

Phrasal verbs database

ask after	ask for news about: <i>Tony was asking after you and I told him you were fine.</i>	check in	register at a hotel or an airport: <i>Give me your passport and I'll go to the desk to check in.</i>
back down	stop demanding sth, stop saying that you will do sth: <i>It seemed as if the man was going to start a fight with the manager, but he eventually backed down.</i>	check out	leave a hotel: <i>All guests must check out by midday.</i>
back out	decide not to do sth you agreed to do: <i>But you promised to help me this weekend – you can't back out now!</i>	check out	investigate: <i>Let's check out that new website Bill was talking about.</i>
bank on	depend on sth happening: <i>I'm really banking on getting that job at the supermarket.</i>	clear up	become brighter and better (for weather): <i>If it doesn't clear up, then I'm afraid we may have to cancel the race.</i>
break down	stop working (for a machine, etc): <i>That's the third time our car's broken down this month!</i>	close down	stop operating (for companies): <i>What is the government doing about the fact that dozens of local businesses are closing down every month?</i>
break out	escape (from prison): <i>Reports are coming in that five prisoners have broken out of Pentonwood Prison.</i>	come (a)round	happen again (for regular events): <i>Christmas soon comes around, doesn't it?</i>
break out	start suddenly (for a war, fire, etc): <i>It seems that the fire broke out in the kitchen.</i>	come (a)round (to)	be persuaded to change your mind (about): <i>That's a good point. Maybe I'm coming round to your way of thinking.</i>
bring forward	change the date/time of an event so it happens earlier: <i>Because of recent events, the meeting has been brought forward to the 29th.</i>	come across	find sth or meet sb by chance: <i>I came across some old photographs while I was clearing out my desk.</i>
bring in	introduce a new law or system: <i>The government are planning to bring in a law banning hunting.</i>	come by	get sth, especially sth that is hard to get: <i>How did you come by that painting?</i>
bring on	cause (an illness, etc): <i>Being out in the fog always brings on my asthma.</i>	come down with	start to suffer from a minor illness: <i>After being out in the storm, Alice came down with a cold.</i>
bring out	produce and start to sell a new product: <i>Did you hear that REM have just brought out a new album?</i>	come forward	offer help or information: <i>After the police appealed for help from the public, a number of people came forward with useful information.</i>
bring up	look after a child until he or she becomes an adult: <i>Both Sarah's parents died when she was young and she was brought up by her grandmother.</i>	come into	inherit: <i>At the age of eighteen, Roger suddenly came into a fortune.</i>
bring up	start discussing a subject: <i>I hate to bring it up, but do you think that money you owe me?</i>	come off	succeed: <i>Well, I think it's a stupid plan and I'll be amazed if it comes off.</i>
call for	require, need: <i>The manager said that the situation called for some difficult decisions.</i>	come on	develop or make progress: <i>Your piano playing is really coming on, isn't it?</i>
call for	demand: <i>The farmers are calling for assistance from the government.</i>	come on	start to be broadcast: <i>That quiz show you wanted to watch comes on in half an hour.</i>
call off	cancel: <i>I hope they don't call the concert off because of this rain.</i>	come out	be published: <i>I can't wait until the next Harry Potter book comes out.</i>
carry on	continue: <i>You carry on painting this wall and I'll go and get some more brushes.</i>	come round/to	become conscious: <i>After a worrying few minutes, Sean started to come round and opened his eyes.</i>
carry out	perform an experiment, etc: <i>The investigators have been carrying out tests on the pieces of plane recovered after the accident.</i>	come up with	think of (an idea, a plan, etc): <i>Who do you think came up with the idea of the bicycle?</i>
catch on	become popular or fashionable: <i>You green hair is great, but I don't think it'll catch on!</i>	count on	rely on, trust: <i>Don't worry – you can count on me to help if you need it.</i>
catch on	understand: <i>Greg is really clever and always catches on in class very quickly.</i>	cross out	draw a line through sth written: <i>Danny realised that he'd made a spelling mistake and crossed the word out.</i>
catch up with	reach the same point/level as: <i>I ran a little faster to try to catch up with the others.</i>	cut down (on)	do less of (smoking, etc): <i>If you can't give up smoking, you could at least try to cut down.</i>
chase after	follow sb/sth quickly in order to catch them: <i>The shopkeeper ran out of the shop and chased after the shoplifter as he ran down the street.</i>	cut down (on)	reduce an amount of: <i>My doctor has advised me to cut down on fat.</i>
		cut off	make a place difficult or impossible to enter, leave or communicate with: <i>The snow meant that the village was cut off for over a month.</i>

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cut off	stop the supply of sth: <i>When we move, don't forget to tell them to cut the water and electricity off.</i>	fill in	add information in the spaces on a document: <i>Just fill in this form and then hand it in at reception.</i>
cut off	disconnect: <i>I was talking to Gordon on the phone when we were suddenly cut off.</i>	find out	discover information, etc.: <i>I've always wanted to find out more about the ancient Egyptians.</i>
dawn on	if something dawns on you, you realise it for the first time: <i>It suddenly dawned on me that Sharon loved Oscar and that was why she was behaving so strangely.</i>	flick through	turn and look at the pages of a magazine, etc quickly: <i>I was flicking through a magazine when, suddenly, I saw a photograph of the man who had stolen the money!</i>
deal with	handle, cope with: <i>My job mostly involves dealing with complaints from members of the public.</i>	get (sb) down	make sb feel sad or lose hope: <i>This rainy weather really gets me down.</i>
die down	become less noisy, powerful or active: <i>The actor waited for the laughter to die down before continuing.</i>	get along (with)	have a good relationship (with): <i>I don't know why, but I don't really get along with my girlfriend's parents.</i>
do away with	get rid of: <i>I think they should do away with double yellow lines and just let people park where they want to.</i>	get at	try to express: <i>The man pointed at his shoulder, but I couldn't understand what he was getting at.</i>
do up	repair, paint or improve: <i>You should have your house done up before you sell it.</i>	get away with	escape punishment for: <i>The police promised that the thieves would not be allowed to get away with the robbery.</i>
do without	live without (sth you can't afford): <i>If there's one thing I could never do without, it's my mobile phone.</i>	get back	return from a place: <i>When did you get back from holiday?</i>
draw up	create (plans, etc): <i>The architect started to draw up the plans for the new house.</i>	get by	manage to survive (financially): <i>I don't make a huge amount of money, but we get by.</i>
dress up	put on fancy or unusual clothes: <i>I used to love dressing up in my mum's clothes when I was a little girl.</i>	get on (with)	have a good relationship (with): <i>I get on with most of my teachers – except Mr Mills!</i>
drop in (on)	visit unexpectedly: <i>I hope you don't mind me dropping in on you like this, only I was just passing and I thought we could have a quick cup of coffee.</i>	get on for	be almost a particular time, number, age, etc: <i>I'm not sure what time it is, but it must be getting on for midnight.</i>
drop off	let someone get out of a vehicle: <i>Let's get the taxi driver to drop us off outside the supermarket.</i>	get on with	continue doing: <i>Jill had lunch and then got on with revising for her exams.</i>
drop off	fall asleep: <i>After a long day at work, Henry dropped off in front of the TV.</i>	get over	recover from (an illness, etc): <i>It took Mary a long time to get over her illness.</i>
drop out (of)	leave school, etc before you have finished a course: <i>Dave's parents were very disappointed when he dropped out of university.</i>	get round to	start (after planning to do sth for a long time): <i>When do you think you'll get round to fixing the bathroom door?</i>
drown out	prevent a sound from being heard by making a louder noise: <i>The shouts from the audience drowned the politician out and no one could hear a word he was saying.</i>	get through	use all of, finish: <i>I can't believe we've got through ten pints of milk in a week!</i>
face up to	accept sth and try to deal with it: <i>You need to face up to your responsibilities.</i>	get up to	do; do sth you should not do: <i>My brother and I used to get up to lots of things our parents didn't know about when we were young.</i>
fall for	fall in love with: <i>Romeo really fell for Juliet when he first kissed her.</i>	give away	give free of charge: <i>Did you hear that they're giving away free tickets to the concert tonight?</i>
fall for	believe (a lie/trick/joke, etc): <i>I told Sam that we had the day off school, and he fell for it!</i>	give away	reveal sth you are trying to hide: <i>I know you haven't seen the film yet so I won't give the ending away.</i>
fall out (with)	have an argument with and stop being friends: <i>Pamela hasn't spoken to her father since they fell out eight years ago.</i>	give in	stop making an effort to achieve sth difficult: <i>I couldn't finish the crossword, so in the end I gave in and had a look at the answers.</i>
feel up to	feel well enough to do: <i>I know I should go to the gym today, but I don't really feel up to it.</i>	give off	produce sth such as heat or a smell: <i>The fridge gets hot next to the cooker because the cooker gives off a lot of heat.</i>
		give up	stop doing sth you do regularly: <i>I gave the piano up about a year ago and started playing the guitar.</i>

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go away	go on holiday: <i>We go away every summer, and this year we're thinking about Russia.</i>	join in	participate, take part: <i>You'll feel much better if you join in, instead of just watching everyone else have fun.</i>
go down (as)	be remembered for having done something: <i>Churchill went down as a great war-time leader.</i>	keep on	continue doing sth: <i>If you keep on being late for work, you're going to be in trouble with the manager.</i>
go in for	enter (a competition, etc): <i>You should go in for the talent contest they're holding at the youth club this weekend.</i>	keep up with	stay at the same point/level as: <i>Gordon walks so fast that no one can keep up with him!</i>
go in for	like: <i>I could never go in for windsurfing. It's just not my kind of sport.</i>	knock out	defeat and remove from a competition: <i>Steve Wilson, the British number one, has been knocked out of the US Open tennis championship by Peter Collingwood.</i>
go into	deal with sth in detail: <i>The head teacher asked me to go to the school to talk about Alexander's behaviour, but she wouldn't go into it on the phone.</i>	knock out	make unconscious: <i>When I fell off my bike, my head hit the ground and I was completely knocked out for about five minutes!</i>
go off	be no longer fresh: <i>Milk goes off very quickly if you don't put it in the fridge.</i>	leave out	not include: <i>If you don't like cinnamon, then simply leave it out and add sugar to the apples instead.</i>
go off	explode; be fired (for a gun, usually accidentally): <i>A bomb went off outside the Syrian embassy in London today, injuring five people.</i>	let down	disappoint: <i>Voters feel really let down by the government.</i>
go off	stop liking: <i>Will used to really like jazz music, but he's gone off it lately.</i>	let off	give little or no punishment: <i>I can't believe that the teacher let Ben off with just a warning!</i>
go on	continue happening or doing sth: <i>Even though everyone said they had heard it, Carol went on telling the joke.</i>	let off	make a bomb, etc explode: <i>Be very careful if you're going to let off those fireworks.</i>
go on	do sth after doing sth else: <i>He started by criticising me, and then went on to offer me promotion!</i>	line up	get/put into lines: <i>The soldiers all lined up, ready to be inspected by the officer.</i>
go over	repeat or think about again in order to understand completely: <i>I'd like to begin by going over what we did in last week's lesson.</i>	live on	use as a source of money: <i>I wanted the job, but I wouldn't be able to live on the salary.</i>
go/come round	go/come to sb's house to visit them: <i>We were wondering if you'd like to come round for dinner one night this week.</i>	look after	take care of: <i>Could you look after my cat while I'm on holiday?</i>
grow on	if sth grows on you, you start to like it more: <i>I didn't like reality TV at first, but it really grows on you after a while.</i>	look down on	think that you are better than: <i>It annoys me the way Vera looks down on other people.</i>
grow out of	develop from: <i>My ambition to be a computer programmer grew out of playing computer games.</i>	look into	investigate: <i>Police are looking into the theft.</i>
grow out of	become too big for: <i>Tracy's grown out of her shoes so we'll have to buy her some new ones.</i>	look out	be careful: <i>Look out! You're going to fall!</i>
grow up	become older: <i>I'd like to be a bus driver when I grow up.</i>	look round	examine (a place): <i>We looked round the house but decided that it was too expensive for us.</i>
hand down	give something valuable to your children or grandchildren, usually when you die: <i>This necklace was handed down to me by my grandmother.</i>	look up to	admire and respect: <i>I've always looked up to my elder brother because he never gives up.</i>
hand in	give to a person in authority: <i>I took the wallet I had found and handed it in at the police station.</i>	look up	try to find information in a book or list, etc: <i>Just a second - I'll look Harry's number up in the phone book.</i>
hand out	give things to people in a group: <i>Johnnie, please hand these out to everyone in the class.</i>	make off	escape: <i>It seems that the burglars made off without being seen by dressing as postmen.</i>
hold up	rob while threatening violence: <i>Two men held up a security van today and then escaped on motorbikes.</i>	make out	pretend that something is true: <i>Neil tried to make out that he'd won the lottery, but we all knew it wasn't true.</i>
hold up	delay: <i>I was held up in a traffic jam.</i>	make out	see, hear or understand sb or sth with difficulty: <i>Someone was waving at me in the distance but I couldn't make out who it was.</i>
		make out	write all the necessary information on a cheque, etc: <i>Could you please make the cheque out to Eurofinance Limited?</i>

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make up	become friends again after an argument: <i>I had an argument with my best friend, but we soon made up.</i>	put forward	suggest: <i>A number of suggestions were put forward during the meeting but none of them were very useful.</i>
make up	invent an explanation, excuse, etc: <i>As I got to school, I knew that I would have to make up an excuse for being late.</i>	put off	delay, postpone: <i>Wendy told me that the wedding has been put off until next January.</i>
make up	create a story, poem, etc: <i>Leo made up a poem about the English teacher.</i>	put off	make sb not want to do or not like sth: <i>I've never tasted blue cheese because the smell has always put me off.</i>
make up for	provide sth good, so that sth bad seems less important: <i>When the concert was cancelled, my dad took us to the cinema to make up for it.</i>	put on	gain (weight): <i>I put on so much weight over Christmas!</i>
make/head for	go in the direction of: <i>It started to rain so we made for a nearby farmhouse.</i>	put on	hold, perform (a show, play, etc): <i>I read that they're putting Macbeth on at the Luvvies Theatre.</i>
name after	give sb or sth the same name as sb or sth else: <i>My dad named his boat after his grandmother.</i>	put out	make something stop burning: <i>I'm afraid you'll have to put your cigarette out before you enter the building.</i>
narrow down	reduce the number of possibilities: <i>I still haven't decided which university to go to, but I've narrowed it down to about four.</i>	put through	connect by phone: <i>I'll just put you through to the supervisor, Mrs Edwards.</i>
pass away	die: <i>I was sorry to hear that your grandfather passed away.</i>	put up with	tolerate: <i>You have to put up with a lot in this job, but it's worth it in the end.</i>
pass out	suddenly become unconscious: <i>It was so hot that several members of the crowd passed out and had to be taken to hospital.</i>	run into	meet by chance: <i>You'll never guess who I ran into in town this afternoon!</i>
pick on	keep treating someone badly or unfairly: <i>It's not fair when some of the bigger boys pick on the little ones.</i>	run out of	not have any left: <i>I'm afraid we've run out of time, so I'd like to thank my guests and I hope we'll see you next week on 'Discussion Time'.</i>
pick up	stop in a vehicle to give someone a lift: <i>I'll pick you up from outside your house and we'll drive into town.</i>	run over	hit with a car: <i>Andrea was run over outside her house and she's been taken to hospital.</i>
plug in	connect to the electricity supply: <i>I couldn't understand why the vacuum cleaner wasn't working and then I realised I hadn't plugged it in.</i>	sail through	do something or deal with something very easily: <i>With a little bit of revision, you should sail through the exam.</i>
pop in(to)	visit quickly or for a short time: <i>Mum popped into the cake shop to get something for after dinner.</i>	save up (for)	save money little by little (for a specific purpose): <i>I'm saving up for my holiday in India.</i>
pull in	stop by the side of the road in a car: <i>Could you just pull in for a second so that I can buy some chewing gum?</i>	see off	go to a train station, etc to see someone leave: <i>We all went to the bus station to see Grandma off.</i>
pull out	stop being involved in an activity: <i>The other company pulled out of the deal at the last minute.</i>	see through	recognise that sth is not true and not be tricked by it: <i>The guard saw through the woman's disguise and immediately arrested her.</i>
pull through	survive (a serious illness, etc): <i>The doctors were really worried about Simon, but in the end he pulled through.</i>	see through (to)	continue (or help to continue) to the end of sth unpleasant or difficult: <i>I'm not enjoying my computer course any more, but I'll see it through to the end.</i>
put by	save an amount of money for the future: <i>I try to put a little by each month for emergencies.</i>	see to	deal with: <i>Could you answer the door while I see to the baby?</i>
put down	criticise, make someone feel stupid: <i>I wish you wouldn't keep putting me down in front of other people!</i>	set in	start and be likely to continue for a while (for rain, winter, an economic depression, etc): <i>Many birds fly south before winter sets in.</i>
put down	kill (a sick/old animal): <i>We used to have a horse, but he fell and broke his leg so he had to be put down.</i>	set out	explain, describe or arrange sth in a clear and detailed way: <i>I liked your composition, but I think you need to set your ideas out more clearly by using paragraphs.</i>
put down to	suggest that sth is the result of: <i>The minister put the recent economic problems down to the rise in oil prices.</i>	set out	start working on sth in order to achieve an aim: <i>In the beginning, we set out to build a successful company, but we never expected to become millionaires.</i>

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set out/off	start a journey: <i>As the sun rose, we took down our tents and set out across the desert.</i>	take on	start to employ: <i>There's so much work to do in the office that maybe we should take on a secretary.</i>
set to	start doing sth in a determined or enthusiastic way: <i>We only had a few hours to get the party ready so we set to work quickly.</i>	take on	accept (work or responsibility): <i>I haven't got time to take on any more projects at the moment.</i>
set up	start (a business, organisation, etc): <i>You're such a good cook that I think you should set up a restaurant.</i>	take over	take control of (a business, etc): <i>When Mr Barker retired, his daughter took over the family business.</i>
settle down	become calm after being upset, etc: <i>When his mum left him at school on the first day, Charlie was quite upset, but he soon settled down and started to enjoy himself.</i>	take to	begin to like: <i>The class took to Mrs Openshaw straight away.</i>
settle down	stay in one place or get married and live quietly: <i>She spent her twenties travelling round the world and then settled down in a quiet village in Sussex.</i>	take to	start (as a habit): <i>I've taken to going for a five-mile run every morning.</i>
show (a)round	take sb on a tour of a place: <i>Let me show you round the garden.</i>	take up	start (a hobby, sport, etc): <i>Why don't you take up a hobby, like collecting something?</i>
show off	try to attract people's attention and make them admire you (usually used negatively): <i>My sister thinks she's a good singer and she's always showing off when people come to visit.</i>	take up	fill an amount of space/time: <i>Studying takes up most of my time at the moment.</i>
slow down	decrease speed: <i>The train started to slow down as it approached the station.</i>	tear down	destroy or remove (for buildings, statues, etc): <i>That beautiful old building was torn down to make way for a new supermarket.</i>
speed up	increase speed: <i>I realised that I might not have enough time to finish the exam so I started to speed up.</i>	tear up	rip into pieces: <i>Robin suddenly grabbed the letter out of my hand and tore it up.</i>
stand for	represent (for abbreviations and symbols): <i>BBC stands for 'British Broadcasting Corporation'.</i>	think over	consider: <i>When I asked Theresa to marry me, she said she'd have to think it over.</i>
stand for	put up with: <i>I wouldn't stand for it if someone spoke that rudely to me.</i>	throw away	get rid of, discard: <i>The CD wouldn't play any more, so I threw it away.</i>
stand in for	do sb's job for them while they are not available: <i>Mr Howard will be standing in for Mrs O'Connell while she's ill.</i>	try on	put on (a piece of clothing) to see how it looks and whether it fits: <i>Debra took the skirt into the changing room to try it on.</i>
stand out	be easy to see because of being different: <i>Molly has bright red hair, so she always stands out in a crowd!</i>	try out	experiment with: <i>England need to try out a few new players before the World Cup starts.</i>
stand up for	support in an argument or fight: <i>I know that my best friend will always stand up for me.</i>	turn down	not accept (an offer, request, etc): <i>I applied to join the Air Force, but they turned me down because of my eyesight.</i>
take aback	surprise (usually in passive voice): <i>We were all taken aback by the news.</i>	turn into	change into sth different: <i>It started as the holiday of a lifetime but soon turned into a nightmare.</i>
take after	look or behave like an older relative: <i>George really takes after his grandfather, doesn't he?</i>	turn off	stop a machine working: <i>Would you please turn that stereo off and get your homework done?</i>
take down	write down what someone says: <i>Could I just take down your details?</i>	turn out	develop in a particular way or have a particular result: <i>I was late for the interview, but it turned out all right in the end and I got the job.</i>
take in	trick sb into believing sth that is not true: <i>The man at the door claimed to be a policeman, but the old woman wasn't taken in.</i>	turn over	turn a page so that the other side is towards you: <i>If you all turn over, you'll see a table that shows how sales have gone this year.</i>
take off	become successful or popular very fast: <i>The iPod has really taken off over the last couple of years.</i>	turn round	go back in the opposite direction: <i>I realised I'd forgotten my phone so I turned round and went back to get it.</i>
take off	leave the ground: <i>As the plane took off, I looked down at the houses below us.</i>	turn up	appear unexpectedly or without making a firm arrangement: <i>Victor hadn't been invited to the party but he just turned up anyway.</i>
take off	remove (a piece of clothing): <i>Carl took off his coat and started to warm himself by the fire.</i>	wear off	stop being effective (for a drug, etc): <i>My arm started to hurt again as the effects of the painkiller wore off.</i>
		wear out	become old and unusable: <i>I had to get a new pair of trainers because my old pair had worn out.</i>
		work out	find the solution to a problem, etc: <i>If you look at the context, maybe you can work out what the word means.</i>