

Across Versus Through

Some of my students ask me to explain the difference between **across** and **through**. The meanings are similar and they can even sometimes be used to describe the same thing but the meaning is slightly different and this can be confusing. let me explain the difference.

Across - a preposition that means “from one side of something to the other side.” This is often used with *verbs of movement*.

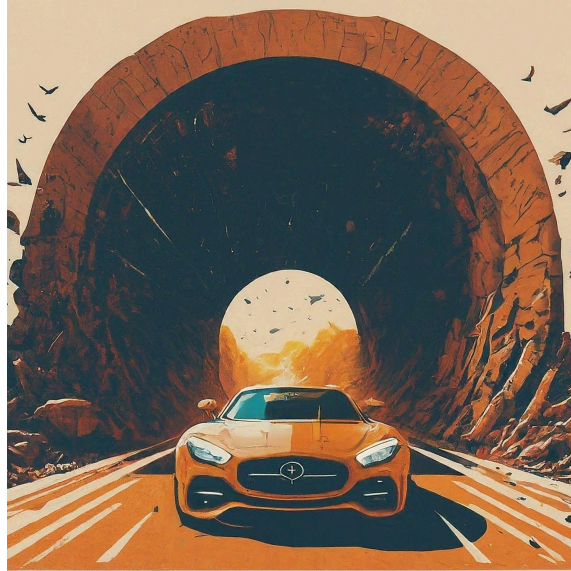


- *Walk across* the street.
- *Swim across* the lake.
- *Drive across* the city.

Another meaning is on the other side (of something). This is used when you describe the location of something. (Where something is, was, or will be.)

- The cafe is **across** the street.
- My friend had a cottage **across** the lake.
- Our office is moving **across** the city.

Through - This has a similar meaning to across, but we use it more for things with some space inside to move. You are inside something for a moment.



- We drove **through** a tunnel. (We were inside the tunnel.)
- The burglar got in **through** the window. (He used the window to get inside the house.)
- The police had to walk **through** the crowd to get to the scene. (The police were inside the crowd.) The police were Surrounded by the crowd.

~ Some places can use either preposition:

She walked through the park. **OK** (She was inside the park.)

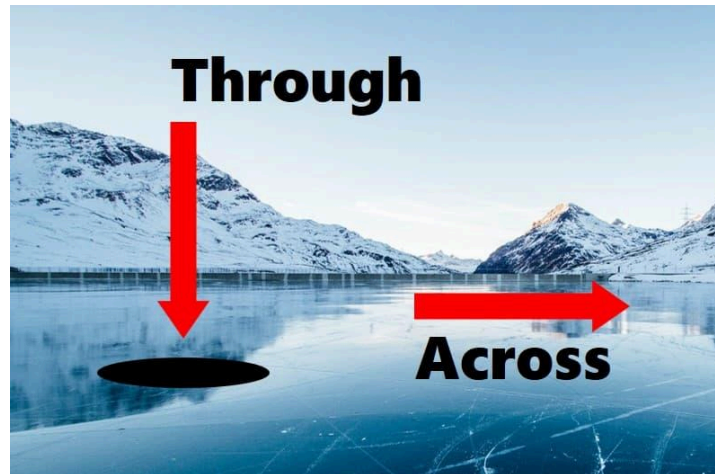
She walked across the park. **OK** (She walked from one side of the park to the other.)

~ Some cannot use either preposition:

We drove ~~across~~ a tunnel. **NG**

The children skated ~~through~~ the ice. **NG** This has a completely different meaning.

Going across the ice is safe. You are on the other side of the lake.
Going through the ice is dangerous. If you go through the ice you are in the water now!



Quiz

The breeze came in _____ the open window and cooled the room. (a) through (b) across

We hiked _____ the forest, following a winding trail. (a) through (b) across

I have to go to a meeting tomorrow at our head office, it's _____ town so I need to leave early. (a) through (b) across

The thief ran _____ the alleyway, trying to escape the police. (a) through (b) across

You can find a grocery store _____ the river. It's easy to get to, just take the bridge. (a) through (b) across

QUIZ Answers

The breeze came in **through** the open window and cooled the room.

- The breeze came from outside, to the inside so we need to use the preposition through.

We hiked **through** the forest, following a winding trail.

- In a forest, the trees are standing above and covering us, so we are inside. We need to use through in this example.

I have to go to a meeting tomorrow at our head office, it's **across** town so I need to leave early.

- The meeting is on the other side of town so we need to use across in this example.

The thief ran **through** the alleyway, trying to escape the police.

- Alleyways are narrow and enclosed, so this example needs the preposition through.

You can find a grocery store **across** the river. It's easy to get to, just take the bridge.

- The grocery store is on the other side of the river, it's an open space, across is the correct preposition to use.

RECAP

When something moves inside something else, use "**through**."

When something moves over something else without being enclosed, use "**across**."

WorldEnglishBlog.com

World English Blog on YouTube

[LINK](#)