



Hello. I'm Margot Politis and this is Study English, IELTS preparation.

Today on Study English, it's geography. How do we talk about places, locations and directions?

Listen to this clip about the history and geography of the Torres Strait.

**JOHNNY HARDING:** The Torres Strait is situated above Queensland, between the Arafura Sea and the Coral Sea, Cape York Peninsula and Papua New Guinea. Darnley Island, also known as Erub, is the largest volcanic island in the eastern Torres Strait, with a population of around 375. It is surrounded by some of the deepest water in the world, known as the Darnley Deep.



Though we are a seafaring people, 75% of Torres Strait Islanders today are living on the mainland. This is because we were displaced from our island homes since colonisation.

Life for Torres Strait Islanders has been an endurance test ever since colonisation. During the Second World War, hundreds of Torres Strait Islander men were shipped off from their homes to fight for their country, of which they were still not citizens. Uncle Bill Sailor who has gone back to live on his land of Erub and remembers, all too well, the war.

So that was Johnny Harding talking about his home, the 'Torres Strait Islands'.

When we want to talk about a place, or where something is in relation to other places, we need to use function words called *prepositions*.

Some common prepositions include 'in', 'on', 'near' or 'between'.

Prepositions can also be made up of two or even three words, for example, 'next to', 'surrounded by', or 'in front of'.

These are called *prepositions of place*.

Listen for the prepositions of place in this clip.

The Torres Strait is situated above Queensland, between the Arafura Sea and the Coral Sea, Cape York Peninsula and Papua New Guinea.



Now, let's go back over the clip and see if we can figure out where the Torres Strait is.

Johnny says that 'the Torres Strait is situated *above* Queensland'.



Here's Queensland.

The islands are situated 'above' Queensland, and 'between' the Arafura Sea and the Coral Sea, Cape York Peninsula and Papua New Guinea.

So the Torres Strait Islands can be found here:

The Torres Strait is situated above Queensland, between the Arafura Sea and the Coral Sea, Cape York Peninsula and Papua New Guinea.

Learning how to use prepositions correctly can be difficult, because most of them have more than one function.

There are not many rules to help you choose correctly, so you need to learn each expression separately.

Look at the use of the prepositions in the following:

Meet me 'at' the front door 'of' the department store 'in' George Street 'on' the corner.

In English we say:

'at a location',

'in the street'

but 'on the corner'.

The general rule is that we use 'in' to talk about large areas, for example:

I live 'in' an apartment block, 'in' Sydney, 'in' Australia.

Use 'at' for particular locations:

I live 'at' number 2 West Street.

Use 'on' to say things like:

My house is 'on' the corner'

or

' I live 'on' the second floor'

I live in an apartment block,  
in Sydney, in Australia.



And here's a quick exercise on prepositions. Try describing the position of things in the picture.

Choose from 'in', 'on', 'near', 'between', 'above', 'next to', 'in front of'.

The chair is \_\_\_\_\_ the table.  
The chair is 'in front of' the table.

The orange is \_\_\_\_\_ the bowl.  
The orange is 'in' the bowl.

The cup is \_\_\_\_\_ the vase and the book.  
The cup is 'between' the vase and the 'book'.

And why don't you try more of these exercises at home?

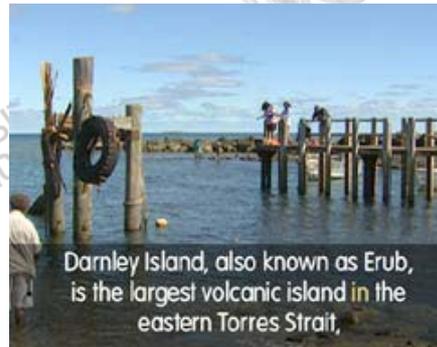


Listen for some more prepositions.

Darnley Island, also known as Erub, is the largest volcanic island in the eastern Torres Strait, with a population of around 375.

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OK, so we can use spoken and written descriptions to talk about a number of different subject areas.

In social settings we can describe 'people', 'family' or 'relationships'.

In physical settings, we can describe 'geography', 'landscapes' and other places.

But whatever you're describing, it's important to organise and structure your language. You need to carefully plan what you're going to say and the order you want to say it in.



If you're describing a country, it's helpful to list the features you want to concentrate on.



They might include the 'location' and 'size' of the country, the 'physical features', the 'climate' and even the 'population' and 'language' of the people.

Listen to all the information in the clip about Torres Strait.

Can you hear what type of information the speaker is giving us?

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We heard information about the 'location' and 'physical features' of the islands as well as about the 'population'.

He could have included information about the 'economy', 'customs', 'festivals' or 'food'.

There are many choices.

If you're writing about a place, the first step is to decide which features you want to describe. The next step is to organise the description.

When writing about a place, *punctuation* is another important tool to help organise your writing and give it meaning.

The rules for punctuation are different in all languages, and knowing which letters to *capitalise* is a key part of punctuation.

The rules about which words to capitalise need to be learnt.

Let's review some of these rules, then we'll go back to the clip and look at how some of these rules apply.

We always capitalise:

'the first word in a sentence';

'the pronoun I';

'specific places on a map', for example, the Torres Strait, or Australia;

'names of people or nationalities', like Torres Strait Islanders, or Australians;

'periods of time, like the Second World War';

and the 'names of people', including their title, for example Uncle Bill Sailor.



'Compass points' are not capitalised, unless they form part of a formal name for an area.

So the 'eastern Torres Strait' doesn't need a capital on the compass point, but 'Southeast Asia' does.

Let's take another look at the clip, focussing on the use of capitals.

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Remember, if you're not sure which words to capitalise, check the dictionary.

And that's all for today.

Don't forget to practice organising and structuring your written language, and always edit your writing to make sure all your capitals and other punctuation are right.

I look forward to seeing you next time on Study English, bye bye.