

back·wards ^{S3}

/ˈbækwədz \$ -wərdz/

(also **backward** /-wəd \$ -wərd/ *AmE*) **adverb**

1 in the direction that is behind you

OPP

Hannah took a step backward.

She pushed me and I fell backwards into the chair.

2 BACK/BACKWARDS ORDER/SEQUENCE towards the beginning or the past

OPP

Count backwards from 100.

3 BACK/BACKWARDS with the back part in front:

Your T-shirt is on backwards.

4 PROGRESS towards a worse state

OPP

The new measures are seen by some as a major step backwards.

5 backwards and forwards ORDER/SEQUENCE

first in one direction and then in the opposite direction, usually many times:

Kip stumbled backwards and forwards before falling down.

6 bend/lean over backwards (to do something) TRY TO DO OR GET SOMETHING
to try as hard as possible to help or please someone:

City officials bent over backwards to help downtown businesses.

7 know something backwards (*BrE*), **know something backwards and forwards** (*AmE*) KNOW SOMETHING

to know something very well or perfectly:

She practiced her part until she knew it backwards and forwards.

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English

© Pearson Education Limited 2009, 2011, 2015