

burn¹ S2 W3

/bɜːn \$ bɜːrn/

verb

(*past tense and past participle* **burnt** /bɜːnt \$ bɜːrnt/ or **burned**)

1 PRODUCE HEAT **produce flames and heat** [intransitive]

a)

if a fire burns, it produces heat and flames:

There was a fire burning in the fireplace.

An average household candle will burn for about six hours.

b)

if something is burning, it is producing flames and being damaged or destroyed by fire:

Parts of the building are still burning.

2 DESTROY WITH FIRE **destroy something with fire** [transitive] to destroy or damage something with fire:

I burnt all his old letters.

Cars were burned and shops were looted during the rioting.

*The Grand Hotel had **burnt to the ground**.*

Make sure the iron isn't too hot or you'll burn the cloth.

*He dropped his cigarette and **burnt a hole in the carpet**.*

3 **injure/kill somebody with fire** [transitive] to hurt yourself or someone else with fire or something hot:

*I **burned my hand** on the oven door.*

*She was **badly burned** in a road accident.*

*Sixteen passengers were **burned to death** (= died in a fire) .*

*A family of five were **burned alive** in their home last night (= died in a fire) .*

*Heretics were **burnt at the stake** (= burnt in a fire as a punishment) .*

4 **sun** [intransitive and transitive] if the sun burns your skin, or if your skin burns, it becomes red and painful from the heat of the sun → **sunburn**:

I burn quite easily.

*Don't forget you can still **get burnt** when you're swimming or when it's cloudy.*

*Her face and neck were quite **badly burned**.*

- 5 | food** [intransitive and transitive] to spoil food by cooking it for too long, or to become spoiled in this way:

I'm afraid I've burnt the pizza.

burn something to a crisp/cinder

The meat was burned to a crisp.

- 6 | chemicals** [transitive] DAMAGE to damage or destroy something by a chemical action:

Quite a lot of household chemicals can burn your skin.

- 7 | fuel** [intransitive and transitive] USE SOMETHING if you burn a FUEL, or if it burns, it is used to produce power, heat, light etc:

The boiler burns oil to produce heat.

greenhouse gases caused by the burning of fossil fuels

- 8 | fat/energy** [transitive] if you burn fat or CALORIES, you use up energy stored in your body by being physically active:

*Taking a brisk walk every morning is a great way to burn calories.
a fat-burning exercise*

- 9 | SHINE | light** [intransitive] if a light or lamp burns, it shines or produces light:

A lamp was burning in the kitchen window.

The hall light was still burning.

- 10 | feel hot and painful** [intransitive and transitive] FEEL HOT/COLD/TIRED ETC if a part of your body burns, or if something burns it, it feels unpleasantly hot:

The whisky burned my throat as it went down.

My eyes were burning from the smoke.

- 11 | BE EMBARRASSED | face/cheeks** [intransitive] if your face or cheeks are burning, they feel hot because you are embarrassed or upset:

I could feel my cheeks burning as I spoke.

- 12 | CD** [transitive] if you burn a CD or DVD, you record music, images, or

other information onto it using special computer equipment

13 **be burning with rage/desire etc** STRONG FEELING OR BELIEF

to feel a particular emotion very strongly:

She was burning with curiosity.

14 **be burning to do something** WANT

to want to do or find out something very much:

I was burning to know how he had got on in New York.

15 **be/get burned** (informal)

a)

to be emotionally hurt by someone or something:

Take things slowly – don't get burned again.

b)

to lose a lot of money:

The company got badly burned in the dot.com collapse.

16 **burn your fingers/get your fingers burned** (informal) HARM/BE BAD FOR

to suffer the unpleasant results of something that you have done:

I tried a dating agency once, but got my fingers badly burnt – I'll never do it again.

17 **burn a hole in your pocket** SPEND MONEY

if money burns a hole in your pocket, you want to spend it as soon as you can

18 **burn your bridges/boats** (informal) DECIDE

to do something with the result that you will not be able to return to a previous situation again, even if you want to:

I'm really tempted to take up that job offer in Washington, but I don't want to burn my boats with this company.

19 **burn the candle at both ends** (informal) WORK HARD

to get very tired by doing things until very late at night and getting up early in the mornings

20 **burn the midnight oil** (informal) WORK HARD

to work or study until late at night

21 **it burns somebody that/how etc** (AmE) ANGRY

used to say that something makes someone feel angry or jealous:

It really burns me the way they treat us.

22 GO FAST **go fast** [intransitive always + adverb/preposition] (informal) FAST/QUICK to travel very fast:

burn along/up etc

a sports car burning up the motorway

COLLOCATIONS – Meaning 3

adverbs

be badly/ severely burned *His face had been badly burned in the fire.*

be burned alive *The animals were burned alive when a farm building caught fire.*

phrases

be burned to death *Anyone inside the truck would have been burned to death.*

be burned at the stake (= burned in a fire as a punishment) *In those days witches were burned at the stake.*

THESAURUS

to be burning

burn to produce heat and flames: *The fire was still burning. | A pile of branches was burning in the yard.*

be on fire if a building, car, piece of clothing etc is on fire, it is burning and being damaged: *Before long, the neighbouring houses were on fire too.*

be alight (especially written) if something is alight, it is burning: *By the time the fire engines got there, the whole building was already alight. | The candle was still alight.*

be ablaze (especially written) if something is ablaze, it is burning with a lot of flames, so that it is seriously damaged: *Twelve hours after the bombing raid, many parts of the city were still ablaze. | The two hundred tonnes of straw were now ablaze and firefighters struggled to get the fire under control.*

blaze to burn very brightly with a lot of flames and heat: *A big log fire was blazing in the fireplace.*

smoulder (BrE), / **smolder** (AmE) / 'sməʊldə \$ 'smouldər
 to burn slowly and continuously, producing smoke but no flames: *A cigarette smouldered in the ashtray. | The fire in the chemical factory was so intense that it was still smouldering a week later.*

flicker if a fire or flame flickers, it burns with an unsteady light that appears and disappears quickly: *A welcoming fire flickered in the grate. | Inside the shrine candles flicker next to statues of saints.*

to start burning

catch fire to start burning accidentally: *We were worried the house would catch fire. | Two farm workers died when a barn caught fire yesterday.*

burst into flames to suddenly start burning and produce a lot of flames that cause serious damage: *The plane crashed into the side of the mountain and burst into flames.*

ignite / ɪg'naɪt / (technical) if a chemical or gas ignites, it starts burning: *The compound ignites at 450 degrees Celsius. | Scientists could not explain why the gas had suddenly ignited.*

to burn something

burn to damage or destroy something with fire or heat: *She lit a fire and burned his letters one by one.*

set fire to something (also **set something on fire**) to make something start burning so that it gets damaged: *Vandals set fire to an empty warehouse. | Teresa wondered if the burning log might set fire to the curtains. | The Vikings attacked villages along the coast and set them on fire. | Sparks from the fireplace could easily set the curtains on fire.*

scorch to damage the surface of something by burning it so that a dark mark is left on it: *Having the iron on a very high heat can scorch the fabric. | The heater was left on all night and it scorched the wall.*

singe / sɪndʒ / to damage hair, wool, paper etc by burning it slightly so that the ends or edges are burnt: *The flames were hot*

enough to singe your eyebrows.

scald to burn your skin with very hot liquid or steam: *The coffee was so hot it nearly scalded his tongue. | It's easy to knock a pan off the stove and scald yourself. | He was scalded by steam escaping from the broken pipe.*

ignite (technical) to make something start to burn, especially something that burns easily such as a gas or chemical: *The gas is ignited by an electrical spark. | It appears he threw away a lit cigarette which ignited the petrol spilt on the ground.*

to make something stop burning

put out to make something such as a fire, cigarette, or candle stop burning: *It took firefighters four hours to put out the blaze. | She threw sand on the fire to put it out. | I put out my cigarette and went back into the house.*

extinguish /ɪk'stɪŋgwɪʃ/ (formal) to make something such as a fire, cigarette, or candle stop burning: *He managed to extinguish the flames with his coat. | Customers who smoke will be asked to extinguish their cigarettes or leave the premises.*

blow out to make a flame or fire stop burning by blowing on it: *He blew out the candle and went to sleep. | The wind blew out the fire.*

burn away

phrasal verb

BURN if something burns away or is burned away, it is destroyed by fire:

burn something ↔ away

All her hair had been burnt away.

burn down

phrasal verb

1 BURN if a building burns down or is burned down, it is destroyed by fire:

She was worried that the house might burn down while they were away.

burn something ↔ down

The old town hall was burnt down in the 1970s.

2 BURNLESS if a fire burns down, the flames become weaker and it produces less heat

burn something ↔ off

phrasal verb

1 BURN to remove something by burning it:

You can use a blowlamp to burn off the old paint.

2 EXERCISE to use energy that is stored in your body by doing physical exercise:

I decided to go for a run to try and burn off a few calories.

burn out

phrasal verb

1 FIRESTOP HAPPENING if a fire burns out or burns itself out, it stops burning because there is no coal, wood etc left:

*He left the fire to **burn itself out**.*

2 be burnt out BURN

if a building or vehicle is burnt out, the inside of it is destroyed by fire:

The hotel was completely burnt out. Only the walls remained.

We passed several burnt out cars.

3 burn something ↔ out

to remove something by burning it:

The cancer cells are burnt out using a laser beam.

4 TIRED to work so hard over a period of time that you become unable to continue working because you are tired, ill, or unable to think of any new ideas:

It's a high-pressure job and you could burn out young.

be/get burnt out

He was almost burnt out by the time he was 21.

burn yourself out

She's in danger of burning herself out.

→ BURNOUT (1)

- 5** ENGINE DAMAGE if an engine or electric wire burns out or is burnt out, it stops working because it has been damaged by getting too hot:

The plugs are wired so that if one burns out, the others will still start the engine.

burn something ↔ out

I think you've burnt out one of the gaskets.

- 6** AIRCRAFT if a ROCKET or JET burns out, it stops working because all its FUEL has been used

→ BURNOUT (2)

burn up

phrasal verb

- 1** DESTROY BURN if something burns up or is burnt up, it is completely destroyed by fire or heat:

The satellite will burn up as it re-enters the Earth's atmosphere.

burn something ↔ up

Most of the woodland has now been burnt up.

- 2** **burn something ↔ up** (informal)

to use a lot of something in a careless way:

Most household appliances burn up loads of electricity.

He just burns up money!

- 3** BE HOT **be burning up** (spoken) HOT

if someone is burning up, they are very hot, usually because they are ill:

Feel his forehead – he's burning up.

- 4** MAKE SOMEBODY ANGRY **burn somebody up** ANGRY (AmE) (informal)

to make someone very angry:

The way he treats her really burns me up.

- 5** EXERCISE **burn something ↔ up**

to use energy that is stored in your body, by being physically active:

As we get older, our body becomes less efficient at burning up calories.

Language: Old English

Origin: *byrnan* 'to burn' and *bærnan* 'to cause to burn'

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English

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