

# A

## abide by abides, abiding, abided

### abide by sth

to accept or obey an agreement, rule, or decision • *Staff who refused to abide by the new rules were fired.* • *We are quite willing to abide by their decision, whatever it may be.*

## abound in/with abounds, abounding, abounded

### abound in/with sth formal

to contain a lot of something • *Its forest and plains abound with deer and elk.* • *His later novels abound in plots and schemes.*

## accede to accedes, acceding, acceded

### accede to sth formal

- 1 to agree to something that someone has asked for [e.g. request, demand], often after disagreeing with it • *The government finally acceded to the nationalists' demand for independence.*
- 2 if someone accedes to the throne or to power, they become king or queen, or they take a position of power • *The diaries were written in 1837 when Queen Victoria acceded to the throne.* (= became queen) • *Traidenis acceded to power in 1270 and ruled Lithuania for twelve years.*

## accord with accords, according, accorded

### accord with sth formal

to be the same as something, or to agree with something • *His version of events does not accord with the witness's statements.*

## account for accounts, accounting, accounted

### account for sth

- 1 to explain the reason for something or the cause of something • *Can you account for your absence last Friday?* • *She was unable to account for over \$5000.* (= she

could not explain where the money was)  
 • *'Have you seen that awful dress she's wearing?' 'Yes, I know, there's no accounting for taste, is there?'* (= you cannot explain why some people like the things that you do not like)

- 2 to form a particular amount of something  
 • *Students account for about 50% of our customers.*

## account for sb

to explain where someone is, especially someone who is lost • *The army made no attempt to account for the missing men.*

## ace out aces, aching, aced

**ace out sb or ace sb out** American informal  
 to defeat someone • *We were aced out by a rival agency.*

## ache for aches, aching, ached

### ache for sb/sth

to want someone or something very much • *He lay awake, his whole body aching for sleep.* • *After only two weeks apart she was aching for him.*

## act out acts, acting, acted

### act out sth or act sth out

- 1 to perform the actions and speech of a situation or story • *The children were told to act out a verse of their favourite poem.*
- 2 to express your thoughts or emotions by using words or actions to represent them  
 • *In therapy sessions children are encouraged to act out their aggressions and talk about their fears.* • *Playing another character allows you to act out your repressed desires.*

## act up acts, acting, acted

### act up

- 1 *slightly informal* if part of your body or a machine acts up, it stops working properly • *If my knee starts acting up, I might have to give tomorrow's walk a miss.* • *My car has been acting up again – I must get someone to have a look at it.*
- 2 if someone, especially a child, acts up, they behave badly • *As soon as one of the kids starts acting up, the others follow.*
- 3 *British* to do a more important job than you usually do for a limited period  
 • *Junior staff are frequently required to act up but they don't get paid extra.*

add up

2

**add up** adds, adding, added**add up (sth) or add (sth) up**

to calculate the total of two or more numbers • *If you add those four figures up, it comes to over £500.* • *Kids who only ever use calculators to do sums quickly forget how to add up in their heads.*

**add up** (never in continuous tenses) *slightly informal*

- 1 to increase and become a large number or amount • *If you put a few pounds away each week, it's surprising how quickly it adds up.* • *You may only be eating a hundred calories here and a hundred calories there, but it all adds up.*
- 2 to be a reasonable or likely explanation for something • (often negative) *So why would she accept a job offering less money and fewer prospects; it just doesn't add up.*

**add up to** adds, adding, added**add up to sth**

- 1 to become a particular amount • *The various building programmes add up to several thousand new homes.*
- 2 to have a particular result or effect • *Trains are frequently cancelled and always late, all of which adds up to a lot of frustration for the passenger.* • *Whether such proposals add up to any real help for the poor remains to be seen.*

**adhere to** adheres, adhering, adhered**adhere to sth** *formal*

to obey a rule or principle • *Companies failing to adhere strictly to safety guidelines are penalised.*

**adjourn to** adjourns, adjourning, adjourned**adjourn to swb** *humorous*

to finish something and go to a different place, usually for a drink and some food • *Shall we adjourn to the sitting room for coffee?*

**agree with** agrees, agreeing, agreed**agree with sb** *slightly old-fashioned*

if new situations or conditions agree with you, they are right for you and make you feel happy • *The sea air seemed to agree with him – he looked fitter than he had in a long time.* • *It's good to see you looking so well – motherhood obviously agrees with you.*

**not agree with sb** (always negative; never in continuous tenses)

if a type of food or drink does not agree with you, it makes you feel slightly ill • *I tend to avoid onions – they don't agree with me.*

**aim at** aims, aiming, aimed**aim at sth/doing sth**

to intend to achieve something, or to be intended to achieve something • *We're aiming at a 50% increase in production.* • *This is the latest in a series of talks aimed at settling the conflict.*

**aim sth at sb**

to intend something to influence someone, or to be noticed or bought by someone • (usually passive) *Roughly half of the magazines bought in Britain are aimed exclusively at women.* • *I don't think his remarks were aimed at anyone in particular.*

**allow for** allows, allowing, allowed**allow for sth**

to consider or include something when you are making plans or judging a situation • *The whole journey should take just over five hours – that's allowing for delays.* • *Even allowing for exaggeration, these reports of human suffering are an appalling tale.*

**allow of** allows, allowing, allowed**allow of sth** *formal*

to accept that something is possible or correct • *The old woman was too full of energy to allow of their walking slowly on her account.*

**allude to** alludes, alluding, alluded**allude to sth/sb** *slightly formal*

to mention something or someone in an indirect way • *She mentioned some trouble that she'd had at home and I guessed she was alluding to her son.* • *So what is the dark secret alluded to in the title of Wellbrock's latest novel?*

**amount to** amounts, amounted**amount to sth** (never in continuous tenses)

- 1 to become a particular amount • *The cost of treating heart disease and cancer amounts to 100 billion dollars a year.*

- 2** to be the same as something, or to have the same effect as something • *He gave what amounted to an apology on behalf of his company.* • *It remains to be seen whether his threats amount to anything more than tough talk.*
- 3** to be or become very good or important (usually negative) *The changes in the department did not amount to much.* • *If you don't work hard in school, you'll never amount to anything.*

**angle for** angles, angling, angled

**angle for sth**

to try to get something without asking for it in a direct way • *I suspect she's angling for promotion.* • *He's been angling for an invitation all week.*

**announce against** announces, announcing, announced

**announce against sb/sth** *American*  
 to say publicly that you do not support a particular politician or political party • *Many show business people have announced against the Republican candidate.*

**announce for** announces, announcing, announced

**announce for sth** *American*

to say publicly that you are going to try to be elected for a particular political position • *He surprised the whole nation by announcing for the Presidency.*

**announce for sb/sth** *American*

to say publicly that you support a particular politician or political party • *The union announced for the Democratic candidate.*

**answer back** answers, answering, answered

**answer (sb) back**

if someone, especially a child, answers back or answers someone back, they reply rudely to someone they should be polite to • *Don't you dare answer me back, young lady!* • *What shocks me about Terry's kids is the way they answer back.*

**answer for** answers, answering, answered

**answer for sth**

to be responsible for something bad, or to

be punished for something bad • *If the government decides to send all these men off to war, they will have a lot of deaths to answer for.* • *Do you think parents should have to answer for their children's behaviour?* • *This was a perfectly happy office till Phil took over – he's got a lot to answer for.* (= everything is his fault)

**answer for sb/sth**

if you say that you can answer for someone or for a quality that they have, you mean that you know from experience that they can be trusted, or that they have that quality • *I can answer for Tanya because I used to work with her but I've no idea what the other candidates are like.* • *Just from those three months of working together I can answer for her professionalism.*

**answer to** answers, answering, answered

**answer to sb** *slightly formal*

if you answer to someone in a higher position, they are the person you have to explain your actions or decisions to • *We were living in a police state, where the police answered to no one.*

**ante up** antes, anteing, anted

**ante up (sth)** *American*

to pay an amount of money • *Each person is being asked to ante up \$12 to cover expenses.*

**appertain to** appertains, appertaining, appertained

**appertain to sth** *formal*

to be about or connected to something • *She enjoyed the privileges appertaining to the office of chairman.*

**arrive at** arrives, arriving, arrived

**arrive at sth**

to achieve an agreement or decision, especially after thinking about it or discussing it for a long time • *We discussed the matter at length but failed to arrive at a decision.* • *It is hoped that after this round of talks they will be able to arrive at an agreement.*

arse about/around

4

**arse about/around** *arses, arsing,*  
*arsed*

**arse about/around** *British & Australian slang*  
 to waste time doing silly or unimportant things • *I wish he'd stop arsing around and help me clear up this mess.*

**ascribe to** *ascribes, ascribing, ascribed*

**ascribe sth to sth** *formal*  
 to believe or say that something is caused by something else • *If this had been the first time such a disaster had occurred, it could have been ascribed to misfortune.*  
 • *He ascribes his phenomenal success to being in the right place at the right time.*

**ascribe sth to sb/sth** *formal*  
 to believe that someone or something has a particular quality • *It seems strange that she can ascribe such callousness to her own son.* • *People often ascribe different values to the same word.*

**ascribe sth to sb** *formal*  
 to believe that something was said, written, or created by a particular person  
 • *Most experts have ascribed the drawing to Michelangelo.*

**ask after** *asks, asking, asked*

**ask after sb/sth**  
 to ask for information about someone, especially about their health • *Graham's been asking after you again.* • *Julia asked after your health.*

**ask around** *asks, asking, asked*

**ask around**  
 to ask several people in order to try to get information or help • *I'll ask around at work and see if anyone can babysit.*

**ask for** *asks, asking, asked*

**couldn't ask for sb/sth** (always negative)  
 if you say that you couldn't ask for someone or something better, you mean that that person or thing is the best of their kind • *She's great to work for – I really couldn't ask for a better boss.*

**ask for sb**

to say that you would like to speak to someone or see someone • *A young man was here earlier, asking for Rebecca.*

**be asking for sth** (always in continuous tenses) *informal*

to behave stupidly in a way that is likely to cause problems for you • *Drinking and driving is just asking for trouble.*  
 • *Coming into work late almost every morning – he was really asking for it!*



**ask in** *asks, asking, asked*

**ask in sb or ask sb in**  
 to invite someone to come into a building or room, especially your home • *I didn't want to leave him on the doorstep so I asked him in.* • (often + **for**) *I'd ask you in for a coffee but I have to be up early in the morning.*

**ask out** *asks, asking, asked*

**ask out sb or ask sb out**  
 to invite someone to come with you to a place such as the cinema or a restaurant, especially as a way of starting a romantic relationship • *There's some girl in the office he fancies but he's too scared to ask her out.* • (sometimes + **for**) *She phoned him to ask him out for a drink.*

**ask over/round** *asks, asking, asked*

**ask sb over/round**  
 to invite someone to come to your house  
 • *I've asked Adrian and David over to dinner next Saturday.* • (often + **for**) *I thought we might ask Nicky and Steve round for drinks one night.*

**aspire to** *aspires, aspiring, aspired*

**aspire to sth**  
 to have a strong desire to achieve or pos-

sess something • *Unlike so many men, he has never aspired to a position of power.*

**associate with** associates, associating, associated

**associate sb/sth with sb/sth**

to connect someone or something in your mind with someone or something else  
 • *Patience isn't a virtue I normally associate with Clare.* • *Why do men always associate enjoying themselves with drinking loads of beer?* • *It's interesting how different styles of dress can be associated with different types of music.*

**be associated with sth** (always passive)  
 if problems or dangers are associated with a particular thing or action, they are caused by it • *The cancer risks associated with smoking are well publicized.* • *Tackling the problems associated with inflation is not going to be an easy task.*

**associate with sb**

to spend time with a group of people, especially people who are disapproved of  
 • *Tim's mother has always disapproved of the sort of people that he associates with.*

**atone for** atones, atoning, atoned

**atone for sth** formal

to do something in order to show that you are sorry for doing something bad and that you want to improve the situation  
 • *Why should the new generation feel they have to atone for the country's past?*

**attend to** attends, attending, attended

**attend to sb/sth**

- 1 formal to deal with a situation or problem • *I've got to go into the office. I have one or two matters to attend to.*
- 2 to help or care for someone or something  
 • *The doctors tried to attend to those with the worst injuries first.* • *As a child you always assume that your parents are there to attend to your needs.*

**attest to** attests, attesting, attested

**attest to sth** formal

to prove that something is true • *A national poll conducted last week attests to her popularity.*

**attribute to** attributes, attributing, attributed

**attribute sth to sth** slightly formal

to believe or say that something is the result of something else • *He attributes his lack of self-confidence to a troubled childhood.* • *She attributes her success to having a good team of people working for her.*

**attribute sth to sb/sth** slightly formal  
 to believe that someone or something has a particular quality • *I would never attribute such a lack of judgement to you.*

**attribute sth to sb** slightly formal  
 to say that something was said, written, or created by a particular person  
 • (usually passive) *The poem was originally attributed to a little-known Welsh author.* • *Both statements were attributed to the minister in the press.*

**auction off** auctions, auctioning, auctioned

**auction off sth or auction sth off**

to sell something, especially buildings or furniture, at an auction (= a public sale where things are sold to the person who offers the most money) • *Conally's house and belongings were auctioned off to repay his business debts.*

**avail of** avails, availing, availed

**avail yourself of sth** (always reflexive)  
 formal

to take the opportunity to use something, often in order to improve your situation  
 • *As an employee I thought I might avail myself of the opportunity to buy cheap shares in the company.*

**average out** averages, averaging, averaged

**average out sth or average sth out**

to calculate the average of a set of numbers • *When I average out what I spend on clothes it comes to about £150 a month.*

**average out**

to be equal in amount or number • *In the end the highs and lows of life tend to average out.*

**average out at** averages, averaging, averaged

**average out at sth**

to have as the average number • *My time off work this year averages out at two days a week.*