

Phrasal verbs

Many verbs (called phrasal verbs), when followed by various prepositions or adverbs, acquire an idiomatic sense.

For example

- He backed up (supported) his friend's claim.
- The present disturbances will soon blow over (pass off).
- The police produced evidence to bear out (substantiate) the charge of murder.
- You must not build your hopes upon (rely upon) his promises.
- The matter has been cleared up (explained).
- I readily closed with (accepted) his offer.
- He is ready to dispose of (sell) his car for Rs.1,500.
- Rust has eaten away (corroded) the plate.
- They fixed upon (chose) him to do the work.
- My good behaviour so far gained on (won the favour of) the emperor that I began to conceive hopes of liberty.
- The habit of chewing tobacco has been growing upon (is having stronger and stronger hold over) him.
- Please hear me out (i.e. hear me to the end).
- I have hit upon (found) a good plan to get rid of him.
- About an hour ago I saw a fellow hanging about (loitering about) our bungalow.
- These events led up to (culminated in) the establishment of a republic.
- During excavations one of the workmen lighted upon (chanced to find, discovered) a gold idol.
- During her long illness she often longed for (desired) death.
- I could not prevail on (persuade, induce) him to attend the meeting.
- For years I could not shake off (get rid of) my malaria.
- I threatened to show him up (expose him).
- All eyes turned to him because he was the only person who could stave off (prevent, avert) the impending war.
- He is sticking out for (persists in demanding) better terms.
- I must think the matter over (i.e., consider it).
- Train up (educate) a child in the way he should go; and when he is old he will not depart from it.
- That fellow trumped up (concocted, fabricated) a story.
- He seems to be well off (in comfortable circumstances).

BEAR

- Satish bore away (won) many prizes at the school sports.
- The new Sultan has been able to bear down (overthrow, crush) all opposition.
- His evidence bears out (confirms, corroborates), the evidence of the first witness.
- In his misfortune God gave him strength to bear up (to keep up spirits, not to despair).
- A religious hope bears up (supports) a man in his trials.
- His evidence did not bear upon (was not relevant to) the inquiry.
- I trust you will bear with (have patience with, show forbearance to) me a few minutes more.

BREAK

- He broke down (failed) in the middle of his speech.
- He broke off (stopped suddenly) in the middle of his story.
- I gave him no cause to break with (quarrel with) me.
- The burglars broke into (entered by force) the house.

BRING

- His folly has brought about (caused) his ruin.
- Idleness and luxury bring forth (produce, cause) poverty and want.
- He brought forward (adduced) several cogent arguments in support of his scheme.
- That building brings in (yields as rent) Rs.700 a month.
- Our teacher often tells us a story to bring out (show) the meaning of a lesson.
- The publishers have recently brought out (published) a cheap edition of their new dictionary.
- He found great difficulty in bringing her round (converting her) to his views.
- She brought up (reared) the orphan as her own child.

CALL

- His master called for (demanded) an explanation of his conduct.
- New responsibilities often call out (draw forth) virtues and abilities unsuspected before.
- Call in (summon, send for) a doctor immediately.
- He called on me (paid me a brief visit) yesterday.
- The old man could not call up (recollect) past events.

CARRY

- He agreed to carry out (execute) my orders.
- His passion carried him away (i.e., deprived him of self control).
- His son carried on (managed) his business in his absence.
- Many persons were carried off (killed) by plague.

CAST

- The ship was cast away (wrecked) on the coast of Africa.
- He was much cast down (depressed) by his loss.
- Some snakes cast off (throw away) their outer skins seasonally.

COME

- How did these things come about (happen)?
- How did you come by (get) this purse ?
- When does the Convocation come off (take place)?
- At last the truth has come out (transpired).
- The taxes come to (amount to) a large sum.
- The question came up (was mooted or raised for discussion) before the Municipal Corporation last week.
- I expect he will come round (recover) within a week.
- I hope he will come round (agree) to our views.

CRY

- Men of dissolute lives cry down (depreciate) religion, because they would not be under the restraints of it.
- He cried out against (protested against) such injustice.
- That young author is cried up (extolled) by his friends.

CUT

- He was cut off (died) in the prime of life.
- You must cut down (reduce) your expenditure.
- He is cut out for (specially fitted to be) a sailor.
- His wife's death cut him up (affected him, distressed him) terribly.

DO

- I am done for (ruined).
- Having walked twenty miles, he is quite done up (fatigued, exhausted).
- She has done up (decorated, furnished) her apartment beautifully.

FALL

- At last the rioters fell back (retreated, yielded).
- At my friend's tea party I fell in with (met accidentally) a strange fellow.
- The measure falls in with (happens to meet) the popular demand.
- The scheme has fallen through (failed) for want of support.
- I am told the two brothers have fallen out (quarrelled).
- It is said that the standard of efficiency in public service has recently fallen off (deteriorated).
- In the second school term the attendance fell off (diminished).

GET

- His friends expected that he would get off (escape) with a fine.
- It is hard to get on with (agree or live sociably with) a suspicious man.
- The thief got away (escaped) with my cash box.
- I can't get out (remove) this stain.
- The revolt of the tribal chiefs has been got under (subdued).
- The dog tried to get at (attack) me.
- He has got through (passed) his examination.
- They soon got the fire under (under control) by pouring buckets of water over it.
- You were lucky to get out of (escape from) his clutches.

GIVE

- We are credibly informed that the murderer has given himself up (surrendered himself) to the police.
- The doctors have given him up (i.e. have no hope of his recovery).
- Soon after it was given forth (published) and believed by many, that the King was dead.
- The fire gave off (emitted) a dense smoke.
- The strikers seem determined and are not likely to give in (submit, yield).
- It was given out (published, proclaimed) that he was a bankrupt.
- The horses gave out (were exhausted) at the next milestone.
- The rope gave way (broke, snapped) while the workmen were hauling up the iron pillar.
- He would not listen to me at first but at last he gave way (yielded).
- The Governor gave away (distributed, presented) the prizes.
- Give over (abandon) this foolish attempt.
- In his cross examination he ultimately gave himself away (betrayed himself).

GO

- You cannot always go by (judge from) appearances.
- It is a good rule to go by (to be guided by) the exact procedure.
- He promised to go into (examine, investigate) the matter.
- Have you anything to go upon (i.e. any foundation for your statement)?
- We have no data to go upon (on which to base our conclusions).
- The story won't go down (be believed).
- The concept went off well (was a success).
- The auditor went over (examined) the balance sheet.
- The poor woman has gone through (suffered) much.
- I must first go through (examine) the accounts.

HOLD

- The rebels held out (offered resistance) for about a month.
- He holds out (gives) no promise of future prospects.
- They were held up (stopped) on the highway and robbed by bandits.
- The subject is held over (deferred, postponed) till the next meeting.

KEEP

- A few boys were kept in (confined) after school hours.
- I was kept in (confined to the house) by a bad cold.
- They kept up (carried on) a long conversation.
- Little disputes and quarrels are chiefly kept up (maintained) by those who have nothing else to do.
- He is trying his best to keep up (maintain) the reputation of his family.
- The rubber syndicate keeps up (maintains) the price.
- She kept on (continued) talking.
- I shall keep back (conceal) nothing from you.

KNOCK

- He has knocked about (wandered about) the world a great deal.
- The dressing table was knocked down (sold at an auction) for fifty rupees.
- We were greatly knocked up (exhausted) after our steep climb.

LAY

- The rebels laid down (surrendered) their arms.
- He had laid out (invested) a large sum in railway shares.
- Foolish people, who do not lay out (spend) their money carefully, soon come to grief.
- He is laid up (confined to his bed) with fever.
- He resolved to lay by (save for future needs) a part of his income.

LET

- I was let into (made acquainted with) her secret.
- This being his first offence he was let off (punished leniently) with a fine.

LOOK

- His uncle looks after (takes care of) him.
- He looks down upon (despises) his poor cousins.
- Look up (search for) the word in the dictionary.
- The old man is looking forward to (expecting with pleasure) the visit of his grandchildren.
- I will look into (investigate) the matter.
- I look on (regard) him as my son.
- Some look to (rely on) legislation to hasten the progress of social reforms.
- Look to (be careful about) your manners.
- Prices of piece goods are looking up (rising).
- Things are looking up (improving).
- His friends look up to (respect) him.
- He will not look at (i.e. will reject) your offer.

MAKE

- Contentment makes for (conduces to) happiness.
- He made over (presented, gave in charity) his bungalow to the Islam Orphanage.
- I cannot make out (discover) the meaning of this verse.
- I cannot make out (read, decipher) his handwriting.
- You have failed to make out (prove) your case.
- Some time ago the two brothers quarrelled but they have now made it up (become reconciled).

PASS

- He generally passed by (overlooked) the faults of his subordinates.
- The crew of the boat passed through (underwent) terrible sufferings.
- He passes for (is regarded as) a great Sanskritist.

PICK

- The Committee picked out (selected) the best players for the team.
- He lost twenty pounds in sickness but is now picking up (regaining or recovering health).

PULL

- Unless we pull together (co-operate, work together in harmony) we cannot succeed.
- My cousin pulled through (passed with difficulty) the examination.
- The doctor says the patient will pull through (recover from his illness).
- It is far easier to pull down (demolish) than to build up.
- He was pulled up (scolded, rebuked) by the President.

PUT

- He puts on (assumes) an air of dignity.
- Please put out (extinguish) the light.
- He was put out (vexed, annoyed) when I refused his request for a loan.
- The plaintiff was put out (disconcerted) when the suit was dismissed.
- He tried to put me off (evade me, satisfy me) with promises.
- He has put in (made, sent in) a claim for compensation.

- While travelling I had to put up with (endure) a good deal of discomfort.
- I cannot put up with (tolerate) his insolence.
- They put him up to (incited him to) mischief.
- I am sorry to put you to (give you) so much trouble.
- He put off (postponed) his departure for a week.
- The measure was put through (passed) without opposition.

RUN

- On account of overwork he is run down (enfeebled).
- He always runs down (disparages) his rivals.
- The lease of our premises has run out (expired, come to an end).
- He has run through (squandered away) his fortune.
- The tailor's bill has run up to (amounted to) a large amount.
- He has run into (incurred) debt.
- While turning the corner I ran against (chanced to meet) an old friend.
- Recently my expenses have run up (increased) considerably.
- The cistern is running over (overflowing).

SEE

- I saw through (detected) the trick.
- It is hard to see into (discern) his motive.
- His friends were present at the station to see him off (witness his departure).

SET

- The High Court set aside (annulled) the decree of the lower court.
- He immediately set about (took steps towards) organizing the department.
- He set off (started) for Peshawar early this morning.
- The frame sets off the picture (i.e., enhances its beauty by contrast).
- He has set up (started business) as a banker.
- I have enough capital to set me up (establish myself) in trade.
- He hired a palatial bungalow and set up for (pretended to be) a millionaire.
- I was obliged to set him down (snub him).
- You may set down (charge) this loss to me.
- Who set you on (instigated you) to do it.
- These seats are set apart (reserved) for ladies.
- In his speech on prohibition, he set forth (explained, made known his views) at length.
- The robbers set upon (attacked) the defenceless travellers.
- Winter in England sets in (begins) about December.

SPEAK

- In Bombay there is no free library to speak of (worth mentioning).
- I was determined to speak out (express my opinion freely).

STAND

- They are determined to stand up for (vindicate, maintain) their rights.
- Let this matter stand over (be deferred or postponed) for the present.

- It is hard but I think I can stand it out (endure it to the end without yielding).
- He is always standing up for (championing the cause of) the weak and oppressed.
- We shall be formidable if we stand by (support) one another.

STRIKE

- He is struck down with (attacked by) paralysis.
- The Medical Council struck off (removed) his name from the register of medical practitioners.
- While we were planning a family picnic, my sister struck in (interrupted) with the suggestion that we invite our neighbour's children as well.

TAKE

- The piano takes up (occupies) too much room.
- It would take up (occupy) too much time to tell you the whole story.
- He takes after (resembles) his father.
- At present I am reading the essays of Bacon but it is sometimes.
- It is difficult to take in (comprehend, understand) his meaning.
- Recently he has taken to (become addicted to) opium eating.
- Finally, he was talked into saying (convinced) yes to the proposal.

TALK

- We talked over (discussed) the matter for an hour.
- I hope to talk him over (convince him by talking) to our view.

TELL

- I am afraid your antecedents will tell against you (i.e. prove unfavourable to you).
- The strain is telling upon him (affecting his health).

THROW

- My advice was thrown away (wasted) upon him, because he ignored it.
- The bill was thrown out (rejected) by the Assembly.
- In disgust he threw up (resigned) his appointment.
- When he became rich he threw over (abandoned or deserted) all his old friends.

TURN

- The factory turns out (produces, manufactures) 20,000 lbs of cloth a day.
- If he is lazy, why don't you turn him off (dismiss him) ?
- He turned out (proved) to be a scholar.
- His very friends turned against (became hostile to) him.
- Who can say what will turn up (happen) next ?
- He promised to come but he never turned up (appeared).

WORK

- We tempted him with many promises but nothing would work on (influence) him.
- He worked out (solved) the problem in a few minutes.
- He is sure to work up (excite) the mob.
- He worked upon (influenced) the ignorant villagers.