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### **About the Writer** \_\_\_\_\_

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## about

### about to or just about to

You are **about to** or **just about to** do something when you are just going to do it:

- *I was **about to** go to bed.*
- *He was **about to** leave when the phone rang.*
- *The meeting is **just about to** start.*

### how about ...? See at how.

**it's about time (too)!** and **about time (too)!** See at time.

**just about** See at just.

**what about ...?** See at what.

## above

### above all

You say **above all** to show that something is more important than other things:

- ***Above all**, we must protect the children.*
- *They need food, clothing and, **above all**, water.*
- *In this business, we value safety **above all**.*

## absolutely

### absolutely!

You say **absolutely!** when you strongly agree with what somebody has said:

- *'I think our team was the best.'*  
*'**Absolutely!**'*

### Language Help

The American expression **you bet!** or **you bet your life!** has the same meaning:

- *'I think our team was the best.'*  
*'**You bet your life!**'*



- 'Shall we offer him the job, then?' 'Yes, **absolutely!**'
- 'Do you agree with the decision?' 'Oh, **absolutely!**'

## absolutely not!

You use **absolutely not!** to say 'No' in a strong way, or to strongly deny or disagree with something:

- 'Aren't you coming swimming with us?' '**Absolutely not!**'
- 'Such violence is never acceptable.' '**Absolutely not!**'
- 'Is that true?' '**Absolutely not!**'

## accident

### by accident

You do something **by accident** when you do it unexpectedly, without trying to or planning to:

- *I found the answer to the question **by accident**.*
- *Our coats are very similar and I took his **by accident**.*
- *We met again, **by accident**, at the gym.*

### Language Help

You can also use **by chance** to express this meaning:

- *We met again, **by chance**, at the gym.*

## addition

### in addition to

Something that you have **in addition to** what you already have is an extra thing:

- *Today we have a choir practice **in addition to** the usual play rehearsal.*
- ***In addition to** the weekly fee, there is an annual membership charge.*
- *She teaches English, **in addition to** working at the library.*

## advantage

### take advantage of

You **take advantage of** an opportunity when you use it:

- **Take advantage of our offer!** 25% off all household goods!
- We sat outside and **took advantage of** the clear weather.
- You should **take advantage of** their free advice service.

## afford

### can afford

You **can afford** something when you can do it or take it without causing problems for yourself:

- *Can you really **afford** to take the risk of losing so much money?*
- *We **can afford** to relax a little now that the job is nearly finished.*
- *I'd like to help but I don't think I **can afford** the time.*
- *I **can't afford** to take that chance.*
- *We **couldn't afford** the luxury of waiting.*

#### Language Help

Notice that this is often used in negative sentences.

## afraid

### I'm afraid

You say **I'm afraid** when you are telling people bad news:

- *I'm afraid that the plane has been delayed.*
- *I'm afraid I haven't done my homework.*
- *There are no more tickets, I'm afraid.*
- *'Couldn't you find him?' 'I'm afraid not.'*

## after

### after all

**1** You use **after all** when things don't happen the way you expect:

- *Well, the English test wasn't so difficult **after all**, was it?*
- *My class is cancelled, so I can come to the party **after all**.*
- *When the game started, she decided she'd like to play **after all**.*



**2** You also use **after all** when you are explaining why something you have just said is true:

- *She speaks French beautifully, but then she is half French **after all**.*
- *William couldn't have done it. **After all**, he was on holiday that week.*
- *I lost the first set 6-0 but, **after all**, I've never played tennis before!*

## after that

**1** then; next:

- *We lived in Kuala Lumpur for two years and **after that** we moved to Singapore.*
- *I have a piano lesson now, and **after that** a choir rehearsal.*
- *Measure the flour into a bowl. **After that**, add the melted butter and mix well.*

### Grammar Help

In the phrase **after that** the pronoun **that** refers to a happening in the past or future.

**2** from that time onwards:

- *I lost my key once, and **after that** I always attached it to my schoolbag.*
- *Parking is free till next week. **After that** you'll have to pay to park here.*
- *The sports centre closed, so we had no more football training **after that**.*

### Language Help

You can also use **from then on** to express this meaning:

- *Parking is free till next week. **From then on** you'll have to pay to park here.*

## after this

**1** next:

- *Where shall we go **after this**?*
- *I've got football training **after this**, and then my swimming lesson.*
- *'When does the local television news come on?' 'It's **after this**.'*

### Grammar Help

In the phrase **after this** the pronoun **this** refers to now, or the present situation.

**2** from this time and in the future:

- *If the sports centre has shut down, where shall we go for football training **after this**?*
- *I'm never going to play with Tom **after this** – I hate him!*
- ***After this** you'll have to pay to park here.*

### Language Help

You can also use **from now on** to express this meaning:

- *From now on you'll have to pay to park here.*

**one after another** See at one.

## afternoon

**good afternoon** See **good morning, good afternoon** and **good evening** at good.

## again

### again and again

many times:

- *I've told you **again and again** to put the milk back in the fridge.*
- *They keep making the same mistake **again and again**.*
- *The police asked us **again and again** to describe exactly what happened.*

**all over again** See at all.

**now and again** or **now and then** See at now.

## ago

### ages ago

Something that happened **ages ago** happened a long time ago:

- *I stopped smoking **ages ago**.*
- *You should have replaced the battery in this smoke alarm **ages ago**.*
- ***Ages ago** this was a butcher's shop, I remember.*

**long ago** or **a long time ago** See at long.



## agreement

### come to an agreement or reach an agreement

to agree about what should happen, after some time and discussion:

- *The union is unable to reach an agreement with the management over pay.*
- *We can never come to an agreement about what to watch on television.*
- *Eventually the two sides managed to reach an agreement.*

### in agreement

You are **in agreement** with people when you agree with them:

- *Mr Carter nodded in agreement.*
- *So, are we all in agreement? Shall we accept the offer?*
- *I'm glad we are in agreement about one thing, at least.*

## ahead

### go ahead

 See at go.

## aim

### take aim

to aim a weapon at something:

- *Fred took aim and pulled the trigger.*
- *After carefully taking aim at the target, she fired.*
- *It is difficult to hold the bow steady and take aim.*

## air

### by air

You travel **by air** when you go somewhere in an aeroplane:

- *Are you going to Kuala Lumpur by air or by road?*

### Language Help

Compare this with **by rail**, **by road** and **by sea**.

- You save a lot of time if you travel **by air**.
- The flowers are transported **by air** and delivered the same day.

## all

**above all** See at above.

**after all** See at after.

## all alone

alone; on your own:

- She was sitting **all alone** in the playground.
- Stay here! Don't leave me **all alone!**
- Will Patrick be able to cope **all alone?**

### Language Help

You can also use **all by yourself** to express this meaning:

- Susie was sitting **all by herself** in the playground.

## all along

from the beginning of the time that you are describing:

- Peter knew where I was **all along**, but he pretended not to.
- We searched the house, but my glasses were in my bag **all along!**
- It was obvious **all along** that she was lying.

### Language Help

You can also use **all the time** to express this meaning:

- We searched the house, but my glasses were in my bag **all the time!**

## all at once

**1** suddenly:

- **All at once** there was a loud crash as the whole shelf collapsed.
- We sat in the waiting room until **all at once** the door flew open.
- **All at once** I realized what had happened.

**2** all at the same time:

- Don't eat **all** your chocolates **at once**.
- Please, children. Don't **all** shout **at once**.
- Three buses arrived **all at once**.



**all by yourself** See **by yourself** at by.

## all day long or all day

Something that happens **all day long** happens through the whole day:

- *They watched television **all day long**.*
- *Victoria seems to have been on the telephone **all day long**.*
- *I could sit here **all day** — it's a beautiful place.*
- *I've had a headache **all day long**, so I'm going home early.*

### Language Help

You can also use **all day through** to express this meaning:

- *They watched television **all day through**.*

**in all honesty** See **to be honest** at honest.

## all night long or all night

Something that happens **all night long** happens through the whole night:

- *She works at the hospital **all night long**.*
- *Poor Dad was coughing **all night**.*
- ***All night long** I could hear that dog barking.*
- *I think Paul was out **all night** — I didn't hear him come in.*

### Language Help

You can also use **all night through** to express this meaning:

- *She works at the hospital **all night through**.*

## all over

**1** in every part of a place:

- *Will there ever be peace **all over** the world?*
- *It will be very windy **all over** the country tomorrow.*
- *I looked **all over** the house for my keys.*

**2** covering something:

- *I've spilt tea **all over** my skirt.*
- *Oh no! There's mud **all over** the carpet.*
- *They stuck posters **all over** the front of the building.*

## all over again

You do something **all over again** when you start at the beginning again:

- You must do these sums **all over again**.
- Weren't you watching? I'll have to show you **all over again!**
- I lost my homework and had to do it **all over again**.
- She told me the whole story **all over again**.

### Language Help

In American English you use **over** to mean **again**:

- I lost my homework and had to do it **over**.
- She made a mistake and had to start **over**.

## all over the place

in lots of different places or not in the right places:

- Oh no! There are toys **all over the place** and the visitors are arriving.
- Be careful – you're spilling water **all over the place**.
- Who has been using my toolbox? These tools are **all over the place!**
- How can you work properly when your books are **all over the place** like that?

## all right

1 not hurt; not ill; OK:

- I fell down the stairs, but I was **all right**.
- You look a bit pale – are you **all right**?
- Lee says he feels **all right** again now.

2 yes; OK:

- 'Do you want to come and watch a video?' '**All right.**'
- **All right**, I'm just coming.
- I'll put these files on your desk, **all right**?

### Language Help

Some people spell **all right** as one word, **alright**:

- You look a bit pale — are you **alright**?

## that's all right

You say **that's all right** when someone says sorry or thank you to you:

- 'I'm sorry I'm late.' '**That's all right.**'
- 'Thanks for having me.' '**That's all right.** It was a pleasure.'
- 'It was kind of you to come.' Oh, **that's all right.**'



### Language Help

There are similar expressions you can use in this way, such as **don't mention it**, **not at all**, **no problem** and **you're welcome**:

- *'I'm sorry I'm late.'* **'Don't mention it.'**
- *'Thanks for having me.'* **'Not at all. It was a pleasure.'**
- *'Thank you for your help.'* **'You're welcome.'**

## is it all right ... ?

You ask **is it all right** to do something to check that you may do it:

- *Is it all right if I sit here?*
- *Is it all right to park in front of the gate?*
- *I let the dog out into the garden. Is that all right?*

### Language Help

You can also use **may I?** to express this meaning:

- *May I sit here?*

## all set

You are **all set** for something when you are ready for it:

- *I was all set to leave when I remembered I hadn't packed my swimming things.*
- *We have to go now, children. Are you all set?*
- *We were all set for the party when our guests all rang and cancelled.*
- *Is everything all set for the boat trip tomorrow?*

## all the time See at time.

## all together

When people or things are **all together**, they are together in a group:

- *Please wait all together in the hotel lobby for your guide.*
- *Put your lunch boxes all together on that table.*
- *I keep my library books all together, so they're easy to find.*

### Language Help

Do not confuse this with the word **altogether**, which means either 'completely' or 'in all' (see separate entry):

- *No, my bag is **altogether** different from yours.*
- *What a lot of students! How many are there **altogether**?*
- *The holiday cost us \$3488 **altogether**.*

### all year or all year round

Something that happens **all year** or **all year round** happens right through the year without stopping:

- *Many types of fruit can be bought in the supermarkets **all year round**.*
- *This garden stays colourful **all year round**.*
- *Tourists visit London **all year round**, but especially in the summer.*

### Language Help

You can also use **throughout the year** to express this meaning:

- *Tourists visit London **throughout the year**, but especially in the summer.*

**first of all** See **first** at first.

### for all I know and for all I care

You say **for all I know** and, more rudely, **for all I care** when you do not really know about something or care about something:

- *I can't trust a stranger who just comes to my door like that. He could be a murderer **for all I know**!*
- *It was difficult to understand what that lawyer was saying. She could have been talking nonsense, **for all I know**.*
- *'I'm fed up and I'm going home.' 'You can go to Mars **for all I care**!'*
- *'Isn't your dad worried about you being out late?' '**For all he cares**, I could stay out all night.'*

### in all

You say you have a particular amount of something **in all**, or a particular number of people or things **in all**, when that is the total amount or number:



- Our group collected \$1000 **in all** for school funds.
- **In all**, we've had 5126 visitors to the museum this year.
- The holiday cost us \$3488 **in all**.

**it's all talk** See at talk.

**it's all very well** and **that's all very well** See at very.

### **(not) at all**

(not) in any way:

- She was **not at all** surprised by the news.
- Were you unwell **at all** during the journey?
- I never heard the baby **at all**. Did she wake up?

### **not at all!**

You can use **not at all!** as a polite reply when somebody thanks you for doing something:

- 'Thanks for the meal.' '**Not at all!**'
- 'It was very kind of you to help.' '**Not at all!**'
- 'That was a brilliant party. Thanks!' '**Not at all – I'm glad you enjoyed it.**'

#### **Language Help**

You can also acknowledge somebody's thanks with **no problem** or **you're welcome**:

- 'Thanks for helping me.' '**No problem.**'
- 'Thanks for the ride.' '**You're welcome.**'

### **of all**

You like something or someone best **of all** if you like them better than anything or anyone else:

- I enjoyed the dodgem cars best **of all**.
- My roller skates were my best present **of all**.
- Miss Brown is the nicest teacher **of all**.

### **of all people**

**1** When you say that somebody **of all people** did something, it shows that you are very surprised that they did:

- She said that Mark, **of all people**, had hit her. He's always such a gentle boy!
- Nobody expected the doctor, **of all people**, to be the murderer!