



Verbs That Take Prepositions

Phrasal verbs, also known as two-word verbs, are verbs that require specific prepositions. Because preposition following the verb affects the verb's meaning, writers must use the proper verb-preposition combination in order to communicate clearly. Saying "Jane believed John" means something entirely different than saying "Jane believed **in** John." Using the wrong preposition leads to confusing or awkward prose. Saying "Jane believed **to** John," for example, does not make sense. Below are *only some* of the most common verbs that take prepositions. The UWC has excellent resources for a more comprehensive list of verbs that take prepositions. Here are a few of our favorites: [A Dictionary of Modern Usage](#) (Bryan A. Garner), [The American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms](#) (Christine Ammer), and [NTC's Dictionary of Phrasal Verbs and Other Idiomatic Verbal Phrases](#) (Richard A. Spears).

account for

Nothing could account for his depression.

accuse. . . of

They accused him of robbing a bank.

agree on

No one could agree on anything.

agree with

I agree with the man who is speaking.

allude to

It is not polite to allude to someone's disability.

apologize for

He did apologize for running away.

apologize to

The leader did not want to apologize to the people.

apply for

Every June college graduates apply for jobs.

approve of

We do not approve of his behavior.

argue with

It does little good to argue with a judge.

argue about

A judge does not want you to argue about anything unless you have a good case.

arrive at

He arrived at a conclusion quickly.

ask for

Children like to ask their parents for gifts, but they especially like to ask for special toys.

become of

John has disappeared; I do not know what has become of him.

believe in

Do you believe in magic?

belong to

Whom does this pet belong to? It belongs to her.

blame . . . for

Don't blame me for your problems!

blame . . . on

Don't blame your problems on me!

borrow from

He has borrowed enough money from the bank.

care for

She enjoys the time she can care for her nieces and nephews.

come from

She came from Honduras with her family.

compare with

How does a small car compare with a large car?

complain about

He is always complaining about something.

compliment on

Compliment them on their performance.

congratulate on

They deserve to be congratulated on (or for) their good work.

consent to

The parents refused to consent to their son's marriage.

consist of

The solution consists of some strange chemicals.

convince of

I am convinced of his good intentions.

decide between

I cannot decide between the two.

delight in

My child delights in watching the ducks.

depend on/upon

Do not depend upon other people.

detract from

Such behavior detracts from your beauty.

dream about/of

We are dreaming about going to Paris.

excuse. . . for

The teacher excused the child for his behavior.

explain... to

It is difficult to explain a problem to people who don't care.

happen to

Oh, I just happened to be in the neighborhood.

hear of

Have you ever heard of something like that?

hear about

Did you hear about Mary? She's got a new job.

hear from

Did you get a letter from him? I never hear from him.

insist on

The decorator insists on blue drapes.

invite . . . to

It would be a good idea to invite him to the party.

laugh about

We laugh about the crazy things we used to do.

laugh at

It's not nice to laugh at someone.

laugh with

When a person laughs, it's good to laugh with him.

listen for

I'm listening for the mail carrier; she should be here by now.

listen to

Listen to me when I'm speaking to you.

look at

It is not polite to look at someone for a long time.

look for

My child is lost! We must look for him.

object to

Most people do not object to helping someone in need.

prefer . . . to

I prefer red cars to blue cars

plan on

Why don't you plan on staying at our place?

provide . . . with

My parents have provided me with enough money to last for one month.

recover from

It often takes a long time to recover from a serious illness.

refer to

If you are referring to me, you should say so.

rely on

I can always rely on my strength.

remind . . . of

you remind me of a bear.

search for

We searched for the lost child for three hours, but we couldn't find her.

spend . . . on

Anna spent all of her money on a new car.

substitute for

When I was absent, William substituted for me.

talk to

When I am talking to you, I expect you to listen to me.

talk about

It is not nice to talk about people when they are not present.

thank . . . for

Thank you for the nice gift.

vote for

You should vote for my candidate.

wait for

Please wait for me! I'll be ready in a moment.

wait on

No, I will not bring you breakfast in bed. I won't wait on you like that.

work for

We should all work for the good of mankind. Mukesh works for that big company.

worry about

Mothers always worry about their children, and so do fathers.

wrestle with

We spent three hours wrestling with that problem, but we could not solve it.