



# 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.