

# beat<sup>1</sup>

S2 W2

/bɪt/

verb

(*past tense* **beat**, *past participle* **beaten** /'bi:tən/)

**1** | **competition/election** [transitive] BEAT/DEFEAT to get the most points, votes etc in a game, race, or competition

**SYN** defeat

*Brazil were beaten 2–1.*

*Labour easily beat the Conservatives in the last election.*

**beat somebody at/in something**

*I beat him more often at pool than he beats me.*

**beat somebody hollow (BrE), beat the pants off somebody (AmE)**  
(= defeat them easily)

**2** | **hit** [transitive] HIT to hit someone or something many times with your hand, a stick etc:

*photographs of rioters beating a policeman*

*He was questioned and beaten.*

*The woman had been **beaten to death** by her husband.*

*Two prisoners were **beaten unconscious**.*

**beat somebody black and blue** (= hit someone until it makes marks on their body)

**beat the living daylights out of somebody** (= beat someone very hard)

**3** | **hit against** [intransitive always + adverb/preposition] HIT to hit against something many times or continuously:

**beat on/against/at etc**

*Waves beat against the cliffs.*

*rain beating on the windows*

*Sid beat on the door with his hand.*

- 4 **do better** BETTER [transitive] to do something better, faster etc than what was best before:

**beat a record/score etc**

*The record set by Kierson in '84 has yet to be beaten.*

*The company's profits are unlikely to beat last year's £10 million.*

- 5 **be better** [transitive not in progressive] (especially spoken) BETTER to be much better and more enjoyable than something else:

*Fresh milk beats powdered milk any time.*

**beat doing something**

*'Well,' said Culley, 'it beats going to the office.'*

*You can't beat swimming as a good all-body exercise.*

*Nothing beats homemade cake.*

**you can't beat something (for something)**

*For excitement, you just can't beat college basketball.*

- 6 **beat** [intransitive and transitive] MIX to mix things together quickly with a fork or special kitchen machine:

*Beat the eggs, then add the milk.*

**beat something in**

*Gradually beat in the sugar.*

**beat something together**

*Beat the butter and sugar together until fluffy.*

- 7 **control/deal with** [transitive] to successfully deal with a problem that you have been struggling with

**SYN** conquer

*advice on how to beat depression*

*the government's long fight to beat inflation*

- 8 **heart** [intransitive] when your heart beats, it moves in a regular RHYTHM as it pumps your blood:

*The average person's heart beats 70 times a minute.*

*Jennifer's heart was beating fast.*

- 9 **drums** [intransitive and transitive] if you beat drums, or if drums beat, they make a regular continuous sound

- 10 **wings** [intransitive and transitive] if a bird beats its wings, or if its wings beat, they move up and down quickly and regularly

**SYN** flap

- 11 **take some beating** BEAT/DEFEAT

if something or someone will take some beating, it will be difficult for anyone or anything to be or do better:

*Raikkonen has 42 points, which will take some beating.*

*Florida takes some beating as a vacation destination.*

- 12 <sup>EARLY</sup> **avoid** [transitive] to avoid situations in which a lot of people are trying to do something, usually by doing something early:

*We left at four a.m. to beat the traffic.*

*Shopping by mail order lets you beat the queues.*

*Shop now and **beat the Christmas rush!***

- 13 **do before somebody else** [transitive] (informal)

LOSE A GAME, COMPETITION, OR WAR to get or do something before someone else, especially if you are both trying to do it first:

**beat somebody to something**

*John had beaten me to the breakfast table.*

*I wanted the last piece of pie, but somebody **beat me to it.***

*They wanted to make it into a film, but another studio **beat them to the punch.***

- 14 **beat about/around the bush** DELAY

to avoid or delay talking about something embarrassing or unpleasant:

*Don't beat around the bush. Ask for your account to be paid, and paid quickly.*

**15 beat the system** DISOBEY

to find ways of avoiding or breaking the rules of an organization, system etc, in order to achieve what you want:

*Accountants know a few ways to beat the system.*

**16 beat a path to somebody's door** (*also beat down somebody's door*) GO

if people beat a path to your door, they are interested in something you are selling, a service you are providing etc:

*The new design was supposed to have consumers beating a path to their door.*

**17 beat a (hasty) retreat**

to leave somewhere or stop doing something very quickly, in order to avoid a bad situation:

*He beat a hasty retreat when he spotted me.*

**18 beat the clock**

to finish something very quickly, especially before a particular time:

*The company managed to beat the clock on delivering its new system.*

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SPOKEN PHRASES

**19 (it) beats me** UNDERSTAND

used to say that you do not know something, or cannot understand or explain it:

*Beats me why he wants such a big car.*

*'What's he saying?' 'Beats me.'*

**20 beat it!** LEAVE A PLACE

used to tell someone to leave at once, because they are annoying you or should not be there

**21 can you beat that/it?** SURPRISED/ANNOY

used to show that you are surprised or annoyed by something:

*They've got eight children! Can you beat that?*

**22 beat your brains out** THINK ABOUT

to think about something very hard and for a long time:

*I've been beating my brains out all week trying to finish this essay.*

**23 if you can't beat 'em, join 'em** TAKE PART/BE INVOLVED

used when you decide to take part in something even though you disapprove of it, because everyone else is doing it and you cannot stop them

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**24 beat the rap** AVOID (AmE) (informal)

to avoid being punished for something you have done

**25 beat time**

to make regular movements or sounds to show the speed at which music should be played:

*a conductor beating time with his baton*

**26 beat a path/track**

to make a path by walking over an area of land

**27 to beat the band** LOT/LARGE NUMBER OR AMOUNT (AmE) (informal)

in large amounts or with great force:

*It's raining to beat the band.*

**28 beat the heat** COLD (AmE) (informal)

to make yourself cooler:

*Fresh lemonade is a great way to beat the heat.*

**29 |metal** (also **beat out**) [transitive] to hit metal with a hammer in order to shape it or make it thinner

**30 |hunting** [intransitive and transitive] to force wild birds and animals out of bushes, long grass etc so that they can be shot for sport

**31 beat your breast** (literary) UPSET

to show clearly that you are very upset or sorry about something

→ BEATEN,  
BEATING

## COLLOCATIONSense 1

### adverbs

easily beat somebody *Jason easily beats me at chess every time we play.*

narrowly beat somebody (= by only a few points, votes etc) *New Zealand narrowly beat the Springboks in South Africa.*

comfortably beat somebody (= by more than a few points, votes etc) *He comfortably beat the second placed candidate.*

soundly beat somebody (= by a lot of points, votes etc) *In each event she soundly beat her opponents.*

beat somebody hands down (= beat someone very easily) *He should be able to beat them all hands down.*

comprehensively beat somebody (= by a lot of points, votes etc) *There's no point trying to offer excuses as to why we were so comprehensively beaten.*

convincingly beat somebody (= in a way that clearly shows somebody deserves to win) *Mexico convincingly beat Brazil 2–0.*

### phrases

beat somebody into second/third etc place *He was beaten into second place in the Monaco Grand Prix.*

## THESAURUS

**beat** to get more points, votes etc than someone. **Beat** is used especially in spoken English: *We should have beaten them easily. | I always beat my brother at tennis.*

**defeat** to beat someone. **Defeat** is more formal than **beat** and is used especially in writing: *England were defeated by 2*

goals to 1. | *Bush defeated Kerry in the election.*

trounce / traʊns / to defeat someone completely in a game: *They were trounced 20–0 by Kuwait.*

thrash (BrE) (informal) ,cream (AmE) (informal) to beat someone very easily in a game: *Of course, they totally creamed the other team. | I hope we thrash them!*

wipe the floor with somebody (informal) to beat someone completely in a game or argument: *She wiped the floor with her opponent in the debate. | They won a £1,000 prize after wiping the floor with the opposition in a bowling competition.*

## beat down

### phrasal verb

1 if the sun beats down, it shines very brightly and the weather is hot

2 if the rain beats down, it is raining very hard

### 3 beat the door down

to hit a door so hard that it falls down

### 4 beat somebody down (BrE) <sup>CHEAP</sup>

to persuade someone to reduce a price:

### beat somebody down to

*He wanted £4,500 for the car, but I beat him down to £3,850.*

### 5 beat somebody ↔ down

to make someone feel defeated, so they no longer respect themselves:

*The women seemed beaten down.*

## beat off

### phrasal verb

### 1 beat somebody/something ↔ off <sup>PREVENT</sup>

to succeed in defeating someone who is attacking, opposing, or competing with you:

*McConnell beat off a challenge for his Senate seat.*

**2** (*AmE*)(informal) (not polite) if a man beats off, he MASTURBATES

## **beat somebody/ something ↔ out** phrasal verb

**1** if a drum or something else beats out a RHYTHM, or if you beat out a rhythm on a drum, it makes a continuous regular sound

**2** (*especially AmE*)<sup>BEAT/DEFEAT</sup> to defeat someone in a competition:

*Lockheed beat out a rival company to win the contract.*

## **beat somebody/ something ↔ out for**

*Roberts beat out Tony Gwynn for the Most Valuable Player Award.*

**3** <sup>STOP SOMETHING THAT IS HAPPENING</sup> to put out a fire by hitting it many times with something such as a cloth

## **beat up** phrasal verb

**1** **beat somebody ↔ up** <sup>HIT</sup>

to hurt someone badly by hitting them:

*Her boyfriend got drunk and beat her up.*

**2** **beat up on somebody** (*AmE*)<sup>HIT</sup>

to hit someone and harm them, especially someone younger or weaker than yourself

**3** <sup>BLAME</sup> **beat yourself up** (also **beat up on yourself** *AmE*) (informal)

to blame yourself too much for something:

*If you do your best and you lose, you can't beat yourself up about it.*

### **Word origin**

**Language:** Old English

**Origin:** *beatan*



