

500 MOST POPULAR PHRASAL VERBS

MEANINGS AND EXAMPLES

FREE PREVIEW

LEARZING

A

ACCOUNT FOR

Meaning 1: To explain.

Example 1: He was unable to account for the error.

Meaning 2: To be the cause of something.

Example 2: These new features account for the smartphone's higher price.

Meaning 3: To make up or form a part of something.

Example 3: Women account for only 25 percent of our employees.

ACT AS

Meaning: To do the job of a particular kind of person or thing.

Example: You speak German - will you act as interpreter?

Example: He acts as head of department when his boss is away.

ACT FOR

Meaning: To represent someone.

Example: If you don't have a lawyer, the state will appoint one to act for you.

Example: In a democracy, the people elect representatives to act for them in parliament.

ACT ON

Meaning: To do something because you have been given information, advice, or orders.

Example: I should act on my doctor's advice and try to eat less.

Example: Police say they acted on information received.

ACT OUT

Meaning 1: To express your thoughts or emotions through your words or actions.

Example 1: Children's negative feelings often act out in bad behavior.

Meaning 2: To represent in action, especially on stage.

Example 2: The actors were acting out the story of the birth of Jesus.

ACT UP

Meaning 1: To behave badly. (About children)

Example: The kids have been acting up again.

Example: I could hear Jonathan acting up downstairs.

Meaning 2: To function improperly. (About a machine or part of the body)

Example: My car always acts up in cold weather.

Example: I hope my back doesn't start acting up again.

Example: My computer's acting up - I think I might have a virus.

ADD UP

Meaning 1: To add two or more numbers in order to find the total amount.

Example: Could you add up these amounts and let me know the total?

Example: Jane has a good head for figures. She can add up really quickly, and she always gets the answer right.

Meaning 2: To increase gradually until there is a large amount.

Example: The changes in air quality are small, but after a while they add up and affect people's health.

Example: When you're feeding a family of six the bills soon add up.

Meaning 3: To seem reasonable or consistent.

Example: Well, I could be wrong, but it all seems to add up.

Example: Jack claimed he was at home at the time of the murder, but police said his story didn't add up.

ADVISE OF

Meaning: To inform someone of something.

Example: A policemen advised me of my rights and then he arrested me.

Example: Please advise us of any change of address or contact details.

ALLOW FOR

Meaning: To consider something when you are planning something.

Example: You should allow for delays when planning a journey.

Example: All these factors must be allowed for.

ANSWER BACK

Meaning: To reply rudely to someone in authority.

Example: Her mother was shocked when she started answering her back.

Example: Don't answer me back, young man!

ANSWER FOR

Meaning: To be responsible for something bad.

Example: The prime minister will have to answer for all the bad decisions he has made.

Example: I expect parents to answer for their children's behaviour.

ARRIVE AT

Meaning: To reach an agreement about something.

Example: We argued about it for hours and eventually arrived at a decision.

Example: They spent time arriving at a solution on the correct software.

ASK AFTER

Meaning: To ask for news about someone.

Example: I met Clara and she asked after you.

Example: Amy asked after Kathleen's health.

ASK FOR

Meaning 1: To try to obtain by requesting.

Example: If you don't know where to go, ask for directions.

Example: There's someone at the door asking for dad.

Meaning 2: To provoke a negative reaction.

Example: The boy is asking for trouble playing with a dog like that - he might be bitten by it.

Example: Anyone who drives while they're drunk is just asking for it.

ASK OUT

Meaning: To invite someone for a date.

Example: Finally, he asked her out.

Example: She's asked Steve out to the cinema this evening.

ASK OVER

Meaning: To invite people to your house.

Example: We have asked some friends over for barbecue on Saturday.

Example: Bob has asked us over for drinks.

ASSOCIATE WITH

Meaning: To spend time with someone.

Example: If Terry associates with those criminals, he'll be sent back to jail again.

Example: I don't want my children associating with drug addicts and alcoholics.

ATTEND TO

Meaning 1: To deal with something or someone.

Example: Nurses tried to attend to the worst injured soldiers first.

Example: We have some urgent business to attend to.

Meaning 2: To serve a customer in a shop, restaurant, etc.

Example: (British English) Are you being attended to, sir?

AUCTION OFF

Meaning: To sell something in an auction.

Example: In order to pay his debts, my friend had to auction off his collection of paintings.

Example: Some of the land was auctioned off last year.

B

BAIL OUT

Meaning 1: To help out someone or something that's in serious trouble, especially financial trouble.

Example: Just when we thought we might have to close the business, my uncle bailed us out with a loan.

Example: Some local businesses have offered to bail out the museum.

Meaning 2: (American English) To escape from a plane, using a parachute, esp. because the aircraft is about to have an accident.

Example: The pilot barely had time to bail out.

Example: The pilot bailed out and parachuted into the sea.

Meaning 3: To pay for someone's release from jail.

Example: His father got a lawyer and bailed him out.

Example: How much will it cost to bail her out?

BANK ON

Meaning: To rely on somebody or something.

Example: I've really been banking on a holiday bonus this year.

Example: They're banking on Robert to finish the job on time.

BASE ON

Meaning 1: To use particular ideas or facts to make a decision or develop something.

Example: Doctors usually base the decisions they make on test results and a patient's symptoms.

Example: Prices are based on two people sharing a room.

Meaning 2: To use something as source material.

Example: He bases his designs on Roman mosaics.

Example: The film is based on a true story.

BEAR ON

Meaning: To be connected or related to something.

Example: Do you have any information bearing on his disappearance?

Example: These are matters that bear on the welfare of the community.

BEAR OUT

Meaning: To support the truth of something.

Example: Scientific evidence bears out the claim that vitamin C helps the body's immune system.

Example: The facts don't bear out your fears.

BEAT UP

Meaning 1: To attack violently.

Example: He threatened to beat me up if I didn't give him my wallet.

Example: Her boyfriend got drunk and beat her up.

Meaning 2: To blame or criticize yourself or someone else.

Example: It's time you stopped beating yourself up over this.

Example: If you do your best and you lose, you can't beat yourself up about it.

BEEF UP

Meaning: To make or become greater or stronger.

Example: The government decided to beef up police force to after a big protest.

Example: The company has plans to beef up its production.

BEND DOWN

Meaning: To lower the top half of your body.

Example: She bent down to pluck rice.

Example: Bend down as you go into the cave, or you'll bang your head.