**47 phrasal verbs and their one-word substitutions**

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The following is a list of commonly deployed [phrasal verbs](https://www.scribbr.com/academic-writing/whats-a-phrasal-verb/) that find one use or another in academic texts. These (and others) can be acceptably used in academic texts. Along with these examples, however, are a number of one-word substitutions to illustrate that in each case the phrasal verb can be easily replaced.

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As you look through the substitutions, be aware that [phrasal verbs](https://www.scribbr.com/academic-writing/getting-your-phrasal-verbs-right/) (like other verbs) often have more than one definition and more than one context of proper use.

This flexibility means that although these substitutions work for the examples given, and although the examples are common uses of phrasal verbs, a suggested replacement will not cover every possible use of its phrasal verb.

**Separable**

*Note: If it uses a pronoun, the separable phrasal verb must be separated (e.g. “He* ***added up*** *the number” but “He* ***added*** *it* ***up****”).*

| **Phrasal verbs** | **Example uses** | **Definitions and Replacements** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Add up | James **added up** the number of affirmative responses. | calculate |
| Buy out | The large company **bought out** the smaller. | purchase (someone’s assets) |
| Buy up | The business’s assets were **bought up** in the auction. | purchase (all of something) |
| Call off | The order was to **call off** the strike immediately. | cancel |
| Carry on | The meeting will **carry on** in your absence. | continue |
| Carry out | Sam **carried out** the research because Jimmy couldn’t find the time. | execute |
| Cut out | Because the subsection was not directly relevant to the rest of the paper, Randal had to **cut** it **out**. | excise |
| Find out | The purpose of the literature review is **find out** what has been said on the topic. | discover |
| Get (it) over with *(must be split)* | Isa and the other participants were happy to **get** the laborious questionnaire **over with**. | complete |
| Get across | Lars’s paper has too many grammatical mistakes, meaning he couldn’t **get** his message **across**. | communicate |
| Give up | The outnumbered forces would not **give up**. | surrender |
| Hold up | When deadlines approach, a student cannot let anything **hold up** the completion of an assignment. | delay |
| Leave out | The witness **left out** a number of important details. | omit |
| Make up | We asked participants to **make up** a scenario in which they would be content. | fabricate |
| Make out | In the darkness he could not **make out** the size of the camp. | see |
| Pass up | We could not **pass up** this opportunity to collaborate. | forgo |
| Pass on | The common flu can be **passed on** through saliva. | transmit |
| Pass out | Our research assistants **passed out** four-hundred surveys to a random sample of shoppers. | distribute |
| Pick up | This study **picks** Dekker’s research **up** where he left it. | resume |
| Point out | Hendriks (2010) **points out** that such a study might be useful. | explain |
| Set up | The equipment’s sensitivity meant we had to **set** it **up** with utmost care. | arrange |
| Turn down | Regretfully, the board must **turn down** a number of applicants every year. | reject |
| Use up | The campers were thirsty after they **used up** the last of the water. | exhaust |

**Inseparable**

| **Phrasal verbs** | **Example uses** | **Definitions and Replacements** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Back out of | Several subjects **backed out of** their treatment. | abandon |
| Bear on | Foucault’s writings still **bear on** contemporary thought about prison. | influence |
| Catch up with | It will take some time for our newer coal mines to **catch up with** our older ones. | equal |
| Call on | **I call on** the work of other contemporary thinkers. | utilize |
| Call for | The act of aggression **called for** immediate response. | necessitate |
| Count on | The question is, should a citizen be able to count on its government to preserve free access to clean water? | rely on |
| Cut down on | Practiced writers **cut down on** unnecessary adverbs and adjectives. | reduce |
| Come up with | Hannah had to **come up with** a way to isolate the variable. | invent |
| Fall apart | The board of directors **fell apart**. | disintegrate |
| Get away | Several of them sought to **get away** from the cold winter night. | escape |
| Get along with | They commonly exaggerated the degree to which the indigenous tribes would not **get along with** one another. | be friendly with |
| Give in | After a long pause for thought, he **gave in** to the demands. | yield |
| Go on | Bakker **went on** to win a prestigious award. | continue |
| Hold on to | Sven tried everything, but could not **hold on to** his youth. | keep |
| Hold out | Bram would **hold out** until morning when the supplies arrived. | wait |
| Hold out on | Napoleon would not tolerate his generals **holding out on** him. | hide (something) |
| Look into | We have a hypothesis, but we must **look into** other possible explanations for the phenomenon. | research |
| Look out for | Among 50 respondents who regularly walk home from work in the middle of the night, 45 indicated **looking out for** criminals. | safeguard against |
| Make sure of | To print the name of interviewee, an author must **make sure of** the interviewee’s consent. | ensure |
| Pick up on | The data show various relationships that we had not **picked up on**. | notice |
| Put up with | The country will **put up with** a certain number of economic sanctions. | tolerate |
| See to | The custodian would **see to** the security of the building. | arrange |
| Take after | This new state **takes after** its regional neighbours. | resemble |
| Touch on | At the beginning of his speech, Finn found it necessary to **touch on** the circumstances of the event. | mention |