

Phrasal Verbs vs. Prepositional Verbs 1

Phrasal Verb – a verb phrase formed by a verb and a particle (adverb or preposition) which has an idiomatic meaning and cannot be translated literally. Phrasal verbs are informal, conversational verbs. Changing the particle alters the meaning of the phrasal verb (or makes nonsense), and most phrasal verbs have multiple meanings. **In formal contexts, one must substitute a real verb in place of the phrasal verb.**

Example: If you don't know the meaning of a word, **look up** the word in a dictionary.
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You are not literally holding the dictionary over your head and looking in an upward direction while you search for a word's meaning in a dictionary. **Look up** is usually translated to the French word *chercher*.

Dependent Preposition – prepositions that **depend on** or must follow a particular verb, noun, or adjective. Here, we are **focusing on** verbs with dependent prepositions (also **referred to** as prepositional verbs). When a verb is **followed by** an object or gerund it is often **accompanied by** a preposition. The verb needs this preposition to express the meaning, so we call these words *dependent prepositions*.

Example: **Look at** these pictures that I took with my new I-phone. (*regarder*)
Please help me **look for** my keys; I can't find them anywhere. (*chercher*)
Did you **look in** the drawer? (*chercher dans/dedans*)

Here is a "short" list of some common legal English verbs with their dependent prepositions and their legalese definitions:

abide by – to accept a decision, a law, or an agreement and to obey it.

accede to – to agree to or allow something that someone has asked for, after you have opposed it for a while.

account for – (1) to explain how or why something happened. (2) to be a particular part of something. (3) to keep a record of how the money in your care will be spent or has been spent. (4) to consider particular facts or circumstances when you are making a decision.

account to – to make a payment to someone together with an itemized breakdown showing how the payment is calculated.

adhere to – to act in the way that a particular law, rule, agreement or set of instructions says that you should.

appertain to – to belong to something or be connected with something.

consist in – to have something as its main or only feature.

consist of – to be formed from the people or things mentioned.

dispose of – (1) to rid yourself of or sell something that is not required. (2) to successfully deal with a problem.

engage in – to be involved in something, to take part in something, or to be busy doing something.

enlarge on/upon – to say or write in more detail about something that you have previously mentioned.

enter into – (1) to begin or become involved in a formal agreement. (2) to begin to discuss or deal with something.

entitle to – to give a right to have or do something.

limit to – to make something exist or happen only in a particular place, within a particular group, or for a particular purpose.

object to – to say that you disagree with, disapprove or, or oppose something.

proceed against – to start a court case against somebody or organization.

proceed from – to be caused by or be the result of something.

provide against – to make plans in order to deal with or prevent a bad or unpleasant situation.

provide for – (1) to make plans or arrangements to deal with something that may happen in the future. (2) to give somebody the necessities with which to live.

refer to – (1) to mention or talk about somebody or something. (2) to describe or be connected to something. (3) to look at something for information. (4) to send somebody or something to a different place or person to obtain help, advice, or a decision.

report to – to give an account of your actions to someone (as a boss or supervisor).

resort to – to make use of something, especially something bad or unpleasant, as a way of achieving something, often because no other course of action is possible.

revert to – (1) (of land or property) to return legally to the previous owner. (2) to go back to a previous condition or activity. (3) to start talking or thinking again about a subject being considered earlier.

sift through – to carefully examine a large amount of something in order to find something important or to decide what is useful and what is not.

skim through – to read something very quickly in order to get a general impression or find a particular point.

speak for – to state the wishes or views of someone or to act as a representative for someone.

subscribe to – to agree with an opinion, theory, etc.

substitute for – to take the place of somebody or something else.

sue for – to formally ask for something in a court of law.

tamper with – to change or touch something (normally without permission) especially in a way that causes damage or harm.

testify to – to show or be evidence that something is true.

Glenn P. Gipson

Now try using these prepositional verbs in context. (next page)

Using the glossary of prepositional verbs above, complete the following sentences with the correct verb (in the correct tense) and its dependent preposition.

1. How do you _____ the fact that the evidence was not properly submitted?
2. The duties that _____ this supervisory position require that you be periodically drug tested.
3. Since my client was injured on the job, he has been unable to _____ his family.
4. We are currently _____ the evidence looking for any weaknesses in their case.
5. Once he submitted all of his receipts, it was easy to see that he had _____ every penny that he had spent during the litigation process.
6. The company _____ many of its assets in order to raise enough capital for the new expansion project.
7. Management has agreed to _____ negotiations with the local union.
8. All parties must _____ the terms of this agreement.
9. The end-user service contract prohibits opening and _____ any of the components.
10. The witness has _____ the events that she observed on the day in question.
11. This law firm is _____ the practice of protecting our clients.
12. This team only _____ several different specialists in a variety of different fields.
13. In light of the cost, we _____ any further changes being made to the contract.
14. The parties have _____ strictly _____ the terms of the agreement.
15. My client is entitled to _____ the manufacturer and the retailer.
16. Our practice is _____ corporate law, but on an international level.
17. When it comes to the matter of politics, everyone is _____ his or her own opinion.
18. Nothing can _____ good legal advice when you are faced with a law suit.
19. The attorney _____ her client in respect of the damages received as a result of the litigation.
20. The dispute _____ a misunderstanding between the involved parties.
21. I need you to quickly _____ these briefs and look for the motion of discovery.
22. After his death, the house and lands _____ their original owner.