



## A SHORT DICTIONARY OF PHRASAL VERBS: Verbs paired with a preposition or adverb

**Separable:** *you may insert a noun or pronoun between these verbs and their prepositions/adverbs.*

**Correct:** Sam passed on the news to Jay.

**Correct:** Sam passed the news on to Jay.

add up - add  
back up - cause to move backwards; support; blow up;  
cause to explode; destroy by explosives  
break down - analyze; list the parts of separately  
break into - go into a house or room forcibly; suddenly;  
begin; bring about - cause to happen  
bring off - accomplish  
bring on - cause  
bring out - publish; emphasize  
bring over - bring  
bring to - revive  
bring up - raise; care for from childhood  
brush out - brush the inside of  
burn down - destroy by burning  
burn up - consume by fire  
buy out - by the other person's share of a business  
buy up - buy the whole supply of  
call off - cancel; order away  
call up - telephone; summon for military service  
calm down - become calm  
carry on - continue  
carry out - fulfill; complete; accomplish; perform  
carry over - carry; continue at another time or place  
cheer up - cause to become cheerful  
chew up - chew thoroughly  
chop up - chop into small pieces  
clean off - clean the surface of  
clean out - clean the inside of  
clean up - clarify; tidy  
clear out - clear the surface of  
clear up - clear the inside of  
close down - close permanently  
close up - close temporarily  
count in - include  
count out - exclude  
count up - calculate; count; add to a total  
cross out - eliminate  
cut off - interrupt; sever; amputate  
cut out - eliminate; delete  
cut down - reduce in quantity

draw up - write; compose (a document)  
dress up - put clothes on; adorn  
dust out - dust the inside of  
eat up - eat completely  
figure out - interpret; understand  
figure up - compute  
fill in - complete (a printed form)  
fill out - complete (a printed form)  
fill up - fill completely (a container)  
find out - discover  
fix up - repair; arrange in a suitable manner  
get across - cause to be understood  
give back - return  
give out - distribute; announce  
give up - surrender something  
hand down - deliver; pronounce formally; leave as an inheritance  
hand over - yield control of  
hang up - suspend  
have on - be dressed in  
have over - entertain someone informally at one's home  
hold off - delay; restrain  
hold up - delay; rob; threaten with a weapon  
keep up - continue; keep the same pace  
leave out - omit  
let down - disappoint  
let out - release from confinement; make larger (in sewing)  
light up - light; illuminate thoroughly  
live down - live in such a way as to cause something to be forgotten  
make over - remake  
move over - move to the side  
pass out - distribute  
pass up - not take advantage of (as an opportunity)  
pass on - transmit  
pay back - repay  
pay off - discharge a debt completely; give someone his final pay  
pick up - come to meet an escort; lift with hands or fingers; learn casually;  
initiate an association publicly  
play down - minimize  
play up - emphasize  
point out - indicate

pull down - pull in a downward direction; raze  
 push across - cause to be understood or accepted  
 put off - postpone  
 put on - dress in; deceive or fool  
 put up - preserve (food); receive as an overnight guest  
 quiet down - be quiet  
 ring up - the telephone  
 rinse off - rinse the surface of  
 rinse out - rinse the inside of  
 rule out - eliminate  
 run down - trace; disparage; hit with a vehicle  
 run off - cause to depart; reproduce mechanically  
 save up - accumulate  
 see through - complete; in spite of difficulties  
 see off - accompany someone to the beginning of a trip  
 send back - send to a place where formerly located  
 send over - send to where someone is  
 set up - arrange  
 show off - exhibit ostentatiously  
 shut off - cause to cease functioning  
 slow up - cause to move more slowly  
 spell out - enumerate; state in detail  
 stand up - fail to keep an appointment with  
 sweep out - sweep the inside of  
 take back - return; retract a statement  
 take down - remove from a high position; write from dictation  
 take in - understood; fool; deceive; make smaller (in sewing)  
 take over - take; assume command of  
 tear down - destroy  
 tear up - tear into small pieces  
 tell off - scold; reprimand  
 think over - consider  
 think through - consider from beginning to end  
 think up - create; invent  
 throw away - discard  
 throw over - reject  
 tie up - tie securely or tight  
 tire out - cause to be exhausted  
 touch up - repair  
 try on - put on a garment to verify the fit  
 try out - test  
 turn down - refuse; lower the volume  
 turn out - produce; force into exile, extinguish (a light)  
 wash off - wash the surface of  
 wash out - wash the inside of  
 wear out - use until no longer usable; tire greatly  
 wind up - finish, tighten the spring of a watch or machine  
 wipe off - wipe the surface of  
 wipe out - wipe the inside of; decimate  
 work out - solve  
 write down - record

write out - write down every detail; spell out  
 write up - compose; prepare (a document)

**Inseparable:** *you cannot separate these verbs from their prepositions/adverbs with any words.*

*Correct:* Becky is reliable; you can count on her.  
*Incorrect:* You can count her on.

back out of - desert; fail to keep a promise  
 bear down on - lean on; browbeat  
 bear on - have to do with  
 bear up under - endure  
 break in on - interrupt  
 break into - interrupt  
 call for - come to get; require  
 care for - like; guard; supervise; maintain  
 carry on with - continue  
 catch up with - cover the distance between oneself and  
 check up on - examine; verify  
 come across - find accidentally  
 come along with - accompany; make progress  
 come by - find accidentally  
 come down with - become ill with  
 come out with - utter; produce  
 come up with - utter; produce  
 count on - rely on  
 cut in on - interrupt  
 disagree with - cause illness or discomfort to  
 do away with - abolish  
 do without - deprive oneself of  
 drop in at/on - visit casually without planning  
 drop out of - leave; quit  
 face up to - acknowledge  
 fall behind in - lag; not progress at required pace  
 fall back on - use for emergency purpose  
 fall out with - quarrel with  
 fill in for - substitute for  
 get ahead of - surpass; beat  
 get around - evade; avoid  
 get away with - do without being caught or punished  
 get by with - manage with a minimum of effort  
 get down to - become serious about; consider  
 get in - enter (a vehicle)  
 get off - descend from; leave  
 get on - enter (a vehicle); mount  
 get on with - proceed with  
 get through with - terminate, finish  
 go back on - desert; fail to keep (a promise)  
 go for - like a great deal  
 go in for - be interested in; participate in  
 go on with - continue  
 go over - review

go with - harmonize with; look pleasing together  
 go without - abstain from  
 hang around - remain idly in the vicinity of  
 hear from - receive a communication from  
 hear of - learn about (sometimes accidentally)  
 hit on - discover accidentally  
 hold on to - grasp tightly  
 hold out against - resist  
 keep at - persevere at  
 keep to - persist in; continue  
 keep up with - maintain the pace of  
 lie down on - evade; fail to do  
 live on - support or sustain oneself by means of  
 live up to - maintain the standard demanded of  
 look after - take care of  
 look back on - remember nostalgically  
 look down on - feel superior to  
 look forward to - anticipate  
 look up to - respect; admire  
 make up for - compensate for  
 pass on - transmit  
 pick on - tease; bully  
 play up to - flatter for personal advantage  
 put up with - tolerate  
 read up on - search out information on  
 run against - compete against in an election  
 run away with - leave; escape from  
 run for - campaign for  
 see about - consider; arrange  
 see to - arrange; supervise  
 settle on - decide on; choose  
 stand for - represent; permit  
 stand up for - support; demand  
 stand up to - resist  
 stick to - persist  
 stick up for - support; defend  
 take after - resemble  
 talk back to - answer impolitely  
 talk over - discuss  
 tell on - report misbehavior to authority  
 touch on - mention briefly  
 turn into - become  
 wait on - serve  
 wait up for - not go to bed while waiting for  
 watch out for - be careful for

**Intransitive:** *these phrasal verbs cannot take a direct object. They may be separated by a noun or pronoun.*

**Correct:** We are having dinner. Come over.

**Incorrect:** Come over dinner.

**Correct:** Come over for dinner.

*("for" makes "dinner" an indirect object)*

back down - retreat from a position in an argument  
 back out - desert; fail to keep a promise  
 back up - move backwards  
 bear up - endure  
 blow in - drop in to visit unexpectedly  
 blow over - pass without doing harm  
 blow up - explode; lose one's temper  
 call up - telephone  
 calm down - become calm  
 carry on - continue as before; misbehave  
 catch on - understand  
 catch up - cover the distance between oneself and a moving goal  
 check up - investigate  
 check out - leave; pay one's bill  
 cheer up - become cheerful  
 clear out - leave  
 clear up - become clear  
 close down - close permanently  
 close up - close temporarily  
 came about - happen  
 come along - accompany; make progress  
 come back - return  
 come by - visit someone  
 come out - appear; make a social debut  
 come over - come to someone's house, to where someone is  
 come through - succeed  
 come to - regain consciousness  
 cut in - interrupt  
 die away - fade; diminish  
 die down - fade; diminish  
 die off/out - disappear; become extinct  
 dress up - don fancy or unusual clothes  
 drive back - return by car  
 drop in - visit someone casually without planning  
 drop out - abandon some organized activity; leave; quit  
 drop over - visit someone casually  
 fall behind - not progress at required pace  
 fall off - decrease; lose weight  
 fall through - fail; not be accomplished  
 fill in - substitute  
 find out - learn  
 fly back - return by air  
 fly over - fly to where someone is

get ahead - make progress  
get along - have a friendly relationship  
get around - circulate; move about  
get away - escape  
get by - manage; either just barely or with a minimum of effort  
get in - enter  
get off - descend from leave  
get on - enter (a vehicle); mount (a horse, etc.)  
get on/along - progress; be compatible  
get up - rise  
get through - finish  
give out - become exhausted  
give up - surrender; fail to finish  
go back - return  
go off - explode  
go on - happen; continue  
go out - stop burning; leave one's residence  
go over - go; succeed  
grow up - mature  
hang around - remain idly; dawdle  
hang up - replace a telephone receive on its hook  
hold on - grasp tightly; persevere; wait while telephoning  
hold out - continue to resist; persevere; persist  
keep on - continue  
keep up - maintain the required pace or standard; continue  
let up - diminish in intensity  
lie down - recline  
look on - be a spectator  
make out - progress; succeed  
make up - become reconciled  
move over - move to the side  
pan out - turn out well; be successful  
pass out - become unconscious  
pass on - die  
pick up - grow; increase  
pull in - arrive  
pull out - depart  
pull through - survive (barely)  
ride over - ride to where someone is  
run away - escape; leave; leave quickly without permission  
run down - slowly lose power so as to stop functioning  
run off - depart running; drain  
sell out - sell the ownership or responsibility  
settle up - pay one's bills or debts  
show off - boast by words or actions  
show up - arrive; appear unexpectedly  
shut up - stop talking  
slow up - reduce speed  
stand by - wait; be prepared to assist  
stand up - stand; rise from sitting; last; endure

stay over - remain at someone's house overnight or longer  
step aside - move to one side  
take off - leave the ground  
take over - assume command  
talk back - answer impolitely  
throw up - vomit  
turn around - turn so that one is facing another direction  
turn in - go to bed  
turn out - succeed; come; appear, as at a public meeting  
turn up - arrive; be found unexpectedly  
wait up - remain awake in anticipation  
wake up - awaken  
walk back - return on foot to where one was  
walk over - walk to where someone is  
wash out - fade or disappear from washing  
watch out - be careful  
wear off - fade; disappear through use or time  
wear out - become unusable through use; become used up  
work out - be successful