

Phrasal Verbs List

200 common phrasal verbs, with meanings and example sentences

phrasal verb	meaning	example sentence
ask <i>somebody</i> out	invite on a date	Brian asked Judy out to dinner and a movie.
ask around	ask many people the same question	I asked around but nobody has seen my wallet.
add up to <i>something</i>	equal	Your purchases add up to \$205.32.
back <i>something</i> up	reverse	You'll have to back up your car so that I can get out.
back <i>somebody</i> up	support	My wife backed me up over my decision to quit my job.
blow up	explode	The racing car blew up after it crashed into the fence.
blow <i>something</i> up	add air	We have to blow 50 balloons up for the party.
break down	stop functioning (vehicle, machine)	Our car broke down at the side of the highway in the snowstorm.
break down	get upset	The woman broke down when the police told her that her son had died.
break <i>something</i> down	divide into smaller parts	Our teacher broke the final project down into three separate parts.
break in	force entry to a building	Somebody broke in last night and stole our stereo.
break into <i>something</i>	enter forcibly	The firemen had to break into the room to rescue the children.
break <i>something</i> in	wear something a few times so that it doesn't look/feel new	I need to break these shoes in before we run next week.
break in	interrupt	The TV station broke in to report the news of the president's death.
break up	end a relationship	My boyfriend and I broke up before I moved to America.

phrasal verb	meaning	example sentence
break up	start laughing (informal)	The kids just broke up as soon as the clown started talking.
break out	escape	The prisoners broke out of jail when the guards weren't looking.
break out in <i>something</i>	develop a skin condition	I broke out in a rash after our camping trip.
bring <i>somebody</i> down	make unhappy	This sad music is bringing me down.
bring <i>somebody</i> up	raise a child	My grandparents brought me up after my parents died.
bring <i>something</i> up	start talking about a subject	My mother walks out of the room when my father brings up sports.
bring <i>something</i> up	vomit	He drank so much that he brought his dinner up in the toilet.
call around	phone many different places/people	We called around but we weren't able to find the car part we needed.
call <i>somebody</i> back	return a phone call	I called the company back but the offices were closed for the weekend.
call <i>something</i> off	cancel	Jason called the wedding off because he wasn't in love with his fiancé.
call on <i>somebody</i>	ask for an answer or opinion	The professor called on me for question 1.
call on <i>somebody</i>	visit somebody	We called on you last night but you weren't home.
call <i>somebody</i> up	phone	Give me your phone number and I will call you up when we are in town.
calm down	relax after being angry	You are still mad. You need to calm down before you drive the car.
not care for <i>somebody</i> / <i>something</i>	not like (formal)	I don't care for his behaviour.
catch up	get to the same point as somebody else	You'll have to run faster than that if you want to catch up with Marty.
check in	arrive and register at a hotel or airport	We will get the hotel keys when we check in.
check out	leave a hotel	You have to check out of the hotel before 11:00 AM.

phrasal verb	meaning	example sentence
check <i>somebody/ something</i> out	look at carefully, investigate	The company checks out all new employees.
check out <i>somebody/ something</i>	look at (informal)	Check out the crazy hair on that guy!
cheer up	become happier	She cheered up when she heard the good news.
cheer <i>somebody</i> up	make happier	I brought you some flowers to cheer you up.
chip in	help	If everyone chips in we can get the kitchen painted by noon.
clean <i>something</i> up	tidy, clean	Please clean up your bedroom before you go outside.
come across <i>something</i>	find unexpectedly	I came across these old photos when I was tidying the closet.
come apart	separate	The top and bottom come apart if you pull hard enough.
come down with <i>something</i>	become sick	My nephew came down with chicken pox this weekend.
come forward	volunteer for a task or to give evidence	The woman came forward with her husband's finger prints.
come from some place	originate in	The art of origami comes from Asia.
count on <i>somebody/ something</i>	rely on	I am counting on you to make dinner while I am out.
cross <i>something</i> out	draw a line through	Please cross out your old address and write your new one.
cut back on <i>something</i>	consume less	My doctor wants me to cut back on sweets and fatty foods.
cut <i>something</i> down	make something fall to the ground	We had to cut the old tree in our yard down after the storm.
cut in	interrupt	Your father cut in while I was dancing with your uncle.
cut in	pull in too closely in front of another vehicle	The bus driver got angry when that car cut in.

phrasal verb	meaning	example sentence
cut in	start operating (of an engine or electrical device)	The air conditioner cuts in when the temperature gets to 22°C.
cut <i>something</i> off	remove with something sharp	The doctors cut off his leg because it was severely injured.
cut <i>something</i> off	stop providing	The phone company cut off our phone because we didn't pay the bill.
cut <i>somebody</i> off	take out of a will	My grandparents cut my father off when he remarried.
cut <i>something</i> out	remove part of something (usually with scissors and paper)	I cut this ad out of the newspaper.
do <i>somebody/something</i> over	beat up, ransack (BrE, informal)	He's lucky to be alive. His shop was done over by a street gang.
do <i>something</i> over	do again (AmE)	My teacher wants me to do my essay over because she doesn't like my topic.
do away with <i>something</i>	discard	It's time to do away with all of these old tax records.
do <i>something</i> up	fasten, close	Do your coat up before you go outside. It's snowing!
dress up	wear nice clothing	It's a fancy restaurant so we have to dress up.
drop back	move back in a position/group	Andrea dropped back to third place when she fell off her bike.
drop in/by/over	come without an appointment	I might drop in/by/over for tea sometime this week.
drop <i>somebody/something</i> off	take somebody/something somewhere and leave them/it there	I have to drop my sister off at work before I come over.
drop out	quit a class, school etc	I dropped out of Science because it was too difficult.
eat out	eat at a restaurant	I don't feel like cooking tonight. Let's eat out.

phrasal verb	meaning	example sentence
end up	eventually reach/do/decide	We ended up renting a movie instead of going to the theatre.
fall apart	break into pieces	My new dress fell apart in the washing machine.
fall down	fall to the ground	The picture that you hung up last night fell down this morning.
fall out	separate from an interior	The money must have fallen out of my pocket.
fall out	(of hair, teeth) become loose and unattached	His hair started to fall out when he was only 35.
figure <i>something</i> out	understand, find the answer	I need to figure out how to fit the piano and the bookshelf in this room.
fill <i>something</i> in	to write information in blanks, as on a form (BrE)	Please fill in the form with your name, address, and phone number.
fill <i>something</i> out	to write information in blanks, as on a form (AmE)	The form must be filled out in capital letters.
fill <i>something</i> up	fill to the top	I always fill the water jug up when it is empty.
find out	discover	We don't know where he lives. How can we find out?
find <i>something</i> out	discover	We tried to keep the time of the party a secret, but Samantha found it out.
get <i>something</i> across/over	communicate, make understandable	I tried to get my point across/over to the judge but she wouldn't listen.
get along/on	like each other	I was surprised how well my new girlfriend and my sister got along/on.
get around	have mobility	My grandfather can get around fine in his new wheelchair.
get away	go on a vacation	We worked so hard this year that we had to get away for a week.
get away with <i>something</i>	do without being noticed or punished	Jason always gets away with cheating in his maths tests.

phrasal verb	meaning	example sentence
get back	return	We got back from our vacation last week.
get <i>something</i> back	receive something you had before	Liz finally got her Science notes back from my room-mate.
get back at <i>somebody</i>	retaliate, take revenge	My sister got back at me for stealing her shoes. She stole my favourite hat.
get back into <i>something</i>	become interested in something again	I finally got back into my novel and finished it.
get on <i>something</i>	step onto a vehicle	We're going to freeze out here if you don't let us get on the bus.
get over <i>something</i>	recover from an illness, loss, difficulty	I just got over the flu and now my sister has it.
get over <i>something</i>	overcome a problem	The company will have to close if it can't get over the new regulations.
get round to <i>something</i>	finally find time to do (AmE: get around to <i>something</i>)	I don't know when I am going to get round to writing the thank you cards.
get together	meet (usually for social reasons)	Let's get together for a BBQ this weekend.
get up	get out of bed	I got up early today to study for my exam.
get up	stand	You should get up and give the elderly man your seat.
give <i>somebody</i> away	reveal hidden information about somebody	His wife gave him away to the police.
give <i>somebody</i> away	take the bride to the altar	My father gave me away at my wedding.
give <i>something</i> away	ruin a secret	My little sister gave the surprise party away by accident.
give <i>something</i> away	give something to somebody for free	The library was giving away old books on Friday.
give <i>something</i> back	return a borrowed item	I have to give these skates back to Franz before his hockey game.

phrasal verb	meaning	example sentence
give in	reluctantly stop fighting or arguing	My boyfriend didn't want to go to the ballet, but he finally gave in.
give <i>something</i> out	give to many people (usually at no cost)	They were giving out free perfume samples at the department store.
give <i>something</i> up	quit a habit	I am giving up smoking as of January 1st.
give up	stop trying	My maths homework was too difficult so I gave up.
go after <i>somebody</i>	follow somebody	My brother tried to go after the thief in his car.
go after <i>something</i>	try to achieve something	I went after my dream and now I am a published writer.
go against <i>somebody</i>	compete, oppose	We are going against the best soccer team in the city tonight.
go ahead	start, proceed	Please go ahead and eat before the food gets cold.
go back	return to a place	I have to go back home and get my lunch.
go out	leave home to go on a social event	We're going out for dinner tonight.
go out with <i>somebody</i>	date	Jesse has been going out with Luke since they met last winter.
go over <i>something</i>	review	Please go over your answers before you submit your test.
go over	visit somebody nearby	I haven't seen Tina for a long time. I think I'll go over for an hour or two.
go without <i>something</i>	suffer lack or deprivation	When I was young, we went without winter boots.
grow apart	stop being friends over time	My best friend and I grew apart after she changed schools.
grow back	regrow	My roses grew back this summer.
grow into <i>something</i>	grow big enough to fit	This bike is too big for him now, but he should grow into it by next year.

phrasal verb	meaning	example sentence
grow out of <i>something</i>	get too big for	Elizabeth needs a new pair of shoes because she has grown out of her old ones.
grow up	become an adult	When Jack grows up he wants to be a fireman.
hand <i>something</i> down	give something used to somebody else	I handed my old comic books down to my little cousin.
hand <i>something</i> in	submit	I have to hand in my essay by Friday.
hand <i>something</i> out	to distribute to a group of people	We will hand out the invitations at the door.
hand <i>something</i> over	give (usually unwillingly)	The police asked the man to hand over his wallet and his weapons.
hang in	stay positive (informal)	Hang in there. I'm sure you'll find a job very soon.
hang on	wait a short time (informal)	Hang on while I grab my coat and shoes!
hang out	spend time relaxing (informal)	Instead of going to the party we are just going to hang out at my place.
hang up	end a phone call	He didn't say goodbye before he hung up.
hold <i>somebody/ something</i> back	prevent from doing/going	I had to hold my dog back because there was a cat in the park.
hold <i>something</i> back	hide an emotion	Jamie held back his tears at his grandfather's funeral.
hold on	wait a short time	Please hold on while I transfer you to the Sales Department.
hold onto <i>somebody/ something</i>	hold firmly using your hands or arms	Hold onto your hat because it's very windy outside.
hold <i>somebody/ something</i> up	rob	A man in a black mask held the bank up this morning.
keep on doing <i>something</i>	continue doing	Keep on stirring until the liquid comes to a boil.
keep <i>something</i> from <i>somebody</i>	not tell	We kept our relationship from our parents for two years.

phrasal verb	meaning	example sentence
keep <i>somebody/something</i> out	stop from entering	Try to keep the wet dog out of the living room.
keep <i>something</i> up	continue at the same rate	If you keep those results up you will get into a great college.
let <i>somebody</i> down	fail to support or help, disappoint	I need you to be on time. Don't let me down this time.
let <i>somebody</i> in	allow to enter	Can you let the cat in before you go to school?
log in (or on)	sign in (to a website, database etc)	I can't log in to Facebook because I've forgotten my password.
log out (or off)	sign out (of a website, database etc)	If you don't log off somebody could get into your account.
look after <i>somebody/something</i>	take care of	I have to look after my sick grandmother.
look down on <i>somebody</i>	think less of, consider inferior	Ever since we stole that chocolate bar your dad has looked down on me.
look for <i>somebody/something</i>	try to find	I'm looking for a red dress for the wedding.
look forward to <i>something</i>	be excited about the future	I'm looking forward to the Christmas break.
look into <i>something</i>	investigate	We are going to look into the price of snowboards today.
look out	be careful, vigilant, and take notice	Look out! That car's going to hit you!
look out for <i>somebody/something</i>	be especially vigilant for	Don't forget to look out for snakes on the hiking trail.
look <i>something</i> over	check, examine	Can you look over my essay for spelling mistakes?
look <i>something</i> up	search and find information in a reference book or database	We can look her phone number up on the Internet.
look up to <i>somebody</i>	have a lot of respect for	My little sister has always looked up to me.

phrasal verb	meaning	example sentence
make <i>something</i> up	invent, lie about something	Josie made up a story about why we were late.
make up	forgive each other	We were angry last night, but we made up at breakfast.
make <i>somebody</i> up	apply cosmetics to	My sisters made me up for my graduation party.
mix <i>something</i> up	confuse two or more things	I mixed up the twins' names again!
pass away	die	His uncle passed away last night after a long illness.
pass out	faint	It was so hot in the church that an elderly lady passed out.
pass <i>something</i> out	give the same thing to many people	The professor passed the textbooks out before class.
pass <i>something</i> up	decline (usually something good)	I passed up the job because I am afraid of change.
pay <i>somebody</i> back	return owed money	Thanks for buying my ticket. I'll pay you back on Friday.
pay for <i>something</i>	be punished for doing something bad	That bully will pay for being mean to my little brother.
pick <i>something</i> out	choose	I picked out three sweaters for you to try on.
point <i>somebody/something</i> out	indicate with your finger	I'll point my boyfriend out when he runs by.
put <i>something</i> down	put what you are holding on a surface or floor	You can put the groceries down on the kitchen counter.
put <i>somebody</i> down	insult, make somebody feel stupid	The students put the substitute teacher down because his pants were too short.
put <i>something</i> off	postpone	We are putting off our trip until January because of the hurricane.
put <i>something</i> out	extinguish	The neighbours put the fire out before the firemen arrived.

phrasal verb	meaning	example sentence
put <i>something</i> together	assemble	I have to put the crib together before the baby arrives.
put up with <i>somebody/ something</i>	tolerate	I don't think I can put up with three small children in the car.
put <i>something</i> on	put clothing/ accessories on your body	Don't forget to put on your new earrings for the party.
run into <i>somebody/ something</i>	meet unexpectedly	I ran into an old school-friend at the mall.
run over <i>somebody/ something</i>	drive a vehicle over a person or thing	I accidentally ran over your bicycle in the driveway.
run over/ through <i>something</i>	rehearse, review	Let's run over/through these lines one more time before the show.
run away	leave unexpectedly, escape	The child ran away from home and has been missing for three days.
run out	have none left	We ran out of shampoo so I had to wash my hair with soap.
send <i>something</i> back	return (usually by mail)	My letter got sent back to me because I used the wrong stamp.
set <i>something</i> up	arrange, organize	Our boss set a meeting up with the president of the company.
set <i>somebody</i> up	trick, trap	The police set up the car thief by using a hidden camera.
shop around	compare prices	I want to shop around a little before I decide on these boots.
show off	act extra special for people watching (usually boastfully)	He always shows off on his skateboard
sleep over	stay somewhere for the night (informal)	You should sleep over tonight if the weather is too bad to drive home.
sort <i>something</i> out	organize, resolve a problem	We need to sort the bills out before the first of the month.
stick to <i>something</i>	continue doing something, limit yourself to one particular thing	You will lose weight if you stick to the diet.

phrasal verb	meaning	example sentence
switch <i>something</i> off	stop the energy flow, turn off	The light's too bright. Could you switch it off.
switch <i>something</i> on	start the energy flow, turn on	We heard the news as soon as we switched on the car radio.
take after <i>somebody</i>	resemble a family member	I take after my mother. We are both impatient.
take <i>something</i> apart	purposely break into pieces	He took the car brakes apart and found the problem.
take <i>something</i> back	return an item	I have to take our new TV back because it doesn't work.
take off	start to fly	My plane takes off in five minutes.
take <i>something</i> off	remove something (usually clothing)	Take off your socks and shoes and come in the lake!
take <i>something</i> out	remove from a place or thing	Can you take the garbage out to the street for me?
take <i>somebody</i> out	pay for somebody to go somewhere with you	My grandparents took us out for dinner and a movie.
tear <i>something</i> up	rip into pieces	I tore up my ex-boyfriend's letters and gave them back to him.
think back	remember (often + to, sometimes + on)	When I think back on my youth, I wish I had studied harder.
think <i>something</i> over	consider	I'll have to think this job offer over before I make my final decision.
throw <i>something</i> away	dispose of	We threw our old furniture away when we won the lottery.
turn <i>something</i> down	decrease the volume or strength (heat, light etc)	Please turn the TV down while the guests are here.
turn <i>something</i> down	refuse	I turned the job down because I don't want to move.
turn <i>something</i> off	stop the energy flow, switch off	Your mother wants you to turn the TV off and come for dinner.

phrasal verb	meaning	example sentence
turn <i>something</i> on	start the energy, switch on	It's too dark in here. Let's turn some lights on.
turn <i>something</i> up	increase the volume or strength (heat, light etc)	Can you turn the music up? This is my favourite song.
turn up	appear suddenly	Our cat turned up after we put posters up all over the neighbourhood.
try <i>something</i> on	sample clothing	I'm going to try these jeans on, but I don't think they will fit.
try <i>something</i> out	test	I am going to try this new brand of detergent out.
use <i>something</i> up	finish the supply	The kids used all of the toothpaste up so we need to buy some more.
wake up	stop sleeping	We have to wake up early for work on Monday.
warm <i>somebody/something</i> up	increase the temperature	You can warm your feet up in front of the fireplace.
warm up	prepare body for exercise	I always warm up by doing sit-ups before I go for a run.
wear off	fade away	Most of my make-up wore off before I got to the party.
work out	exercise	I work out at the gym three times a week.
work out	be successful	Our plan worked out fine.
work <i>something</i> out	make a calculation	We have to work out the total cost before we buy the house.