

## Grammar notes: phrasal verbs a-b

### account for something

to explain

to give an explanation for something

Well, how do you **account for the fact that there's £20,000 missing?**

There's a lot of money not **accounted for**.

### add something on (to)

to include in a calculation or on a list

It'll cost more once you've **added the VAT on**.

Buying a house is very expensive after you've **added on the solicitor's costs**.

OK, so we need a printer, a scanner and a webcam. What about speakers? **Add them on to** the list as well.

### add something up

to total by adding

### add up

to be satisfactory when you think about it

I've **added all my expenses up** and you owe me £250.

They say the company is very successful and there aren't any problems with staff, suppliers or customers. But they're selling it at a very low price. It just doesn't **add up**.

### back down

to abandon your position in an argument

The argument lasted for hours because neither of them would **back down**.

He **backed down** when it became clear that nobody else supported him.

### back out (of something)

to break an agreement

to not do what you said you would

The two companies were going to merge, but one of them **backed out** at the last minute.

One company **backed out of the deal** because of rumours about the other company's finances.

### back someone/something up

to support

Everyone **backed him up** when he complained about the conditions at work.

I'll listen to your complaints about the conditions at work when you have some evidence to **back them up**.

Whenever you write a new report, remember to **back it up** on CD.

**back-up** (noun)

If you have problems with the new system, just phone our office and our staff will give you all the **back-up** you need.

You must have a **back-up** copy in case anything goes wrong with the computer.

**be down**

to have decreased

to not be working (computers/phones)

Sales **are down** by nearly 30%, so we'll have to start thinking about reducing the number of staff.

The computers **are down** again, so we can't get the plane tickets over the internet.

The phones **were down** for three days after the floods.

**be in on something**

to know something that isn't common knowledge

to be involved in something

The takeover was a complete surprise to me. **Were you in on it?**

I **wasn't in on the plan** at the beginning, but then someone asked me to join.

**be off**

to not be at work

She's not here. She's **off** today. I think she's got a hospital appointment.

That's the fourth time she's **been off** this month.

**be out of something**

to not have any more

The printer's **out of ink** again. Have you got another cartridge?

The machine's **out of coffee**. You'll have to have tea or chocolate.

**be up**

to have increased

Profits **are up** 60% this year, so we'll be able to pay a dividend.

Sales **were up** so much we had to employ extra staff.

**boss someone around**

to tell people what to do (often and needlessly)

You'd think he owned the company the way he **bosses everyone around**.

Stop **bossing me around**! I've been working here longer than you have.

branch out (into something)

to expand into new areas

If you want the company to grow, the business will have to branch out into new areas.

We're involved in all areas of the hotel business now, but we started with a restaurant and then branched out.

break down

to stop working

break something down (by)

to analyse

to show separately

We must get a new photocopier. This one's always breaking down.

I don't want a total figure. I want everything broken down by departments so I can see who's spending what.

When you break the figures down by category, you can see that most of our spending is on R&D.

breakdown (noun)

There was a breakdown on the tube this morning, so everyone got to work late.

I want a complete breakdown of all those figures.

bring something forward

to arrange to have or do earlier

Next week's meeting has been brought forward from Tuesday to Monday.

We've decided to bring the launch date forward to take advantage of the pre-Christmas increase in trading.

bring something out

to launch a product

They're bringing out a new line of summer clothing next month.

That's not a new computer program,. They brought that out years ago.

bring something up

to mention

Who brought up the question of wage rises in the meeting?

Well, I was waiting for the manager to bring it up, but he didn't. So I had to.

brush something up

to renew your knowledge of something

Either the existing staff will have to go to evening classes to brush up their Spanish, or we'll have to employ new staff who actually know the language.

If you brush your languages up, then that will help you get a better job.