



IELTS

PHRASAL VERBS

FOR SPEAKING

BAND 8 or 9

Phrasal verbs	Meaning	Example
Act on	To take action because of something like information received.	The police were acting on a tip from an informer and caught the gang red-handed.
Act out	Perform something with actions and gestures.	They acted out the story on stage.
Act up	Behave badly or strangely.	My computer' acting up. I think I might have a virus.
Add on	Include in a calculation.	You have to add the VAT on to the price they give.
Add up	To make a mathematical total.	We added up the bill to check it was correct.
Agree with	Affect – usually used in the negative to show that something has had a negative effect, especially is it makes you feel bad.	I feel terrible – that food didn't agree with my stomach.
Aim at	To target	The magazine is aimed at teenagers.
Allow for	Include something in a plan or calculation.	You should allow for delay when planning a journey.
Allow of	Make possible, permit	The rules don't allow of any exceptions.
Angle for	Try to get something indirectly, by hinting or suggesting.	He is been angling for an invitation, but I don't want him to come.
Answer back	To reply rudely to someone in authority.	Her mother was shocked when she started

		answering her back and refusing to help.
Argue down	Beat someone in a debate, discussion or argument. Persuade someone to drop the price of something they are selling.	The teacher tried to argue the girl down, but she couldn't. She argued him down ten percent.
Argue out	Argue about a problem to find a solution.	If we cannot argue our differences out, we'll have to take them to court.
Ask after	Enquire about someone's health, how life is going.	Jerry rang earlier and asked after you, so I told her you were fine.
Ask about	Ask how someone is doing, especially professionally and in terms of health.	He asked about my brother.
Ask around	Ask a number of people for information or help.	I have no idea, but I'll ask around at work and see if anyone can help.
Ask in	To invite someone into your house.	John's at the door. 'Ask him in.'
Ask out	To invite someone for a date.	He wanted to ask her out but was too shy.
Ask over	Invite.	They have asked us over for drinks on Friday.
Ask round	Invite someone.	We asked Joseph round for dinner.

Auction off	Sell something in an auction.	They auctioned off their property as they were heavily in dept.
Back away	Retreat or go backwards.	The crowd backed away when the man pulled a knife.
Back down	Retract or withdraw your position or proposal in an argument.	She refused to <u>back down</u> and was fired.
Back into	Enter a parking area in reverse gear.	He prefers to back his car into the garage.
Back off	Retreat	The police told the protesters to back off.
Back out	Fail to keep an arrangement or promise.	He <u>backed out</u> three days before the holiday so we gave the ticket to his sister.
Back out of	Fail to keep an agreement, arrangement.	She backed out of the agreement at the last minute.
Back up	Make a copy of computer data.	You should always back up important files and documents so that you won't lose all your work if something goes wrong with the hardware.
Bag out	Criticise.	Don't bag out bag out Australian English.
Ball up	Confuse or make things complicated.	The new project has balled me up. I have no idea what to do.

Bargain down	Persuade someone to drop the price of something they're selling.	I bargained her down to half what she originally wanted.
Bash about	Mistreat physically.	If you bash your monitor about like that, it won't last long.
Bash in	Break, damage or injury by hitting.	The burglars bashed the door in to enter the house.
Bash out	Write something quickly without much preparation.	I bashed the essay out the night before I had to hand it in.
Be after	Try to find or get	The police are after him because of the theft.
Be along	Arrive	The next bus should be along in the next quarter of an hour or so.
Be away	Be elsewhere: on holiday, etc.	She's away on business for two weeks.
Be cut out for	Be suitable, have the necessary qualities.	She's not cut out for this kind of work.
Be cut up	Be upset.	She was very cut up about coming second as she thought deserved to win.
Be down	Be depressed.	He's been down since his partner left him.
Be fed up	Be bored, upset or sick of something.	I am fed up of his complaints.
Be taken with	Like something	I was very taken with the performance-it was superb.
Be up	Be out of bed	She is not up yet.

Be down on	Move towards	She spotted him on the other side of the room and bore down on him.
Bear on	Influence, affect	The judge's character may well bear on the final decision.
Bear out	Confirm that something is correct.	Statistics bear out the government's positions on the issue.
Bear up	Resist pressure.	How are you bearing up under the strain?
Bear up under	Cope with something difficult or stressful.	He is bearing up under the pressure.
Bear with	Be patient.	Please bear with me a moment while I finish this email.
Beat down	Strong sunshine.	The sun was really beating down and we could not stay outdoors.
Beat out	Narrowly win in competition.	The marathon runner barely beat out his rival at the tape.
Beat up	Attack violently.	The mugger beat him up and stole his wallet.
Belong with	Be in the correct or appropriate location with other items.	Does this disc belong with those on the shelf?
Bend down	Lower the top half of your body.	I bent down to pick it up off the floor.
Big up	Exaggerate the importance.	He bigs himself up all the time.
Bitch up	Spoil or ruin something.	I bitched up the interview.

Black out	Fall unconscious.	He blacked out and collapsed on the floor.
Blast off	Leave the ground-spaceship or rocket.	The space shuttle blasted off on schedule yesterday.
Block in	Park a car and obstruct another car.	I could not drive here this morning because someone had blocked me in.
Block off	Obstruct an exit to prevent people from leaving.	The police blocked off the road after the murder.
Blow away	Impress greatly.	Her first novel blew me away.
Blow down	When the wind forces something to fail.	A tree was blown down in the storm.
Blow in	Arrive, sometimes suddenly or unexpectedly.	He blew in from Toronto early this morning.
Blow off	Not keep an appointment.	We were going to meet last night, but she blew me off at the last minute.
Blow up	Explode.	The bomb blew up without any warning.
Boil up	Feel a negative emotion strongly.	The anger boiled up in me when I saw what they had done.
Bone up on	Study hard for a goal or reason.	I need to bone up on my French grammar for the test.
Book in	Check in at a hotel.	We took a taxi from the airport to the hotel and booked in.

Call up	Telephone.	I called him up as soon as I got to a phone to tell him the news.
Calm down	Stop being angry or emotionally excited.	When I lose my temper, it takes ages for me to calm down again.
Cancel out	Have an opposite effect on something that has happened, taking things back to the beginning.	The airport taxes cancelled out the savings we had made on the flight tickets.
Cap off	Finish or complete, often with some decisive action.	She capped off the meeting with a radical proposal.
Care for	Like.	I don't care for fizzy drinks. I prefer water.
Carried away	Get so emotional that you lose control.	The team got carried away when they won the championship and started shouting and throwing things around.
Carry forward	Make something progress.	They hope the new management will be able to carry the project forward.
Carry off	Win, succeed	She carried off the first prize in the competition.
Carry on	Continue	Carry on quietly with your work until the substitute teacher arrives.
Decide upon	Choose, select.	Jenny spent a long time looking at houses before she bought one, but

		eventually decided upon one near her office.
Die away	Become quieter or inaudible (of a sound).	The last notes died away and the audience burst into applause.
Die back	When the parts of a plant above ground die, but the roots remain alive.	The plant dies back in the winter.
Die down	Decrease or become quieter.	It was on the front pages of all the papers for a few days, but the interest gradually died down.
Die for	Want something a lot.	I am dying for the weekend-this week's been so hard.
Die off	Become extinct	Most of the elm trees in the UK died off when Dutch elm disease arrive.
Die out	Become extinct or disappear.	Some scientists say that the dinosaurs died out when a comet hit the earth and caused a nuclear winter.
Die in	Start eating greedily.	We were starving so we really dug in when the food finally did arrive.
Die into	Reach inside to get something.	She dug into her handbag and pulled out a bunch of keys.
Fawn over	Praise someone in an excessive way to get	She fawned over the inspectors in the hope that

	their favour or something from them.	they would give her a good grade.
Feed off	Eat a food as part of an animals diet.	The gecko feeds off mosquitoes and other insects.
Feed on	Give someone a particular food.	He feeds his cat on dry food.
Feed up	Give someone a lot of food to restore their health, make them bigger, etc.	She's been ill for a fortnight so we're feeding her up.
Feel up	Touch sexually, grope.	Someone felt me up in the club as I was trying to get to the bar.
Feel up to	Feel capable of doing something.	I am so tired. I don't think feel up to going out tonight.
Get ahead	Progress	Nowadays, you need IT skills if you want to get ahead.
Get ahead of	Move in front of.	I work at home in the evening to get ahead of schedule.
Get along	Leave.	It is late; we must be getting along.
Give up	Stop doing something that has been a habit.	I gave up taking sugar in tea and coffee to lose weight.
Hit on	Have an idea.	I suddenly hit on the solution.

Hold off	Stop someone from attacking or beating you.	John couldn't hold their opponents off and lost the game.
Hold on	Wait.	Could you hold on for a minute; she will be free in a moment.
Hook up	Meet someone.	We hooked up at the conference.
Hunt out	Search until you find something.	It took me ages to hunt out the photos.
Jack up	Increase sharply.	They have jacked up the price of oil this month.
Jam on	Apply or operate something forcefully.	Joseph jammed on the brakes when the rabbit ran in front of his car.
Jaw away	Talk just for the point of talking rather than having anything to say.	That shows that your interest is not in helping the student, but in jawing away.
Jazz up	Make something more interesting or attractive.	The show was getting stale so they jazzed it up with some new scenes.
Keep around	Keep something near you.	I keep a dictionary around when I am doing my homework.
Keep at	Continue with something difficult.	She found the course hard but she kept at it and completed it successfully.
Keep away	Don't allow someone near something.	Medicines should always be kept away from children.

Keep back	Maintain a safe distance.	The police told the crowd to keep back from the fire.
Key to	Plan things to fit or suit people or situations.	Promotions are keyed to people's abilities.
Key up	Make someone excited or nervous.	The noise got us keyed up.
Kick about	Discuss.	We kicked the idea about at the meeting.
Kick in	When a drug starts to take effect.	Her high fever didn't feel half as bad once the antihistamines had kicked in.
Kick out	Expel.	The family kicked the au pair out when they found out that she was planning to move to work for another household.
Knock off	Finish work for the day.	We knocked off early on Saturday to avoid the rush hour queues.
Lash down	Secure something with ropes or cords.	We lashed the tarpaulin down to stop the wind blowing it away.
Lash into	Criticise someone strongly.	He lashed into them from messing things up.
Lash out	Suddenly become violent.	He lashed out and broke the man's nose.
Lay on	Organise, supply.	They laid on a buffet lunch at the conference.
Lay out	Spend money.	They laid out thousands of pounds on their wedding reception.

Let in	Allow someone to enter.	The doorstaff didn't let him in the nightclub because he was wearing jeans.
Let off	Not punish.	The judge let him off with a fine rather than a prison sentence since it was his first offence.
Line up	Arrange events for someone.	We have lined up a lot of meetings for them.
Link up	Connect, join.	The train links up the cities.
Live by	Follow a belief system to guide your behaviour.	He tries hard to live by the Bible.
Live down	Stop being embarrassed about something.	If I fail the test and everyone else passes, I'll never be able to live it down.
Live with	Accept something unpleasant.	It's hard to live with the pain of a serious illness.
Log in	Enter a restricted area on a computer system.	I had forgotten my password and could not log in.
Log into	Enter a restricted area of a computer system.	I logged into the staff intranet to check my email.
Log off	Exit a computer system.	When she had finished working on the spreadsheet, she logged off and left the office.
Log on	Enter a computer system.	He entered his password for the college intranet and logged on.

Log out	Exit a computer system.	John closed the programs and logged out when it was time to go home.
Look up	Consult a reference work (dictionary, phonebook, etc.) for a specific piece of information.	I didn't know the correct spelling so I had to look it up in the dictionary.
Magic away	Make something disappear quickly.	He magicked the bill away and paid for us all before I could get my wallet out.
Make after	Chase.	The police made after the stolen bike.
Make away with	Steal	The thieves made away with the painting.
Make it	Arrive or get a result.	I thought you weren't coming, so I was really pleased you made it.
Make it up to	Try to compensate for doing something wrong.	He tries to make it up to her, but she wouldn't speak to him.
Make of	Understand or have an opinion.	What do you make of your new boss?
Make off	Leave somewhere in a hurry.	They made off when they heard the police siren.
Mash up	Mix sources of audio, video or other computer sources.	She mashed up the songs into a single track.
Melt down	Heat something solid, especially metal, until it becomes liquid.	They melted the golden statue down and turned it into gold bars.

Mess about	Not be serious, not use something properly.	The children were messing about with the TV remote control and broke it.
Mix up	Confuse.	I always mix those two sisters up because they look so like each other.
Move into	Start living in a place.	They moved into the house as soon as it was ready.
Move up	Move to make space.	Could you move up and let me sit down?
Nail down	Succeed in getting achieve.	They are having trouble nailing down the contract.
Name after	Give someone a name to remember another person.	I was named after my uncle who died in the war.
Narrow down	Remove less important options to make it easier to choose.	I am not sure which university to apply, but I have narrowed my list down to three.
Nerd out	Play safe and avoid taking a risk.	I am going to nerd out and not go on the river trip.
Opt for	Choose.	I opted for an endowment mortgage and lost a lot of money.
Opt in	Choose to be part or a member of something.	If you want them to notify you of updates, you have to opt in.
Opt into	Choose to be a member part of something.	I opted into the scheme.
Opt out	Choose not to be part of something.	The UK opted out of a lot of EU legislation on

		working hours and conditions.
Pack in	Stop doing something.	I'm trying to in smoking.
Pack off	Send someone away.	His boss packed him off to a regional office.
Pack out	Fill a venue.	The stadium was packed out.
Pack up	Stop doing something.	You should pack up smoking.
Pad down	Sleep somewhere for the night.	I am too tired to come home; can I pad down here tonight?
Pad out	Make a text longer by including extra content, often content that isn't particularly relevant.	I couldn't think of much to write, so I padded the essay out with a few lengthy quotes.
Pal around	Be friendly and spend time with someone.	We palled around at university.
Pal up	Become friends.	We palled up when I started working with her.
Pass away	Die.	Sadly, Georgia's uncle passed away yesterday after a short illness.
Pass back	Return.	I felt awful when the teacher started to pass back the exam papers.
Pass by	Go past without stopping.	I was just passing by when I saw the accident.
Patch up	Fix or make things better.	I tried to patch things up after the argument, but they wouldn't speak to me.

Pay back	Repay money borrowed.	I paid back the thirty pounds I'd borrowed.
Pay off	Produce a profitable or successful result.	Their patience paid off when he finally showed up and signed the contract.
Peel away	Leave a group by moving in a different direction.	Some of the crowd peeled away to get out of the crush.
Peg out	Put washing outside to dry.	I pegged the washing out after it stopped raining.
Phase in	Introduce gradually.	They are phasing in the reforms over the next three years.
Phase out	Remove gradually.	They have introduced a compact edition of the newspaper and are phasing out the broadsheet edition over the next few months
Pick at	Eat unwillingly.	I wasn't very hungry so I just picked at my food.
Pick up	Collect.	While you're in town, can you pick up my trousers from the Dry Cleaner.
Pig out	Eat a lot.	The food was great, so I really pigged out.
Pile up	Accumulate.	Work just keeps on piling up and I really can't manage to get it all done.
Pin down	Discover exact details about something.	The government can't pin down where the leak came from.

Pin on	Attach the blame to someone.	The police tried to pin the crime on.
Pin up	Fix something to a wall, or other vertical surface, with a pin.	I <u>pinned</u> the notice <u>up</u> on the board.
Pine away	Suffer physically because of grief, stress, worry, etc.	He has been <u>pinning away</u> since his wife died and is a shadow of his former self.
Pipe down	Be quiet (often as an imperative)	The lecturer asked the students to <u>pipe down</u> and pay attention.
Pipe up	To speak, raise your voice.	At first, no one answered, then finally someone <u>piped up</u> .
Play along	Pretend to agree or accept something in order to keep someone happy or to get more information.	I disagreed with the idea but I had to <u>play along</u> because everyone else liked it.
Play around	Be silly.	The children were <u>playing around</u> and being annoying.
Play up	Behave badly.	The children <u>played up</u> all evening and drove the babysitter mad.
Plug in	Connect machine to the electricity supply.	He <u>plugged</u> the TV <u>in</u> and turned it on full blast
Plump down	Put something in a place without taking care.	He <u>plumped</u> his bag <u>down</u> and kicked his shoes off.
Plump for	Choose.	I <u>plumped for</u> the steak frites.

Point out	Make someone aware of something.	He <u>pointed out</u> that I only had two weeks to get the whole thing finished.
Poke about	Move things around or search in a casual way to try to find something.	I <u>poked about</u> in my CD collection to see if I could find it.
Poke around	Move things around or search in a casual way to try to find something.	I <u>poked around</u> in my desk to see if the letter was there.
Polish off	Finish, consume.	She <u>polishes off</u> half a bottle of gin every night.
Polish up	Improve something quickly.	I need to <u>polish up</u> my French before I go to Paris.
Pop in	Visit for a short time.	He <u>popped in</u> for a coffee on his way home.
Pop off	Talk loudly, complain.	He's always <u>popping off</u> when things don't suit him.
Power up	Turn a computer or electronic device on so that it is ready to use.	I <u>powered up</u> my laptop and started work.
Price up	Charge more for something.	In rural areas where they have a monopoly, some garages <u>price up</u> fuel because there's nowhere else to buy it.
Pull ahead	Overtake, move in front	The lorry was going slowly but we managed to <u>pull ahead</u> .
Pull out	Move into traffic.	The traffic was so bad that it took me ages to <u>pull out</u> .