

SPROOCHENTEST · SPEAKING GUIDE

# Articles & Prepositions in Luxembourgish

an, am, op, um, un, mam, vum, bei, zu

A step-by-step guide to choosing the right preposition for location, movement, and transport.

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Start here: first decide location or movement.  
Everything else becomes easier.

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01

## Location or Movement?

Ask one question before choosing the preposition. This is the foundation for everything else.

MEANING	QUESTION	EXAMPLES
Location	Where is it?	Ech sinn am Kino. / D'Taass steet um Dësch.
Movement	Where are you going?	Ech ginn an de Kino. / Ech ginn op de Maart.

### KEY PRINCIPLE

Location = am / um (contracted forms). Movement = an / op (with article). Master this distinction and most preposition choices become automatic.

02

## AN and AM

an = in / into. am = an dem = in the / at the. Use "an" for movement, "am" for location.

USE	LUXEMBOURGISH	MEANING
Movement	Ech ginn an de Kino.	I go to the cinema.
Location	Ech sinn am Kino.	I am at the cinema.
Movement	Ech ginn an d'Kichen.	I go into the kitchen.
Location	Ech sinn an der Kichen.	I am in the kitchen.

03

## OP and UM

"op" is often used for going to a place. um = op dem = at / on the.

USE	LUXEMBOURGISH	MEANING
Movement	Ech ginn op d'Aarbecht.	I go to work.
Movement	Ech ginn op de Maart.	I go to the market.
Location	Ech sinn um Maart.	I am at the market.
Position	D'Buch läit um Dësch.	The book is on the table.

04

## UN

"un" usually means at / on / attached to. Common with walls, doors, windows, and clothes.

PATTERN	EXAMPLE
un der Mauer	D'Bild hänkt un der Mauer.
un der Dier	De Mann steet un der Dier.
un hunn (to wear)	Si huet eng rout Box un. / Hien huet e bloen T-Shirt un.

### ESSENTIAL FOR IMAGE DESCRIPTION

"un hunn" = to wear. You will use this in almost every picture description: "Hien/Si huet ... un."

05

## Contractions

A preposition often joins with an article. Learn these as fixed chunks.

FULL FORM	SHORT FORM	EXAMPLE
an dem	am	Ech sinn am Restaurant.
op dem	um	D'Taass steet um Dësch.
mat dem	mam	Ech fuere mam Auto.
vun dem	vum	Ech kommen vum Büro.
bei dem	beim	Ech sinn beim Dokter.

06

## Countries: Why "an Däitschland" but "am Libanon"?

Some countries have no article. Some have one. That decides the form.

COUNTRY TYPE	LOCATION	MOVEMENT
No article	Ech sinn an Däitschland.	Ech ginn an Däitschland.
No article	Ech sinn an Italien.	Ech ginn an Italien.
With article: de Libanon	Ech sinn am Libanon.	Ech ginn an de Libanon.
With article: den Iran	Ech sinn am Iran.	Ech ginn an den Iran.

**Why?** am = an dem. If there is no article, there is no "dem". So: an Däitschland, not "am Däitschland".

07

## Cities and Villages Use ZU

EXAMPLE	MEANING
Ech wunnen zu Lëtzebuerg.	I live in Luxembourg.
Ech schaffen zu Esch.	I work in Esch.
Ech sinn zu Ettelbréck.	I am in Ettelbruck.

08

## Transport Uses MAM

mam = mat dem = with the. Use it for all transport.

LUXEMBOURGISH	MEANING
Ech fuere mam Auto.	I go by car.
Ech kommen mam Bus.	I come by bus.
Ech fuere mam Zuch.	I travel by train.
Ech ginn mam Vélo op d'Aarbecht.	I go to work by bike.

## Picture Description Patterns

Use these sentence starters when describing images in the exam.

### LOCATION PATTERNS FOR IMAGE DESCRIPTION

Um Bild gesinn ech eng Famill.

Am Hannergrond gesinn ech e Gebai.

An der Mëtt gesinn ech eng Fra.

Um Dësch steet eng Taass.

Un der Mauer hänkt e Bild.

PATTERN	MEANING	USE FOR
Um Bild...	In the picture...	Opening sentence
Am Hannergrond...	In the background...	Background details
An der Mëtt...	In the middle...	Central focus
Um Dësch...	On the table...	Objects on surfaces
Un der Mauer...	On the wall...	Things attached/hanging

## Common Mistakes to Avoid

These are the errors candidates make most often. The key is location vs. movement.

**X** Ech sinn an de Kino.

**>** Ech sinn am Kino.

**X** Ech ginn am Kino.

**>** Ech ginn an de Kino.

**X** Ech sinn op de Maart.

**>** Ech sinn um Maart.

**X** Ech fueren mat dem Auto.

**>** Ech fuere mam Auto.

**X** Ech sinn am Däitschland.

**>** Ech sinn an Däitschland.

### FINAL RULE

Movement uses an / op. Location uses am / um. Transport uses mam. Cities use zu. Master these four rules and you cover 90% of preposition use in the exam.

**Quick Reference:** Movement = an/op | Location = am/um | Transport = mam | Cities = zu | Wearing = un hunn