

Of vs. Off

1. 'Of'

The word 'of' has several functions in a sentence. One of which is its function as a preposition usually for various relations that are described in the sentence.

As a function of a preposition, the word 'of' does just that. For instance, 'of' is used to indicate a point:

The house is to the North of the river.

It is also commonly used to point out the material, parts, or elements of something:

A glass of wine.

It is also used to indicate a possessive relation:

The Queen of England has reigned for many years.

2. 'Off'

Works as an adverb and a preposition. The more familiar of the two, is the adverbial function. It is also used to describe something stopping, or suspension:

Please can you turn off the lights.

The prepositional function of 'off' is also common. Here, it can be used as a word to indicate the physical separation or distance from a position of rest, attachment, or union:

*Please can you take your bag off the table.
Browns is a shoe shop just off the main street.*

So to summarize, the two words differ in the following areas:

1. 'Of' is mostly used as a preposition, and therefore, should be used when a preposition is needed.
2. 'Off' is usually used as an adverb, and should be used in cases where an adverb is needed.
3. 'Of' is more often used, while 'off' is used less frequently.
4. 'Off' is used in conjunction with verbs, which is not the case with 'of'.