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, acing, 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 out acts, acting, acted

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

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 swh 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 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.
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

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

to say publicly that you do not support a particular politician or political party  ● Many show business people have announced against the Republican candidate.

answer back answers, answering, answered

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

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.

ante up antes, anteing, anted

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

appertain to appertains, appertaining, appertained

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

arrive at arrives, arriving, arrived

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

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.

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!

ascibe to

ascibe 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.

ascibe 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.

ascibe 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

ask after sb/sth

to ask for information about someone, especially about their health • Graham’s been asking about you again. • Julia asked after your health.

ask around

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

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.

aspire to

aspire to sth

to have a strong desire to achieve or pos-
Unlike so many men, he has never aspired to a position of power.

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.

The cancer risks associated with smoking are well publicized.

Tackling the problems associated with inflation is not going to be an easy task.

Tim’s mother has always disapproved of the sort of people that he associates with.

Why should the new generation feel they have to atone for the country’s past?

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.

A national poll conducted last week attests to her popularity.

My time off work this year averages out at two days a week.