 9a, 10c

Quiz 12: 1b, 2c, 3c, 4c, 5a, 6b, 7a, 8b, 9a, 10b

Quiz 13: 1a, 2b, 3b, 4b, 5c, 6a, 7c, 8a, 9b, 10c

Quiz 14: 1b, 2c, 3a, 4c, 5b, 6a, 7c, 8b, 9b, 10b

Quiz 15: 1c, 2a, 3a, 4c, 5a, 6c, 7c, 8a, 9c, 10b

Quiz 16: 1b, 2a, 3b, 4a, 5c, 6c, 7c, 8a, 9b, 10a

Quiz 17: 1b, 2a, 3a, 4a, 5a, 6a, 7c, 8c, 9c, 10b

Quiz 18: 1c, 2c, 3a, 4a, 5b, 6b, 7c, 8c, 9a, 10c

Quiz 19: 1a, 2a, 3a, 4c, 5a, 6c, 7b, 8b, 9a, 10c

Quiz 20: 1b, 2b, 3a, 4c, 5b, 6b, 7c, 8b, 9a, 10c