

act²

S2 W1

verb

1 **do something** [intransitive] DO SOMETHING/TAKE ACTION to do something in a particular way or for a particular reason:

The company acted correctly in sacking him.

The jury decided that Walker had acted in self-defence.

act to do something

The UN must act now to restore democracy.

Politicians will only act when enough people demand that they do something.

In everyday English, people often use expressions like **do the right thing** or **do a brave thing** rather than use **act** with an adverb such as **correctly** or **bravely**:

They acted correctly in telling her.

→ They **did the right thing** in telling her.

When **act** is used alone to mean 'take action', in everyday English people usually just say **do something**:

*We have to **do something** now.*

2 **behave** [intransitive always + adverb/preposition] to behave in a particular way:

They acted unreasonably when they turned down Jill's application.

He's been acting strangely ever since his Mom died.

act as if

Pip acted as if he was better than everyone else.

act like

Stop acting like a baby.

act with

She acted with dignity.

act your age (= used to tell someone to behave in a more adult way, suitable for someone of their age)

- 3 **pretend** [intransitive and transitive] to pretend to have feelings, qualities etc that are different from your true ones:

When he's angry, he acts the fool.

That guy is acting crazy.

act a part/role

Stella felt unnatural in their company, as if she was acting a part.

act as if/like

Why does he act as if he was stupid?

- 4 **play/film** ACTOR/ACTRESS [intransitive and transitive] to perform in a play or film:

I first started acting when I was 12 years old.

act a part/role

She is acting the role of Lady Macbeth six evenings a week.

The movie is very well acted.

- 5 **have an effect** [intransitive] DO to have an effect or use:

act as

The padding acts as a cushion if the player falls or is hit by the ball.

act on

Disinfectants act on bacteria in two main ways.

- 6 **act for somebody/act on somebody's behalf** REPRESENT

to represent someone, especially in a court of law or by doing business for them:

Makin, a solicitor, is acting for the young people in their case against the county council.

I am acting on behalf of the bank.

→ ACTING¹

act as something

phrasal verb

to do a particular job for a short time, for example while the usual person is absent:

My brother speaks French – he can act as interpreter.

act on/ upon something

phrasal verb

to do something because of another person's advice or order, or because you have received information or had an idea:

*She is **acting on the advice** of her lawyers.*

*Police say they **acted on information** received.*

act something ↔ out

phrasal verb

1 if a group of people act out an event, they show how it happened by pretending to be the people who were involved in it:

The children were acting out the story of the birth of Jesus.

2 EXPRESS to express your feelings about something through your behaviour or actions, especially when you have been feeling angry or nervous:

These teenagers are likely to act out their distress by running away.

act up

phrasal verb

1 BEHAVE if children act up, they behave badly:

He's a tough kid and he acts up a lot.

2 BROKEN if a machine or part of your body acts up, it does not work properly:

The computer is acting up again.

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English

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