

By car, on foot, in a taxi: transport prepositions

CEFR A2 · 20 questions · A4 / US Letter

By + vehicle for the way you travel, on or in + a/the + vehicle when you picture the journey, and the fixed phrase on foot.

The rule

By + vehicle: the means of travel

- By car, by bus, by train, by plane, by boat, by bike, by taxi, by underground.
- No article is used: "by car", never "by a car" in this pattern.
- By air, by sea and by land name the route rather than the vehicle.
- On foot is the fixed exception: we walk on foot, not by foot.

On + big vehicles and open vehicles

- On a bus, on a train, on a plane, on a ship, on the ferry, on the metro.
- On a bike, on a motorbike, on a horse: you sit on top of them.
- Use on when the vehicle is part of the scene: "I met her on the train."
- The article appears with on: on a bus, on the bus, on the last train.

In + cars and small closed vehicles

- In a car, in a taxi, in a van, in a lorry, in a helicopter.
- Use in when you picture the inside of the vehicle: "We sat in the taxi and waited."
- By taxi and in a taxi are both correct, but they answer different questions: means against scene.
- For bicycles, never use in: say on a bike.

Get in and get on

- Get in a car or a taxi; get out of a car or a taxi.
- Get on a bus, a train, a plane or a bike; get off a bus, a train, a plane or a bike.
- The same logic applies to sit: sit in a car, sit on a bus.
- Take a taxi and ride a bike are common alternatives that avoid the preposition choice.

Arrive, travel and go combinations

- Arrive in a city or a country: "arrive in Paris".
- Arrive at a building, a station or an event: "arrive at the airport".
- Travel by train, go by bus, come on foot: the pattern depends on the verb.
- A journey on foot is a walk. "I went there on foot" means I walked.

Questions

Write your answer on the line under each question. Check your work with the answer key on the last page.

1. I usually go to work ___ bike.

2. We travelled to Paris ___ train.

3. She was sitting ___ the bus when I called her.

4. They waited ___ a taxi outside the station.

5. He goes to school ___ foot every day.

6. Get ___ the train quickly; it is about to leave.

7. Get ___ the car; we are late.

8. She rides to work ___ a motorbike.

9. We flew to Athens ___ plane.

10. I met him ___ a flight to Tokyo.

11. Do not travel ___ a bus without a ticket.

12. The children came home ___ foot through the park.

13. It is cheaper to go ___ underground in London.

14. We sat ___ the taxi and waited for the rain to stop.

15. There were no seats left ___ the train.

16. She goes to the office ___ car with her brother.

17. We arrived ___ Rome late at night.

18. They arrived ___ the airport two hours early.

19. You cannot ride ___ a plane without a passport.

20. He delivered the parcel ___ bike.

Answer key

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1. **by** — By + vehicle names the means of travel, with no article.
2. **by** — By train is the fixed means pattern.
3. **on** — Large vehicles take on because passengers stand or sit on them.
4. **in** — Cars and taxis are small closed vehicles, so they take in.
5. **on** — On foot is the fixed phrase for walking.
6. **on** — Trains take get on, while cars take get in.
7. **in** — Cars take get in because you sit inside.
8. **on** — You sit on top of a motorbike, so the preposition is on.
9. **by** — By plane names the means of travel without an article.
10. **on** — On a flight describes the scene inside the journey.
11. **on** — Buses take on; by bus would also name the means, but the article a points to on a bus.
12. **on** — The fixed walking phrase is on foot.
13. **by** — By underground names the means of travel.
14. **in** — A taxi is a small closed vehicle, so in is correct.
15. **on** — Trains take on because passengers are on the vehicle.
16. **by** — By car names the means of travel with no article.
17. **in** — Arrive in a city or country; arrive at a building or event.
18. **at** — Arrive at a building or a point like an airport.
19. **on** — Planes take on: you are on the plane as a passenger.
20. **by** — By bike names the means of travel; on a bike would picture the vehicle.