Preposition Detectives

Find out whether a preposition tells where or when.

4.W.6.d "Prepositions – Writing sentences that include prepositions, explaining their functions in the sentence."

NAME _____ DATE _____

PLACE

A place preposition tells where something is or happens. The words after it name a location.

Foxes rest **between** oak trees.

TIME

A time preposition tells when something happens. The words after it name a time.

Parades begin **at** noon.

1 SORT

8 items

Circle PLACE or TIME for each sentence, then choose two numbered sentences and explain what each bold preposition tells you.

1. The kitten slept **beneath** the couch. PLACE TIME
2. The painter stood **beside** the ladder. PLACE TIME
3. We packed our bags **before** sunrise. PLACE TIME
4. The red ball rolled **behind** the shed. PLACE TIME
5. Maya read **during** lunch. PLACE TIME
6. The concert starts **after** dinner. PLACE TIME
7. A spider hid **inside** the mailbox. PLACE TIME
8. The chalk lay **near** the door. PLACE TIME

2 PROVE IT

Explain your thinking

Pick two items from Part 1. For each one, tell how you knew where it belonged.

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

3 MAKE YOUR OWN

One of each

Write one new sentence with a place preposition and one with a time preposition. Underline each preposition.

PLACE _____

TIME _____

CHALLENGE

Write one sentence with both a place preposition and a time preposition. Underline both, then explain what each one tells.

ANSWER KEY

Preposition Detectives

GRADE 4 · 4.W.6.d

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	The kitten slept **beneath** the couch.	**PLACE**	Beneath tells where the kitten slept.
2	The painter stood **beside** the ladder.	**PLACE**	Beside tells where the painter stood.
3	We packed our bags **before** sunrise.	**TIME**	Before tells when the packing happened.
4	The red ball rolled **behind** the shed.	**PLACE**	Behind tells where the ball rolled.
5	Maya read **during** lunch.	**TIME**	During tells when Maya read.
6	The concert starts **after** dinner.	**TIME**	After tells when the concert starts.
7	A spider hid **inside** the mailbox.	**PLACE**	Inside tells where the spider hid.
8	The chalk lay **near** the door.	**PLACE**	Near tells where the chalk lay.

PART 2 · PROVE IT

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

PART 3 · MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **PLACE**: The notebook sat above the shelf.
- **TIME**: Our class meets on Tuesday.

Challenge: We met outside the library before school. Outside tells where we met, and before tells when we met.

For Part 2, students should name the bold preposition and explain whether it tells where or when. For example, in item 1, beneath tells where the kitten slept, and in item 3, before tells when we packed.