

A phrasal verb is a combination of a verb and a preposition, a verb and an adverb, or a verb with both an adverb and a preposition, any of which are part of the syntax of the sentence, and so are a complete semantic unit. Sentences, however, may contain direct and indirect objects in addition to the phrasal verb.[1] Phrasal verbs are particularly frequent in the English language. A phrasal verb often has a meaning which is different from the original verb.

According to Tom McArthur:

...the term 'phrasal verb' was first used by Logan Pearsall Smith, in "Words and Idioms" (1925), in which he states that the OED Editor Henry Bradley suggested the term to him. Alternative terms for phrasal verb are 'compound verb', 'verb-adverb combination', 'verb-particle construction (VPC)', AmE "two-part word/verb" and 'three-part word/verb' (depending on the number of particles), and multi-word verb (MWV).[2]

'Preposition' and 'adverb' as used in a phrasal verb are also called 'particle' in that they do not alter their form through inflections (are therefore uninflected, they do not accept affixes, etc.).

It is, however, the figurative or idiomatic application in everyday speech which makes phrasal verbs so important:

"I hope you will get over your operation quickly."

"Work hard, and get your examination over WITH."

The literal meaning of "to get over", in the sense of "to climb over something to get to the other side", no longer applies to explain the subject's enduring an operation or the stress of an examination which they have to overcome. It is when the combined meaning of verb plus adverb, or verb plus preposition is totally different from each its component parts, that the semantic content of the phrasal verb cannot be predicted by its constituent parts and so becomes much more difficult for a student learning English to recognise.

Other idiomatic usages of phrasal verbs show a verb + direct object + preposition/adverb + indirect object construction:

In her introduction to "Longman Dictionary of Phrasal Verbs, What this dictionary contains", Rosemary Courtney includes as a third category

3. Idioms which are formed from phrasal verbs, such as let the cat out of the bag. These idioms are printed in heavy type. Idioms have a meaning which is different from the meaning of the single words, and usually have a fixed word order.[3]

Courtney then cites among many other examples in the dictionary such phrases as "to add insult to injury", "to add fuel to the flames", "to leave someone in the lurch", "to scare someone out of their wits", etc.

"To get over an examination" is not the correct application of the phrasal verb "to get over." The author wants to imply, "to finish," the phrasal verb in this case is "to get over with." To get over the examination means put it in your emotional past.

### Phrasal Verb Definition Example

account for. To explain

ache for. Want something or someone a lot

act on. To take action because of something like information received

act out. Perform something with actions and gestures. Express an emotion in your behaviour

act up. Behave badly or strangely

act up behave or function improperly I think I need to take my car to the mechanic because it's acting up again.

add on. Include in a calculation

add up. To make a mathematical total. Be a satisfactory explanation for something

add up. to Have a certain result

add up + calculate a sum I added up the receipts and it totaled \$ 279,57.

add up to + equal an amount The total expenses added up to \$ 8645,766.

add up make sense Her story doesn't add up. I think she is lying.

aim at. To target

allow for. Include something in a plan or calculation

angle for. Try to get something indirectly, by hinting or suggesting

answer back. To reply rudely to someone in authority

answer for. Be held responsible for a problem. Speak on behalf of someone or from knowing them

argue out. Argue about a problem to find a solution

ask after. Enquire about someone's health, how life is going

ask around. Ask a number of people for information of help. Invite someone

ask for. To provoke a negative reaction. Request to have or be given

ask in. To invite somebody into your house

ask out. To invite someone for a date

ask out + invite on a date I can't believe that Joe finally asked me out on a date!

ask over. Invite

ask over + invite to one's home Why don't we ask the Johnsons over for dinner?

ask round. Invite someone

auction off. Sell something in an auction

back down stop defending your opinion in a debate Jane never backs down. She always wins arguments.

back out not keep (a promise, agreement, deal) Sam backed out at the last second.

back out of + not keep (a promise, agreement, deal) Sam backed out of the agreement at the last second.

back up + give support You need examples to back up your opinion.

back up move backwards, reverse Could you back up a little so I can open this drawer.

back up Make a copy of computer data

ball up Confuse or make things complicated Roll or form into a round shape

bawl out criticize, reprimand (inf.) She bawled him out for arriving late.

bash about Mistreat physically

bash in Break, damage or injure by hitting

bash out Write something quickly without much preparation

bash up Break, damage or hurt by hitting

be after Try to find or get

be along Arrive

be away Be elsewhere; on holiday, etc.

be cut out for Be suitable, have the necessary qualities

be cut up Be upset

be down Be depressed. Be reduced or less

be down on Have negative feelings toward someone

be down with Be ill

be fed up Be bored, upset or sick of something

be in Be at home or at work. Be submitted, arrive

be in on. Be involved in

be not on. Be unacceptable

be off. Be bad (of food). Depart, leave

be on. Be functioning (of machines). Take place. Take medication or drugs, especially when they affect the person badly. Be at the top of one's game, performing very well

be on about. Mean, try to say

be onto. Pursue, be aware of someone's true nature

be out. Be absent from a place

be out of. Have no more left

be out to. Attempt

be snowed under. Have too much work

be taken aback. Be shocked or surprised

be taken with. Like something

be up. Be out of bed. Have increased or risen. When the time for something finishes or expires

be up for. Be enthusiastic about an upcoming event

be up to. Be good enough. Doing something naughty or wrong

bear down on + bite The soldier had to bear down on the leather strap while the doctor removed a bullet from the soldier's arm.

bear down on + take strong measures against The U.S.A. is bearing down on drug traffickers.

bear on + have to do with This information may bear on this case.

bear up withstand I didn't think he would bear up so well in that situation.

bear up under + withstand How did he bear up under such extreme pressure.

bear with + be patient Please bear with me while I fill out the paperwork.

blow in visit unexpectedly (inf.) My cousin blew in unexpectedly with his entire family.

blow over pass without creating a problem All this negative publicity will blow over in a couple of weeks.

blow up + make explode;destroy using explosives The terrorists blew the bridge up.

blow up explode The bomb blew up before they could defuse it.

blow up suddenly become very angry When Joan heard the news, she blew up and rushed out of the room.

break down + analyze in detail We need to break this problem down in order to solve.

break down stop working properly through mechanical defect The local train had a breakdown this morning. The truck broke down in the desert.

break down become mentally ill or lose emotional control because of grief. She broke down after her husband died.

break down collapse due to bad health Mr Brown had been overworked for some time before he finally broke down in his office.

break in + wear or use something new until it is comfortable I need to break these shoes in before I go hiking.

break in interrupt While we were discussing the situation, Terri broke in to give her opinion.

break in enter a place unlawfully The burglar broke in between midnight and 3 AM.

break in on + interrupt (a conversation) Jane broke in on the conversation and told us to get back to work.

break into + enter a house unlawfully The burglar broke into the house between midnight and 3 AM.

break into + interrupt (a conversation) Jane broke into the conversation and told us what she knew.

break off + end something Sally broke her engagement to John off.

break out appear violently Violent protests broke out in response to the military coup.

break out + use something extravagant for celebration He broke out the champagne to celebrate his promotion.

break out of + escape The murderer broke out of the prison.

break up + break into pieces I broke the cracker up into pieces and put it in the soup.

break up + disperse (a crowd), stop (a fight) The police broke the demonstration up before it got out of control.

break up end a relationship Sam and Diane broke up again. What a rocky relationship.

bring about + cause to happen Democracy brought about great change in the lives of the people.

bring along + bring with When we go to the forest, bring your wildlife guide along.

bring around change someone's mind, convince someone She doesn't want to go, but we'll eventually bring her around.

bring away learn or gain (from an experience) My trip across the Sahara was difficult, but I brought a new appreciation for life away from the experience.

bring off + succeed at something difficult or unexpected You robbed the bank! I can't believe you brought that off.

bring on + cause something I can't believe she got so angry. What brought that on?

bring out + highlight, stress Your new shirt brings out the color of your eyes.

bring over + bring to someone's house When you visit me, why don't you bring over your son.

bring to revive consciousness We used smelling salts to bring her to after she fainted.

bring up + mention I didn't want to bring up the fact that she was unemployed.

bring up + raise ( a child) Sam was brought up in South Carolina.

brush off + ignore something or someone (inf.) Mary brushed her ex-boyfriend off at the party.

burn down + destroy by setting fire to The children burned the house down while playing with matches.

burn down burn until completely gone (building) Two buildings burnt down in the fire.

burn up be hot I am burning up in here - open the window.

burn up consume by fire The papers were burned up in the fire.

burn up + destroy by fire He burnt up the files.

buy out + buy the shares of a company or the shares the other person owns of a business Pacific Inc. was bought out by a company from Oregon.

buy up + purchase the entire supply of something We bought up all the beer in the store.

call for + require (as in a recipe) This recipe calls for milk, not water.

call off + cancel something They called the picnic off because of the rain.

call off + order to stop (an invasion, guard dogs) He called off the dogs when he saw it was his neighbor.

call on + visit Mark called on Naomi while he was in town.

call on + invite someone to speak in a meeting or a classroom Professor Tanzer called on Tim to answer the question.

call up + telephone I called Sam up to see if he wanted to go to the movies.

calm down + make someone relax You can calm the baby down by rocking her gently.

care for + nurse someone or something He cared for the bird until its wing healed.

care for + like someone or something I don't care for sour cream on my potato.

carry on + continue (a conversation, a game) Please, carry on. I didn't mean to interrupt you.

carry on about + continue in an annoying way He kept carrying on about how much money he makes.

carry on with + continue I want you to carry on with the project while I am out of town.

carry out + complete and/or accomplish something The secret agent carried out his orders exactly as planned.

carry over + continue on a subsequent day, page, etc. The meeting carried over into lunch time.

catch on slowly start to understand (inf.) He caught on after a few minutes.

catch up make up for lost time I will never catch up. I am too behind in my work.

catch up with + speed up to be at the same place as a person or thing in front of you I had to run to catch up with the others.

catch up on + become up-to-date I need to catch up on world events. I haven't seen the news in ages.

check back return to see if everything is OK We will check back tomorrow to make sure the project is finished.

check by + go to a place to see if everything is OK We need to check by the office to see if the documents are ready.

check for + try to find They checked for termites before they bought the house.

check in enter a hospital, hotel etc. They need to check in before noon.

check into + enter a hospital, hotel etc. They checked into the hotel at 11:00 AM.

check into + investigate, look for (often through a service) We are checking into discount flights to London.

check off + make a mark next to (an item on a list) Check each name off the list.

check on + make sure something is OK Let's check on the baby again before we go to sleep.

check out + investigate, take a look at He checked out the new restaurant down the street.

check out leave a hotel, hospital It's already eleven. We need to check out.

check out of + leave a hotel, hospital We checked out of the hotel before ten.

check over + closely examine the condition of something He checked over the old car to see if it was worth buying.

check up on + investigate someone or something The police are checking up on the bomb threats.

check through send luggage through (to a destination) Your luggage will be checked through to Paris.

check with + ask a person for confirmation He needs to check with his parents before he goes.

cheer up make someone feel cheerful The party really cheered me up.

cheer up become cheerful Cheer up. Everything will be all right.

chew up + chew into small pieces The dog chewed up my shoe.  
chop down + fell/cut ( a tree) The lumberjack chopped the tree down.  
chop up + chop/cut into small bits He chopped the meat up into little pieces.  
clean up + tidy Susan cleaned the mess up before she left.  
clear ut leave ( inf.) Everybody clear out! We're closed.  
clear up + tidy Susan cleared up the mess before she left.  
close down + close a place permanently The corner market closed down because they didn't have many customers.  
close down close permanently The bar was closed down because they served alcohol to minors.  
close in on + approach and threaten The rebels were closing in on the capital, so the government called in the army.  
close up + close temporarily They are closing the ski resort up for the summer.  
close up close temporarily The ski resort is closing up for the summer.  
come about occur / happen How did you idea for the book come about.  
come across + discover by accident They came across some lost Mayan ruins in the jungle.  
come across + initially seem or have the appearance He comes across as rather rude, but he isn't.  
come along accompany someone If you want, you can come along.  
come along with + accompany Sam came along with us to the beach.  
come along progress How's the research paper coming along.  
come along with + progress How are you coming along with the research paper.  
come away leave a place with a particular feeling or impression I came away from the meeting feeling like the presentation was a success.  
come back return What time are you coming back?  
come by + get, receive How did you come by that new Mercedes?  
come by visit a person at their house I'll come by later this afternoon.  
come down with + become sick with He came down with the flu.  
come into + inherit He came into a large sum of money when his aunt died.  
come off + fall off, break off The handle came off the suitcase when I picked it up.  
come out appear I didn't see the car at first. It came out of nowhere.  
come out reveal you are homosexual Sam finally came out last month.  
come out turn out, end up The pictures came out great.  
come out with + produce and distribute a product Microsoft is coming out with a new video game system next month.  
come over visit someone at their house Why don't you come over after work for dinner.  
come to regain consciousness Don't worry! She faints all the time. She always comes to after a few minutes.  
come through do what is needed or expected Terry really came through for us in the end.  
come up to + approach; to equal The job offer didn't come up to her expectations.

come up with + produce or create (an idea, a plan) She came up with a great proposal for the new advertising campaign.

come with + include (an accessory) The computer system doesn't come with a printer.

count in + include Did you count expenses in?

count on + depend/rely on You can really count on Sarah.

count out + exclude You can count James out. He hates playing poker.

count up + add Count the change up and see how much we have.

crack down on + become tougher on, better enforce laws on The police have been cracking down on drunk driving.

crack up laugh uncontrollably, laugh a lot When I told the joke, they all cracked up.

crack up at + laugh uncontrollably about, laugh a lot about I cracked up at his joke.

cross out + draw a line through something, eliminate Why did you cross my name out on the list?

cut down decrease the amount of You eat too much fat. You need to cut down.

cut down on + decrease the amount of You need to cut down on your fat intake.

cut in interrupt She suddenly cut in and delivered the news

cut in on + interrupt She cut in on the conversation and delivered the news.

cut off interrupt someone while they were speaking She cut him off before he said something he would regret later.

cut off + sever (with a knife) His finger was accidentally cut off in an industrial accident.

cut out + remove He cut the bone out of the steak.

cut out stop an action Cut it out! You're bothering me.

cut up + cut into small pieces He cut the beef up and put the pieces in the soup.

die away diminish in intensity The applause died away after 5 minutes.

die down diminish in intensity The controversy about the president's affair finally died down.

die off/out become extinct Whales are in danger of dying off.

disagree with + cause to feel sick due to food or drink Spicy food disagrees with me.

do away with + abolish Some Americans want to do away with the death penalty.

do over + repeat You made many mistakes, so I want you to do the report over.

do without + manage without something one wants or needs I couldn't do without a car in California.

draw up + create (a contract) Let's draw an agreement up before we go any further with this project.

dress down reprimand severely The mother dressed her son down for skipping school.

dress down dress casually I am dressing down because we're going to a barbecue by the beach.

dress up + decorate You could dress this house up with some bright colors

dress up wear elegant clothes She always dresses up at work.

drive back + repulse The invaders were driven back by the army.

drop in visit someone unexpectedly Meg dropped in yesterday after dinner.  
drop in on + visit someone unexpectedly Let's drop in on Julie since we're driving by her house.  
drop out quit an organized activity Yuri isn't on the team any more. He dropped out.  
drop out of + quit an organized activity (school) It's difficult to get a good job if you drop out of high school.  
drop over visit someone casually Drop over any time you feel like talking.  
eat away gradually destroy, erode The heavy rains ate away at the sandstone cliffs.  
eat up + devour Ken ate the cookies up.  
eat in eat inside the home We usually eat in instead of going out for dinner.  
eat out eat outside the home They eat out once a week.  
face up to + acknowledge something difficult or embarrassing I'll never be able to face up to my colleagues after getting so drunk last night at the work party.  
fall back on + be able to use in case of emergency Yuki can fall back on her degree in biology if she doesn't succeed in her acting career.  
fall behind go slower than scheduled, lag Hurry up or you will fall behind!  
fall behind in + go slower than scheduled, lag Cheryl has missed several days of school and now she is falling behind in her homework.  
fall off decrease Interest in the project fell off when they realized it wouldn't be profitable.  
fall out with + have an argument with I had a falling out with my sister last month and we haven't talked to each other since.  
fall through fail to happen Unfortunately, my trip to Indonesia fell through because I couldn't save enough money.  
feel up + grope She sued her boss for sexual harassment after he felt her up.  
feel up to + have the energy to do something I don't feel up to going out tonight because I had a long day at work.  
figure on + expect Where do you figure on living when you move to the the U.S.A.?  
figure out + solve something, understand I finally figured the joke out. Now I understand why everybody was laughing.  
figure up + calculate I need to figure my expenses up before I give you an estimate.  
fill in + complete Don't forget to fill in all the blanks on the application.  
fill in substitute Who is going to fill in while you're gone?  
fill in for + substitute for Miguel filled in for me at the meeting yesterday because I was sick.  
fill out + complete (an application) I filled out an application to rent the apartment last week.  
fill out mature, get breasts Now that you're filling out honey, we need to get you a bra.  
fill up + fill to the top Fill the car up with unleaded gas, please.  
find out + discover You will never find out all my secrets!

find out discover Vicky's parents are going to be so mad when they find out she got a tattoo.

fix up + repair, renovate, remodel My neighbors are fixing their house up.

get across + cause to be understood It's difficult to get humor across in another language.

get ahead make progress I can't get ahead even though I work two jobs.

get ahead of + surpass You need to work overtime in order to get ahead of schedule.

get along have a good relationship Do you and your sister get along?

get along with + have a good relationship Giovanna doesn't get along with her two brothers.

get around + avoid someone or something Some people get around paying taxes by hiring a good accountant.

get around go many places It's easy to get around town with public transportation.

get away escape The bank robbers got away.

get away with + do something against the rules or illegal and not get caught or punished My sister gets away with everything!

get by survive without having the things you need or want I lost my job, so I am having a hard time getting by this year.

get by on + survive with minimal resources It's nearly impossible to get by on making minimum wage.

get by with + manage with You don't need a computer. You can get by with the typewriter.

get down to + get serious about a topic Enough small talk. Let's get down to business.

get in + enter ( a car, a small boat) Get in the front seat. You will have more leg room.

get in enter Get in. I will give you a ride to school

get off + send (a package) I finally got my sister's birthday present off yesterday.

get off remove ( a spider from your shirt) Can you get this spider off my shirt?

get off + leave (a bus, plane, train, boat) We need to get off the bus at the next stop.

get off leave It's dangerous to sit on the roof. Get off!

get off idiomatic phrase - How does he justify saying that?! Where does he get off saying that?!

get on put on (clothes) You should get your jacket on because it's going to be cold.

get on enter (a bus, train), mount (a horse, a bike) The train is leaving. Quick, get on!

get on + enter (a bus, train), mount ( a horse, a bike) Get on my bike and I will give you a ride home.

get on have a good relationship Natasha doesn't get on with her co-workers.

get on with + have a good relationship Do you get on with your neighbors?

get on with + continue an activity Now that the police have left, let's get on with the party!

get out of + exit (a small boat, car, an enclosed area) I fell into the water when I tried to get out of the canoe.

get over + recover (a cold, a disease, an ex-boyfriend/ex-girlfriend) Jennifer still hasn't gotten over her breakup with Peter.

get through + complete We will never get through all of these boxes by 9:00 PM.

get through + penetrate We need a stronger drill to get through this wall.

get through penetrate The door was jammed, so we couldn't get through.

get through (with) + finish Have you gotten through with your homework yet?

get through to + make contact It's hard to get through to Janet because her telephone line is always busy.

get up cause someone to rise (from a sitting position or a lying position) Ahmed got Abdul up at 5:30 in the morning by turning the music up really loud.

get up rise (from sitting position or a bed) What time did you get up this morning?

give away + give something without asking for anything in exchange Why did Nancy give all of her furniture away?

give away + betray (a secret) We are having a surprise party for Susan next Saturday, so don't give our surprise away by acting suspicious.

give back + return something you borrowed When are you going to give that book back to your teacher?

give in stop trying Never give in! You can do it!

give off + release (a smell, light) That white flower gives off a beautiful smell.

give out + distribute I earn extra money by giving out brochures on the street.

give out become very tired (inf.) I hope this car doesn't give out in the middle of the desert.

give up + surrender something The police told the thief to give his gun up.

give up surrender Never give up learning English!

go away leave I yelled at the dogs to make them go away.

go back return When are you going back to your house?

go by + go past, go close to, visit quickly We go by the coffee shop everyday.

go back on + not keep (one's word, a promise) Don't trust him. He always goes back on his promises.

go down decrease The cost of flight tickets is going down.

go for + try to achieve Our team is going for the gold medal in the Olympics.

go for idiomatic phrase - I am craving pepperoni pizza. I could go for pepperoni pizza.

go in for + participate ( inf.) Are you going to go in for soccer this year at school?

go into + discuss in detail I really don't want to go into that now.

go off explode The bomb could go off at any moment.

go off begin, start (used with signals, alarms, warning sounds) The alarm clock went off at 6:00 AM.

go off stop (said of a machine) The DVD player goes off automatically if you are not using it.

go off become angry Maria went off last night after I told her about losing her bike.

go on continue Please, go on. Don't let me interrupt you.

go on happen This place is a mess! What went on here last night?  
go on with + continue ( a plan, a conversation) I think we should go on with the meeting and stop wasting time.  
go out stop burning ( a fire) The fire went out after three days.  
go out take part in social activities (usually at night) They love to go out every Saturday night.  
go over + review Do you usually go over your notes before class?  
go over be well received, succeed That didn't go over well.  
go through + examine in detail, study carefully I need to have my lawyer go through this contract before I sign it.  
go through + endure; experience challenges, difficulties or traumas She has gone through so much in her life.  
go through with + continue or proceed despite difficulties or fears I have decided to go through with the operation.  
go with + match (clothing) That shirt doesn't go with those pants.  
go with + accompany a person I am going with Alejandro to the party.  
go with + have a boyfriend/girlfriend I am going with Yuri.  
go without + abstain from something you want or need A person can go without water for three days.  
grow under go out of business The restaurant went under after it lost its liquor license.  
grow up mature Your brother needs to grow up and start thinking about his future.  
hand back + return Is the teacher going to hand back our tests today?  
hand down + pronounce formally The president is going to hand his decision down on health care tonight.  
hand down + give as an inheritance When my clothes got too small for me as a child, I handed them down to my sister.  
hand in + submit I have to hand in an offer by March 12.  
hand out + distribute We should hand the concert fliers out at school.  
hand over + relinquish control of Hand your car keys over. You're too drunk to drive.  
hang around + stay in a place for fun ( inf.) Maria and Salvador usually hang around the beach after school.  
hang around stay in a place for fun Those guys just hang around all day.  
hang up + suspend (clothes on a hanger) You can hang your jacket up in the front closet.  
hang up put down the telephone receiver Don't hang up. I'm going to change phones.  
hang out + stay in a place for fun (inf.) Let's go hang out at the mall tonight.  
hang out stay in a place for fun What are you doing? - - I'm just hanging out.  
have on + wear Do you have your hiking boots on?  
have over invite guests to your home Why don't we have Mr. and Mrs. Jones over for dinner tonight.  
hear from + receive news from (a letter, an e-mail) Have you heard from Steve lately?

hear of + know about something or somebody Have you heard of chocolate covered ants?

hit on + find on accident I hit on the idea while watching the Simpsons show.

hit on + flirt with Jay's friend Marc was trying to hit on my sister last night.

hold back + restrain The police held the demonstrators back while the politicians entered the building.

hold back not allow to advance in school The teacher held Frank back a year, so he couldn't enter fifth grade.

hold off + restrain Mr. Johnson held the dog off while we crossed the yard.

hold off on + delay We should hold off on making dinner until your parents arrive.

hold on grasp tightly Hold on tight! The roller coaster is about to take off.

hold on tell someone to wait on the telephone Hold on a minute. I'll get Carol.

hold on to + grasp tightly Make sure you hold on to the hand rail as you walk down the stairs.

hold out not give in, continue to resist Stop holding out and tell us where you found all of these old records.

hold out against + not give in, resist They held out against enemy attack.

hold up + delay (a flight, traffic); The accident held traffic up for an hour.

hold up + rob (a bank, a person) with a weapon Five men held the bank up yesterday.

hook up + make the electrical connections required for a machine or information service Can you hook up the fax machine for me?

iron out eliminate We need to have a meeting this week in order to iron out the distribution problems.

jack up + to raise We need to jack up the car before we change the tire.

joke around to be humorous Mike is always joking around at work.

jump in enter a conversation Feel free to jump in at any moment while we are talking.

jump to + make a quick, poorly thought out decision You shouldn't jump to conclusions.

keep around have handy, have accessible I always keep a dictionary around to translate new words.

keep at + not give up (an activity), to persevere You should keep at your studies.

keep away prevent access to, hold back Keep the kids away from the cookies.

keep back maintain a safe distance, cause to maintain a safe distance Keep back! The burning building is about to collapse.

keep down not vomit, not throw up, keep in one's stomach If I ate that, I down know if I could keep it down.

keep in keep in a particular place, have something in a specific location When I am not using it, I keep my passport in this drawer.

keep off prevent from stepping or climbing on to something Keep the cat off the couch.

keep on continue He kept on talking after everybody asked him to stop.

keep out prevent from entering Keep the dog out of the garden; he keeps digging up the flowers.

keep over cover something with, put something above I keep a tarp over my bicycle at night to prevent it from getting wet.

keep to + continue, persist in (an activity) Everybody said she would never finish the puzzle, but she kept to it until it was done.

keep up stay on the required schedule You have to keep up if you want to work here.

keep up + continue You are doing a great job! Keep it up.

keep up with + stay on schedule with (a person, the workload, homework) I have so much reading that I can't keep up with the writing exercises.

kick back sit or lie back (to relax) After work, I like to kick back in front of the TV and relax.

kick in begin taking effect The medicine takes one hour to kick in.

lay away + save for the future Why don't you lay away your wedding outfit?

lay down + establish (laws, rules) Lori lays down the law in her class. English only!

lay in on + scold or criticize severely My mom really laid in on me when I got home at 4:00 in the morning last night.

lay into + scold or criticize severely I saw Reto's mom lay into him when he came home late last night.

lay off + suspend someone from a job (during a slow period) The company was losing money, so they had to lay off 100 workers.

lay out + arrange Why don't we lay the pieces of the table out before we put it together.

leave out + not include, omit Why did your parents leave you out of their vacation plans?

let down disappoint I felt let down when I didn't receive a birthday card from my sister.

let down lengthen (pants in sewing) My uncle is a tailor, so he can let your pants down.

let out release I am happy my brother was let out of prison early.

let out make bigger (in sewing) I need to let out this skirt because I have gained weight.

let up weaken in intensity I told her NO a thousand times, but she won't let up.

lie down rest, recline I need to lie down before we go out tonight.

lie down on + rest, recline ( on a couch, bed) I'm going to lie down on the sofa for a while.

lie with + be decided by Whether or not you can go to the party lies with your father.

light up + illuminate Let's get some candles to light this room up.

light up + to smoke Do you have to light up another cigarette? I thought you were trying to cut down.

live down + live in a way that a shameful or embarrassing event is forgotten Jose will never live down singing that song at the karaoke bar.

live on + survive from I could live on bread and cheese.

live up to + keep a standard It would be hard to live up to her parent's expectations. They are so demanding.

look after + take care of (a child, a house, a pet) When my sister goes on vacation, I look after her dog.

look back on + to remember nostalgically When I look back on my childhood, I often feel angry.

look down on + see as inferior She's so conceited. She looks down on everybody else.

look for + to seek or search for I'm looking for my keys. Have you seen them?

look forward to + anticipate with pleasure I am looking forward to traveling to New York next year.

look into + investigate The police are looking into the murder.

look on observe as a spectator Everybody just looked on as the two men fought.

look out be careful, pay attention, heed a certain danger Look out, there's a black widow spider on the wall.

look over + examine, review When I'm camping, I look my shoes over before I put them on.

look up + search for (in a dictionary) It takes time to look up new vocabulary words.

look up + locate and visit If you ever travel to California, you should look me up.

look up to + respect, admire someone He looks up to his father.

make out decipher I can't make out your handwriting. What does this say?

make out + write a check or other document Who should I make this check out to?

make out succeed He really made out in the stock market last year.

make out progress How is your son making out in his new job?

make out kiss passionately I saw Benno and Isabelle making out in the movie theater last night!

make out with + kiss someone passionately Did you make out with Sally?

make over do again The teacher made me do my homework over.

make up + invent ( a story) Don't believe anything she says. She always makes things up.

make up + complete what was missed Fortunately, my professor let me make up the exam I missed yesterday.

make up + put on cosmetics It takes me 10 minutes to make my face up.

make up reconcile You two have been friends for so long that I think you should make up.

make up for + compensate for Allen made up for being late by getting me flowers.

mix up + confuse I sometimes mix the verb tenses up.

mix up + blend We need to mix up these different kinds of nuts before we put them in a bowl.

mix up + make lively (a party) Let's mix up this party with a little disco music.

name after + name a child using another family member's name I was named after my grandfather.

nod off fall asleep The movie was so boring that I nodded off before it was finished.

nose around + sneak around I hate it when my mother noses around my room.

occur to + pop into one's mind, come to one's mind It didn't occur to us that we had left the iron on.

open up share feelings I'm glad that John feels comfortable enough around me to open up.

out to + verb try to She is out to get revenge now that her husband left her for another woman.

pan out be successful, turn out well The trip to Vegas didn't pan out.

pass away die After battling cancer for several years, he finally passed away at the age of 87.

pass off + try to convince someone that something is real He tried to pass the fake watch off as a real Rolex.

pass on + transmit Please pass this message on to your co-workers.

pass on + not accept (an invitation to eat or do something) Jennifer passed on the invitation to join us for dinner.

pass on die I am afraid Professor Johnson has passed on.

pass out + distribute We need to pass out these flyers for the concert tomorrow.

pass out become unconscious He passed out because the room was too hot.

pass up + not take advantage (of an opportunity) I can't believe she passed up the opportunity to study in Rome.

pay back + repay If I loan you money, will you pay me back.

pay off + complete payment on a debt It took me ten years to pay off my credit card debt.

pay off + to bribe Don't try to pay the police officer off if you get pulled over for speeding.

pick on + to tease, bully She keeps picking on me! Make her stop.

pick out + choose Diane picked out a lovely dress for the dance.

pick up + to lift an object with the hands Keep your back straight when you lift the TV up.

pick up + come and get someone in a car What time are you going to pick me up.

pick up + learn something without effort It's possible to pick up enough English in two weeks to get by on your trip to Los Angeles.

pick up + try to initiate a relationship with someone (often in a bar) Some weird guy tried to pick Patricia up at the bar.

pick up grow, increase (inf.) Business is really picking up this quarter.

play down + make less important (inf.) The President played down his affair with the intern.

play up highlight something (inf.) She played up her part in the new movie, but it was actually a very small role.

play up to + flatter someone for your personal advantage She has been playing up to the boss because she wants a promotion.

point out + indicate I'd like to point out that figures in column two might be outdated.

pull down earn He pulls down about \$300,000 a year.

pull in park (a vehicle) Mark pulled in too quickly and crashed into the wall.

pull out depart (a vehicle) Our train pulls out at 8:00, so don't be late.

pull through barely survive I didn't think she was going to make it, but she pulled through in the end.

put across + communicate (an idea or suggestion) clearly so that it is understood I thought Ms. Smith put her ideas across rather clearly in the meeting.

put away + return to the proper place of storage I told you kids to put your toys away.

put down + insult, say bad things about She always puts down people who don't share her opinions.

put in + officially submit a request (in the armed forces or public services) He put in for a transfer to the division in Los Angeles.

put off + postpone Don't put off your work - do it now!

put on + wear Make sure you put on a sweater before you go outside.

put on + deceive I didn't believe a thing he said. I think he was putting me on.

put out + extinguish (a fire) Don't use water to put out a grease fire.

put out + inconvenience someone I don't want to put you out, but could you pick me up at the airport.

put out + spend (usually used with unreasonably large sums of money) I can't put out that much money each month.

put up have a guest stay in your house for a short time Can you put me up while I'm in town.

put up with + tolerate Sandy will not put up with smoking in her house.

quiet down + be quiet, or cause to be quiet The neighbors told us to quiet down last night or they would call the police.

read up on + research a topic for a reason I need to read up on the company before I go on the job interview.

ring up telephone Jack rung me up last night at 3:00 in the morning.

rule out + eliminate I wouldn't rule out the possibility of moving to another country if I get a good job offer.

run across + find or meet unexpectedly I ran across some old photos while I was cleaning my house.

run against + compete in an election Gore ran against Bush in the 2000 elections in the U.S.A.

run away leave home permanently before you are a legal adult The child ran away because her parents beat her.

run away from + escape from The child ran away from its parents.

run down trace Have you run down those phone numbers I asked for last week?

run down criticize My boss runs everyone down.

run down hit with a car My dog was run down by a bus.

run down loose power, be very tired You need to wind your watch so it doesn't run down.

run for + campaign for a government position Gore is running for president of the U.S.A.

run into + meet unexpectedly I ran into my English teacher at the movies last night. She's so nice!

run off + make leave The new government is trying to run the drug traffickers off.  
run off reproduce (photocopies) Would you mind running off 10 copies of this document for me?

run off leave quickly Why did you run off after the party?

run off waste water You shouldn't swim where the sewage runs off into the ocean.

run out of + not have any more of something We ran out of milk this morning, so we need to go to the store.

save up + accumulate (money) I hope I will be able to save up enough money to go to school.

see about + arrange or consider something My dad said he was going to see about buying me a car.

see off say good-bye to someone at the beginning of their trip (at the airport, train station) Did you see your sister off at the train station?

see to + make sure something happens, arrange I'll see to it that Mr. Ramirez gets your message.

see through finish something despite difficulties Are you going to be able to see your studies through now that you have a baby?

sell out tell on someone My partner in crime sold me out for a reduced jail sentence.

set up arrange a relationship My mom set me up with her friend's son.

set up falsely incriminate a person I don't think he killed those men. Somebody set him up.

set up + arrange (an appointment, a meeting, etc.) I set up an appointment with my doctor at 3:30 this afternoon.

settle on + make a decision after a period of time I settled on the job at the oil company.

settle up pay one's debts We need to settle up before you move.

show off + show to everybody with a lot of pride He always shows off his new things.

show off boast, draw attention to oneself Young boys show off in order to impress girls.

show up make someone seem inferior He's always trying to show up his co-workers in order to get ahead.

show up arrive without previous notice I hadn't seen my cousin for years, and all of a sudden, he showed up at my workplace yesterday!

shut off stop from functioning If you don't pay your electric bill, your power is going to get shut off.

shut up make quiet Would someone shut him up! He's talking so loudly that we're going to get in trouble.

slow down + make move more slowly Because Mary's level in English is lower than the rest of the students, she slows the class down.

slow up + make move more slowly Because Mary's level in English is lower than the rest of the students, she slows the class up.

spell out + to explain something in a detailed way so that the meaning is clearly understood He's so stupid that you have to spell everything out for him.

stand by wait I need you to stand by and answer the phone when my broker calls.

stand for + represent SCUBA stands for "self contained underwater breathing apparatus."

stand for + tolerate I won't stand for people criticizing me.

stand out be very noticeable Soledad is so beautiful! She really stands out in a crowd.

stand up not arrive to a date or an appointment (inf.) I arranged to meet Joe at the library at 8:00, but he stood me up. I hope he has a good excuse.

stand up for + defend (something one believes in) Every individual must stand up for what they believe in.

stand up to + defend oneself against someone or something I think you should stand up to your older brother and tell him to stop pushing you around.

stay over spend the night at a person's house It takes you so long to take the bus home, so why don't you just stay over?

stick it to + severely criticize a person (inf.) My boss really stuck it to me when I arrived late to work for the third time this week.

stick to + persevere, keep trying Even though English is a hard language to master, you must stick to it!

stick up for + defend oneself or opinions Joseph joined the army because he believes he must stick up for his country.

take after + resemble a parent or relative I take after my father. Who do you take after?

take away + remove, seize or capture The soldiers took the captives away.

take back + retract something you said I demand that you take back what you said.

take back + return an item to a store The dress my grandmother bought for me didn't fit, so I took it back and exchanged it for a pair of pants.

take down + write down what is said Would you mind taking down my messages while I am on vacation?

take down + remove (from a high place) The city government made the shop take down their bright, neon sign.

take for consider, view as Do you take me for an idiot?

take in + learning Are you taking in all of these phrasal verbs?

take in + deceive a person He was taken in by the con artist.

take in + make smaller when sewing I lost weight, so I need to take some of my skirts to the tailor to have them taken in.

take off when a plane or rocket leaves the ground My stomach felt funny when the plane took off.

take off + remove In many cultures, it is appropriate to take off your shoes when entering a house.

take off + leave work or school for a period of time I was sick last week, so I took a few days off of work.

take off leave We took off after dinner.

take on + accept (responsibilities, work) She has taken on too much responsibility in this project.

take over + take control of Who is going to take over the family business when Aretha's father dies?

take over take control of If the President is assassinated, the Vice-president will take over.

take out + accompany a person on a date (for dinner, the movies) I can't meet you tonight because I am taking Fernanda out to dinner.

take up + begin a new hobby Have you taken up any new hobbies since you moved here?

take up + discuss (at a later date) We should take this issue up in the meeting tomorrow.

take up + shorten a garment when sewing This dress is too long, I am going to take it up.

take up + occupy space This couch takes up too much space in the living room.

talk back respond in an impolite way to an adult Don't talk back!

talk back to + respond in an impolite way to an adult Children should not talk back to their parents.

talk over + discuss I hope my parents talk their relationship problems over before they get divorced.

tear down + destroy The county decided to tear down the dilapidated school and build a new one.

tear up + tear or rip into small pieces I always tear up my personal papers before I throw them out.

tell off + criticize a person severely, reprimand (inf.) Carolina told me off when she found out I was gossiping about her date with Martin.

tell on + report a crime to the police or bad behavior to a parent Every time I did something wrong when I was a child, my sister would tell on me.

think over + consider Think over the offer before you sign the contract.

think through + consider carefully You need to think this through carefully before you make a decision.

think up + create or invent a false story I need to think up an excuse for not going to her party.

throw away + discard Don't throw away those bottles; we can recycle them.

throw out + discard I asked him not to throw out the Sunday newspaper because I wanted to save an article.

throw out + remove by force from (a room, school, a house, etc.) Mary threw out her roommate because she stopped paying rent.

throw up vomit If you drink too much alcohol, you might throw up.

tie up + tie securely When we dock, make sure you tie the boat up.

tire out cause someone to be very tired Speaking English all day tires me out.

touch on + talk about for a short time The presidential candidates touched on the subject of health care during the debates.

touch up make the final improvements We didn't paint the whole kitchen, we just touched up the cabinets.

try on + put on to make sure a piece of clothing fits Try on the pants before you buy them.

try out test Try out this massage chair - it feels great!

turn away refuse to deal with or give service They turned us away at the border because we didn't have visas.

turn around change or reverse direction Turn the car around and go back home.

turn down + refuse an offer; reject an application She turned down the new job in New York, because she didn't want to move.

turn down + lower the volume or intensity of a TV, radio, or other machine I'm studying! Please turn down the TV.

turn in submit You need to turn your essays in next week.

turn in go to bed (inf.) It's getting late. I think it is about time to turn in.

turn into + become something different, transform When she kissed the frog, it turned into a handsome prince.

turn off + stop the function of (a stove, a water faucet, a car, etc.) Don't forget to turn off the iron before you leave the house.

turn on + attack unexpectedly The pit bull suddenly turned on the small child.

turn on cause to be excited sexually Scientists have discovered that the smell of cinnamon turns many people on.

turn on + start the function of a TV, a radio, a machine Turn on the TV. The baseball game starts in a few minutes.

turn out produce The weavers can turn out two or three rugs a month.

turn out switch off a light Turn out the light before you go to bed.

turn out audience members to a function Over 100,000 people turned out for the concert.

turn out end up being She turned out to be the murderer after all.

turn over give to authorities (said of evidence or stolen / lost property) They turned the wallet over to the police.

turn up + increase the volume or intensity of a TV, radio, or other machine Turn up the TV. I can't hear what they're saying.

turn up find unexpectedly My keys turned up in the bedroom.

use up use all of something I used up all of the soap, so we need to buy some more.

veer away from + stay away from, avoid I veer away from the same old summer blockbuster films.

wait on + serve, service (a table) Each waitress waits on three different tables in the restaurant.

wait up not sleep because you are waiting for something or someone Don't wait up.  
wait up for + not sleep because you are waiting for someone or something Let's wait up  
for Mary to see how her date went.  
wake up + awaken someone The car alarm woke me up at 6:00 in the morning.  
wake up awaken Wake up. It's time to get ready for work.  
wash up clean oneself Make sure you wash up before dinner.  
wash up + clean If we work together, we can wash the kitchen up in a few minutes.  
watch out be careful Watch out - there's a rattlesnake!  
watch out for + be careful of Watch out for snakes while you are hiking in the desert.  
wear off disappear after a period of time The effects of the medicine will wear off after a  
few hours.  
wear out use until something is not useable anymore If you wear the same shoes  
everyday, you'll wear them out.  
wear out cause to be very tired Her three kids wore me out.  
wind up + finish (inf.) If he doesn't get his act together, he is going to wind up in jail.  
wind up + tighten the spring of a watch or similar machine He wound up the toy dog  
and set it on the floor.  
wind up + cause an animal or a child to behave wildly The kids always get wound up  
when Uncle Henry comes over.  
wipe out + massacre or destroy The tidal wave wiped out the small fishing village.  
wipe out cause to be very tired After surfing all day, I was completely wiped out.  
work out + solve I hope you two can work out your problems.  
work out exercise I work out three times a week at the fitness center.  
work out be successful I am glad your new catering business is working out.  
write down + record Write down the directions so you don't forget them.  
write out + write down every word or letter He wrote out the lyrics so I could understand  
what the singer was saying.  
write up + prepare a report He wrote up a business proposal in order to get a loan.  
yak on to continue talking in an annoying way ("on" can be repeated for emphasis) He  
just yakked on and on and on.  
yak on about + to continue talking in an annoying way about something ("on" can be  
repeated for emphasis) She just yakked on and on about her husband's new job.  
yammer on to talk in an annoying way or complain ("on" can be repeated for emphasis)  
They yammered on and on and on.  
yammer on about + to talk in an annoying way about something or complain about ("on"  
can be repeated for emphasis) He just yammered on and on about how horrible the  
waiter was.  
zero in on + discover, pinpoint I think I have zeroed in on what has been causing the  
problem.  
zip around + move quickly from place to place I zipped around town after work  
yesterday.

zone out stop paying attention He zoned out during class.

zonk out fall asleep Jill was so exhausted after taking the TOEFL test that she zonked out before dinner.

zoom in focus You need a telephoto lens to zoom in.

zoom in on + focus on something, pinpoint She zoomed in on his face while taking the picture.