

PREPOSITIONARY

CHARLES N. PRIEUR &
ELIZABETH CHAMPION SPEYER

The Writer's Guide to Prepositions®

“*The one and only
Prepositionary*”

The Writer's Guide to Prepositions[©]

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*“The one and only
Prepositionary”*

“Many times one preposition might seem logically just as right as another. And it is only that tyrannical, capricious, utterly incalculable thing, idiomatic usage, which has decreed that this preposition must be used in the case, and that in another...”

LOGAN PEARSALL SMITH - “WORDS AND IDIOMS”

“Prepositions... cause more difficulty... than any other aspect of the English language.”

J.B. HEATON - “PREPOSITIONS AND ADVERBIAL PARTICLES”

“No parts of speech must be used more exactly than connectives (prepositions)...”

R. VOORHEES - “HANDBOOK OF PREPOSITIONS”

“The proper preposition is a matter of idiom; and idioms, if they do not come “naturally”, must either be learned or looked up.”

THEODORE M. BERNTEIN - “THE CAREFUL WRITER”

Note: We are indebted to all those we have quoted in our 'prepositionary'. We have attempted to return the favour by not only mentioning the authors of the quotations, but the sources as well; thus encouraging our readers to read, or refer to, their works.

PREFACE

DURING his long career in advertising, much of it as a writer, Charles Prieur often reached in vain for an 'instant help' reference work on the use of English prepositions -- one of the trickiest aspects of the language. He began collecting examples of right preposition use in the course of his reading. And, as the file expanded to vast proportions, he asked himself: "Why not a book?"

But the book kept being deferred, until a mutual friend introduced him to Elizabeth Speyer, whose career was education. In her work at the Centre for the Study and Teaching of Writing, at the Faculty of Education of McGill University, Elizabeth had found that preposition use baffled students, especially those new to the language. Preposition choice is capricious, related to meaning and nuance, and largely based on custom.

Together, Charles and Elizabeth decided to organize a guide to prepositions in a handy dictionary format, listing thousands of the most common words that present difficulty. The name "prepositionary" suggested itself.

Interspersed among the mundane examples in the Prepositionary are quotations from many sources: snippets of information, philosophy, and humour.

We are confident "*The Writer's Guide to Prepositions*" will prove both very helpful and very easy to use. It was designed to be so.

Abbreviations used for quick reference:

n = noun

a = adjective

v = verb

vv = versatile verb. In other words: the verb in question can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows. This is particularly true of any verb that suggests motion, such as walk, run, crawl, creep, inch, hide, etc.

A SPECIAL NOTE...

THE world's many languages are not the result of logical design. They evolved out of culture and tradition. Whenever linguists have tried to impose order on wayward usage, the vernacular has always won out in the end. Which perhaps explains the failure of Esperanto to take root. It was not born of the people. It has no music, no soul.

From approximately 50,000 words in the 16th century, English now greets the new millennium with an estimated 750,000 words. Although technology has prompted much of this increase, it is the readiness of the language to assimilate useful words from other cultures that has nourished its growth over the centuries.

The Writer's Guide to Prepositions will prove invaluable, if good speech and lucid writing matter to you. Our 'prepositionary' offers you more than 10,000 examples of the right preposition, for the exact meaning you want to convey.

The word preposition itself says that it pre-positions the thought or action that follows. For a good example of this, consider the phrase: gathering in the corn. If gathering means harvesting, then in is an adverb, not a preposition, because it adds to the verb. If, however, gathering means assembling, then in is a preposition, because it pre-positions where people are meeting, i.e. in the corn.

Prepositions are not to be trifled with. The collision of two 747s in 1997, killing 583 people, resulted from a misunderstanding over the preposition at. "At take-off" was understood by the air controller to mean that the plane was waiting at the take-off point; and not that it was actually taking off.

Using a wrong preposition will not often have such tragic consequences. But using the right preposition will always be a source of satisfaction, and speak well of one's writing competence.



ABATE

The cleaning women are **abating** the noise of their vacuum cleaners *by* plugging their ears with cotton batten.

We can **abate** the smoke nuisance *by* half.

His anger will **abate** *in* intensity when he learns of your cooperation.

Her pain was **abated** *by* a strong drug.

His voice suddenly **abated** *to* a whisper.

ABBREVIATE

She automatically **abbreviates** my written speeches *by* cutting out the first paragraph; almost always, for the better.

The exam was **abbreviated** by omitting an entire section.

She **abbreviated** his whole diatribe *to* one word: NO!

He was **abbreviating** the message *with* great skill.

ABHORRENCE

We share an **abhorrence** *of* sloppy writing.

ABHORRENT

This idea is **abhorrent** *to* reason.

ABIDANCE

Abidance *by* the regulations is obligatory.

ABIDE

She is **abiding** *by* (i.e. sticking to) our agreement.

He promised to **abide** *by* (i.e. adhere to) the rules of grammar.

Do you intend to **abide** (i.e. dwell) *in* this part of the country.

“**Abide** *with* (i.e. remain faithful to) **me!**” says the psalmist.

ABILITY

His **ability** *at* chess was exceptional.

His **ability** *with* darts was a byword in every pub in England.

ABOUND

“Colonialism . . . **abounded** *in* flags, exotic uniforms, splendid ceremonies, Durbars, sunset-guns, trade exhibitions . . . postage stamps and, above all, coloured maps.” (Paul Johnson, *A History of the Modern World*)

Rocks **abound** *under* the soil.

This lake **abounds** *with* fish.

I promise you: it is **abounding** *with* game of all sorts.

ABREAST

I like to keep **abreast** *of* the latest news.

ABSCOND

The boy **absconded** *from* the reformatory with the warden's credit cards.

He will **abscond** *with* the funds; I guarantee it.

ABSENCE

The student's **absence** *from* class resulted in a failing grade.

“The dolphin can report the **absence** *of* objects, as well as their presence.” (Louis Herman, *Omni* mag.)

“Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear — not **absence** *of* fear.” (Mark Twain)

ABSENT

“God is **absent** *from* the world, except in the existence in this world of those in whom His love is alive . . . Their compassion is the visible presence of God here below.” (Simone Weil, *Gateway to God*)

ABSENTEE

He was a conspicuous **absentee** *from* the morning drill.

ABSOLVE

She was **absolved** *from* her obligation.

The bishop **absolved** him *of* his sins. (rare)

ABSORB

Nutrient may be **absorbed** *by* plants *into* their system *through* their roots.

Plants **absorb** moisture *from* the air.

“When iron is **absorbed** *in* the small intestine, it is immediately joined to the protein transferrin, which shuttles it through the bloodstream, shielding tissues from its harmful effects.” (Terence Monmaney, Discover mag.)

She is **absorbing** all that information *in* small bites.

“Between 1867 and 1899, Canada **absorbed** 1.6 million immigrants *into* a population at Confederation of barely three million.” (Andrew Coyne, The Next City mag.)

ABSTAIN

True science teaches us to doubt and to **abstain** *from* ignorance.

ABSTINENCE

The negative side of virtue is **abstinence** *from* vice.

ABSTRACT (V)

To ascertain the truth, it was necessary to **abstract** (i.e. remove) a good deal *from* his account of the proceedings.

ABUT

The lane **abuts** *against* (i.e. runs alongside) the railroad.

The house **abuts** (i.e. fronts) *on* the street.

His property **abuts** (i.e. borders) *upon* mine.

ABUZZ

“The brain contains between 10 billion and 100 billion neurons, each forming bridges to so many others that the brain is **abuzz** *with* as many as 1 quadrillion

connections.” (Sharon Begley with John Carey and Ray Sawhill, Newsweek mag., Feb. 7, ‘83)

ACCEDE

“There are over 60 covenants on human rights . . . China has **acceded** *to* 17 and the United States *to* 15 of them.” (Qian Qichan, Time mag., Aug. 11, ‘97)

When the monarch died, his eldest son **acceded** *to* (i.e. inherited) the throne.

ACCEPT

Having been **accepted** *as* an accountant, he ‘moled’ his way into the secret organization.

His credentials have been **accepted** *by* the company.

“The computer can **accept** data only *in* a highly structured (digital) form.”

(British Medical Bulletin, Oxford English Dictionary)

I **accept** (i.e. agree) *to* do that, but on one condition.

“Legacies, or children of alumni, are three times more likely to be **accepted** (i.e. admitted) *to* Harvard than other high school graduates with the same (sometimes better) scores.” (Michael Lind, Harper’s mag.)

ACCEPTANCE

“The assertion finds **acceptance** *in* every rank of society.” (M. Faraday, Oxford English Dictionary)

“The only real freedom is in order, in an **acceptance** *of* boundaries.” (Peter Ustinov)

ACCESS (N)

“Each animal was kept in a small room, with **access** *to* an outdoor exercise area.” (National Geographic)

ACCESS (V)

He **accessed** (i.e. made his way into) the house *by* (or *through*) a window.

I know she will **access** (i.e. enter) his apartment *with* the stolen key.

ACCESSIBLE

The fortress was **accessible** (i.e. approachable) *from* the seacoast only.



He was as **accessible** (i.e. available) *to* the humblest as he was *to* his peers.

ACCESSION (N)

The **accession** (i.e. addition) *of* 90 new students overcrowded the school.

The populace rejoiced at the prince's **accession to** (i.e. assumption of) the throne.

ACCESSION (V)

"This skull was the oldest of its type ever found (2.5 to 2.6 million years old). It was **accessioned** (i.e. recorded) under the number KNM-WT 17000 in the National Museums of Kenya." (Pat Shipman, Discovery)

ACCESSORY

A person who conceals a crime is an **accessory after** the fact.

A person who incites another to commit a felony is considered to be an **accessory before** the fact.

Though he escaped punishment, he was an **accessory to** the crime.

ACCIDENT

Her wealth was due to an **accident** (i.e. happenstance) *of* birth.

An **accident** (i.e. mishap) *to* the machinery halted production.

ACCLIMATIZE

She quickly became **acclimatized to** the new conditions.

He is **acclimatizing** himself *to* desert conditions.

ACCOMMODATE

They were **accommodated** (i.e. given lodging) *at* the newly-refurbished Ritz hotel.

His staff was usually **accommodated** (i.e. lodged) *in* motels.

We were forced to **accommodate** (i.e. adapt) ourselves *to* our circumstances.

She was always ready to **accommodate** (i.e. oblige) a friend *with* a loan.

ACCOMPANY

The child was **accompanied** (i.e. escorted) *by* her mother.

She **accompanied** (i.e. went with) him *on* all his travels.

Let me **accompany** (i.e. escort) you *to* the door.

He **accompanied** (i.e. supplemented) his speech *with* gestures.

ACCOMPLICE

He was an **accomplice** (i.e. partner in crime) *in* the murder of the diplomat.

The police are searching for the two **accomplices** (i.e. associates in wrongdoing) *of* the thief.

ACCOMPLISH

She was **accomplished** (i.e. skilled) *in* all the social arts.

She **accomplished** (i.e. performed) the difficult task *with* speed and efficiency.

ACCORD (N)

They were all **in accord with** his decision.

ACCORD (V)

Wordsworth mentioned the glimpses of eternity **accorded** (i.e. granted) *to* saints.

The victim's account of the accident **accords** (i.e. agrees) *with* yours.

ACCORDING

"Corrosion costs America \$70 billion each year, **according to** the National Bureau of Standards."

(The Economist, 1988)

ACCOUNT

He gave an accurate **account of** his adventures.

ACCOUNT

"The Columbia (river) and its tributaries **account for** (i.e. produce) one-third of all hydroelectric power generated in the United States."

(William Least Heat Moon, Blue Highways)

“The Higgs boson accounts (i.e. is responsible) *for* the origin of all mass in the universe.”

(Larry Gonick, Discover mag.)

The bank clerk had to **account to** (or *with*) his superiors every Tuesday.

ACCOUNTABLE

Man is **accountable** *for* his acts.

He likes to pretend that he is **accountable to** no one.

ACCRETE

“The poor live in . . . the makeshift, vertical barrio that has **accreted to** suspension cables of the bridge.”

(William Gibson)

ACCRETION

“They jettisoned . . . the embarrassing **accretions** *from* their past.” (Paul Johnson)

His book is an **accretion of** casual writings.

ACCRUE

Many advantages **accrue** (i.e. arise) *from* the freedom of the press.

All proceeds will **accrue** (i.e. accumulate and go) by natural advantage) **to** him.

ACCUMULATE

“In August 1986, bubbles of carbon dioxide **accumulating at** the bottom of (Lake Nyos in Cameroon) . . . burst to the surface; a blanket of dense carbon dioxide and water vapor spread over nearby villages, killing cattle and 1,700 people.” (Discover mag., Oct. 1988)

I’m **accumulating** stamps *for* my nephew *in* a large album.

Your discards are **accumulating into** quite a pile.

The maple leaves had **accumulated under** the porch.

ACCURATE

You must be **accurate in** your calculations.

“Today’s best atomic clocks are **accurate to** one part in 10 to the 14th power; but a super-cooled atomic clock should be 10,000 times more accurate).”

(The Economist)

ACCUSE

The foreman **accused** the worker *of* carelessness.

ACCUSTOM

You will simply have to **accustom** yourself **to** his habits.

“I’ve grown **accustomed to** her face.” (words of a song)

I’m slowly **accustoming** myself **to** this simpler way of life.

ACQUAINT

The couple became **acquainted through** mutual friends.

Please **acquaint** him *with* your plan.

ACQUAINTANCE

Clubs foster **acquaintance between** people with similar values.

She is anxious to make the **acquaintance of** any person who shares her interests.

ACQUIESCE

“You’re bound to **acquiesce in** his judgment, whatsoever may be your private opinion.”

(Oxford English Dictionary)

Note: The use of *to* and *with* is obsolete

(Oxford English Dictionary)

ACQUIRE

He will **acquire** it *by* hook or *by* crook.

They **acquired** most of their mercenaries *from* Germany.

“One year into the First World War, Britain had to **acquire** 32,000 pairs of German binoculars, *through* a Swiss intermediary.” (John Grigg, The Spectator reviewing First World War by Martin Gilbert)

ACQUIT

The defendant was **acquitted** by the jury.

The jury **acquitted** the man *of* the alleged crime.

By **acquitting** the executive *of* all blame, the tribunal dealt a serious blow to the company’s morale.

**ACT (VV)**

"A part of the brain called the hypothalamus acts as the body's thermostat." (Robert M. Sapolsky, Discover mag., 1990)

Why don't you act for him?

You are acting in a manner that invites criticism.

"DNA is a long molecule that contains information on the way four different components are strung together like beads on a string. Thus, they act like letters in an alphabet. The sequence of those letters forms sentences called 'genes'." (David Suzuki, Montreal Gazette)

"Interlukin-1 acts on the body's central thermostat, causing a fever, which may depress viral activity and enhance the immune response." (Leon Jaroff, Time mag.)

Act towards him as you do towards his sister.

The gastric juice acts upon the food we swallow.

He always acted with decision.

Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

ACTIVE

Storefront lawyers are active in the cause of justice.

Drug dealers are very active on that street.

Mother Theresa is active with her sister nuns in obtaining relief for the poor.

One gland in particular becomes active under stress.

ACTUATE

She was actuated by compulsive curiosity.

He actuates the light with a snap of his finger.

The boy was actuating the car's starter with a stolen key.

ADAMANT

"Yes, he was adamant on that." (John Le Carré)

ADAPT

The gun was adapted for use in hand-to-hand fighting.

His invention was adapted from an idea conceived by his father.

"Natural selection cannot anticipate the future and can adapt organisms only to challenges of the moment." (Stephen Jay Gould, Discover mag., Oct. '96)

A child adapts very quickly to his/her surroundings.

She was adapting unconsciously to his body language.

ADD

I will also add a ribbon for the effect.

"The burning of Earth's rain forests . . . not only adds carbon dioxide to the atmosphere but also removes the trees that would have absorbed it. The result is an accumulation of heat-reflecting gases and an overall warming of the planet — the greenhouse effect." (Jonathan Schell, Discover mag.)

When she added baby's breath to the bouquet of roses, the effect was magic.

He was adding insult to injury by not acknowledging her presence.

That adds up to an insult, my friend.

ADDICT (V)

She was addicted to the music of Mozart.

What kind of monsters addict children to nicotine?

They were addicting underage girls to morphine.

ADDICTION

I shared his addiction to Sherlock Holmes mysteries.

ADDRESS (N)

She showed great address in dealing with her opponents.

He exhibited the address of an accomplished intriguer.

ADDRESS (V)

"Eric Gill solaced himself by instructing his apprentices to address him as 'Master'." (The Economist mag.)

The president addressed (i.e. spoke to) the people in a voice laden with sorrow.

She addressed (i.e. directed) her remarks to the legislature.

He was addressing her as Mrs. Ames long before she married him.

ADEPT

She is adept at getting out of trouble.

The parliamentarian was adept in the cut and thrust of debate.

ADEQUATE

His skills are barely **adequate** *for* the job.

He proved **adequate** *to* the situation.

ADHERE

Paint **adheres** best *to* a clean, dry surface.

Some of this food is **adhering** *to* the pan *like* glue.

“Treason against the United States shall consist only in levying war against them, or in **adhering to** their enemies, giving them aid and comfort.”

(Article 111, Section 3, Constitution of the United States)

ADHERENCE

His **adherence** *to* the cause proved to be his downfall.

ADHERENT

He is an **adherent** *of* the Conservative Party.

Adherents *to* Luther’s principles were called Protestants.

ADJACENT

The two men’s farms are **adjacent** *to* each other.

ADJUST

Just give me time and I’ll **adjust** *to* this new life.

She **adjusted** *to* theatrical life *like* a born trooper.

“Without gravity, the heart begins to relax, **adjusting to** its lower work load by slowing down and shrinking.”

(David Noland, Discover mag.)

ADMINISTER

She **administered** (i.e. dealt) a polite rebuff *to* the pushy salesman.

She **administers** (i.e. manages) our head office *with* a firm hand and an even temper.

ADMIRATION

“I take place to no man in my **admiration** *for* Dan Rather.” (James Brady, Advertising Age)

“The prince . . . is the **admiration** *of* the whole court.”
(The Oxford Universal Dictionary)

ADMIT

They have **admitted** (i.e. accepted) me *into* their ranks.

His problem did not **admit** *of* (i.e. permit) a solution.

When will they **admit** you *to* (i.e. allow you to take) the bar exams?

Confessing your crime to a priest is quite different from **admitting** it *to* the police.

ADOPT

The players **adopted** it *as* their mascot.

He **adopted** little Harry *with* trepidation.

ADORN

If you let him, he’ll **adorn** the statue of David *with* a fig leaf.

The emperor **adorned** his castle *with* the spoils of war.

ADRIFT

The boat was cut **adrift** *from* its moorings.

Our skiff is **adrift** *on* the lake.

ADVANCE (N)

“Every great **advance** *in* science has issued from a new audacity of imagination.”

(John Dewey, Forbes mag., 1970)

That’s certainly an **advance** *on* last year’s proposal.

ADVANCE (V)

He worked very hard to **advance** himself *in* his profession.

I regret to report they **advanced** *on* the city last night.

He kept **advancing** *on* her, and she kept backing away.

Our football **advanced** *to* the 30-yard line this time.

Let’s **advance** *toward* the town tonight.

ADVANTAGE

She has the **advantage** *of* Mrs. Jones, who is impoverished. (British)

I would take **advantage** *of* that situation, if I were you.

You have the **advantage** *over* me ; I don’t know you.
(North American)

The **advantage** *to* him was plain.

**ADVANTAGEOUS**

It would be **advantageous** *for* them to buy time, but not for me.

That's certainly **advantageous** *to* us.

ADVERSE

Being **adverse** *to* a person or a thing reflects opposition.

ADVERT

Mac then **adverted** *to* last year's disaster.

I'm **adverting** *to* what you told me last night.

ADVERTISE

In the early 1930s . . . when Amtorg, the Soviet trading agency, **advertised** *for* 1000 skilled workers, more than 100,000 Americans applied.

She is now **advertising** her language school *on* Internet.

He took every opportunity to **advertise** her *in* Vogue magazine.

I would **advertise** this product *to* the 20-to-35 age group.

ADVICE

My **advice** *to* you is to avoid confrontation.

ADVISE

I will **advise** (i.e. inform) him *by* letter *of* the loss of the ship.

Our experts are here to **advise** (i.e. counsel) you *on* any computer problem.

ADVOCATE (N)

He was the principal **advocate** *for* the huge conglomerate.
The new political candidate is an **advocate** *of* electoral reform.

"We have an **advocate** *with* the Father." (1 John ii.1.)

ADVOCATE (V)

As a lawyer, he **advocates** *for* (i.e. defends) a number of blue chip firms.

The soap box orator was **advocating** (i.e. recommending) group action *to* his only listener.

AFFECT

The vibrations are **affecting** her *at* night, *after* she has gone to sleep.

He is **affected** *by* bad weather.

"Psychological conditions **affect** the welfare of people *through* the immune system." (Rita Levi-Montalcini)

Bach's music **affects** me *in* my innermost being.

AFFILIATE (N)

The department store is an **affiliate** *of* a nation-wide chain.

AFFILIATE (V)

The group decided to **affiliate** *with* the national association.

Note: *with* (American); *to* (British)

AFFINITY

There is a strong **affinity** *between* music and dancing.

"An **affinity** *for* is confined to scientific usage. One substance is said to have an **affinity** *for* another when it has a tendency to unite with it."

(Frederick T. Wood, *English Prepositional Idioms*, published by MACMILLAN)

"When Père Armand David, the great French explorer-priest, acquired the Western world's first great panda in 1869, he never doubted its evident **affinity** *with* bears."
(Stephen Jay Gould, *Discovery*) Note: Never *to*

AFFIX

So why don't you **affix** (i.e. attach) this *to* your will?

They're **affixing** this warning sign *to* every trailer in the country.

AFFLICT

FM stereo was the only high-fidelity audio medium **afflicted** *with* background noise.

Afflicting us *with* his presence, the politician proceeded to monopolize the conversation.

AFOUL

He was often **afoul** *of* the law.

AFRAID

He was **afraid of** his own shadow.
She was **afraid to** walk home in the dark.

AGE (N)

You can't get married in that country under the **age of** eighteen.

AGE (V)

I have the Christmas pudding **ageing in** wine.
That meat is **aged to** perfection.

AGGRIEVED

She was **aggrieved at** being overlooked for the part.
They were **aggrieved by** the attitude of their relatives.

AGHAST

They were **aghast at** his negligence in the matter.

AGITATE

She spent her life **agitating for** equality.
We will **agitate for** a new contract starting tomorrow.

AGOG

They were all **agog about** the latest gossip.

AGONIZE

They are **agonizing over** the scathing review.
She **agonized with** him *throughout* the dismal third act.

AGREE

They **agree about** that, but nothing else.
They **agreed among** themselves.
"The principles to be **agreed by** all."
(Bacon, *The Oxford Universal Dictionary*)
He **agrees on** the course to be taken. We're sure she will **agree to** that.
"History," said Napoleon, "is a set of collectively **agreed upon** lies."

"An intellectual is not necessarily a man who is intelligent, but someone who **agrees with** other intellectuals." (Edward Teller, *Discovery* mag.)

"They **agree** (i.e. reconcile) their budgets **with** their accountants every six months." (*The Economist*)

Can you believe it? She's **agreeing with** everybody.

AGREEABLE

I am **agreeable to** your plan of action.

AGREEMENT

I am in full **agreement with** you.

AIM

"As late as 1931, the United States had a war plan **aimed at** the British Empire, 'Navy Basic Plan Red'."
(Paul Johnson: *A History of the Modern World*)

The girl **aimed for** the target but broke a window instead.

"The reason laser light works so well in everything from CD players to surgery is that it's 'coherent'— that is, ordinary separate photons of light merge to make one powerful light wave that can be **aimed with** terrific precision." (*Discover* mag., July 1998)

AKIN

The tribes are **akin in** their warlike nature.
Your words were **akin to** a slap in the face.

ALARM (V)

I am **alarmed at** the present state of affairs.
The parents were **alarmed by** the rise in crime in their neighbourhood.
The child was constantly **alarming** us *by* running a fever.
Do not **alarm** me *with* these possible disasters.

ALARM (N)

My **alarm at** the news that soldiers were approaching spread like wildfire.

ALERT (A)

The squirrel is very **alert in** its movements.

“Phagocytes (white blood cells) constantly scour the territories of our bodies *alert to* anything that seems out of place. What they find, they engulf and consume.”
(Peter Jaret, National Geographic/Reader's Digest)

ALERT (V)

I had to **alert** him *to* the danger.

ALIEN (A)

The segregation of the blacks in South Africa was **alien to** democratic principles.

ALIEN (N)

They claimed to have seen an **alien from** the planet Venus.

ALIENATE

She was **alienated from** her own society *by* its treatment of the unfortunate.

He **alienates** (i.e. turns off) everyone *by* talking down to them.

They're **alienating** (i.e. disaffecting) the whole world *by* bullying that small nation.

“Enemy property was **alienated** (i.e. transferred) *during* the war.” (World Book Dictionary)

ALIGHT

He is **alighting** (i.e. getting off) *at* every bus stop along the way.

She **alighted from** (i.e. got out of) her car and ran into the house.

The robin **alights** (i.e. lands) *on* that mailbox every morning.

ALIGN

Germany was **aligned with** Japan in World War II.

I think Jordan is **aligning** herself *with* Iraq this time.

He would rather **align** himself *with* me than *against* me.

ALIKE

The specimens are **alike in** kind.

ALIVE

The painter was at the top of his form, **alive in** every fiber of his being.

The missionary's religion was founded on the conviction that we should be **alive to** every noble impulse.

Her eyes were **alive with** hope.

ALLEGIANCE

The leaders depended upon the **allegiance of** the citizens *to* the legitimate government.

ALLIANCE

The United Nations was designed to eradicate the need for military **alliances between** and *among* nations.

The Indian chief made an **alliance with** the neighboring tribe *for* the defense of their respective lands.

ALLOCATE

They **allocated** their resources *to* new tasks.

Canada is **allocating** her extra wheat *to* North Korea.

ALLOT

The director was authorized to **allot** (i.e. allocate) extra funds *to* the company *for* the specific purpose of completing the railroad link.

“Ten years I will **allot** (i.e. apportion) *to* the attainment of knowledge.” (S. Johnson, O.E.D.)

A certain amount of food was **alloted** (i.e. allocated) *to* each platoon.

How much of that shipment are you **allotting** (i.e. allocating) *to* me?

ALLOW

Astronomers, in their calculations, must **allow** (i.e. make provisions) *for* the pull of gravity.

The researcher is willing to **allow of** (i.e. permit) other hypotheses.

He **allowed** (i.e. granted) 10% of his annual income *to* each of his wives.

ALLUDE

This passage in the Bible evidently **alludes to** the Jewish Passover.

ALLURE

Allured by hope of gain, the prospectors risked their lives on the mountain pass.

It was hoped that the promise of heaven would **allure** people *from* evil *to* good.

ALLY

The quarreling states at last decided to **ally against** their common enemy.

In his mind, this treaty was **allied to** territorial expansion. (Federico Garcia)

“Lorca understood that any artist who **allied** himself too closely *with* a political ideology died as an artist, became little more than a talented propagandist.”

(Neil Bissoondath, *Montreal Gazette*)

He is **allying** himself *with* anyone who buys him a drink. You **ally** yourself *to* things, but *with* people.

ALOOF

He stood **aloof from** the rest of his family.

She used to be rather **aloof with** strangers.

ALTERING

“By 2040, the **altering of** genetic material *in* embryo could eliminate more than 3000 genetically-derived diseases.” (*Life* mag.)

ALTERNATE

He **alternated between** scolding and praising.

Here, floods **alternate with** droughts.

ALTERNATIVE

We were given the **alternatives of** leaving town or being shot.

“The **alternative to** functioning mitochondria (such as those in the human cell) is called death.”

(David Clayton, molecular biologist, *Discover* mag.)

AMALGAM

The plan was an **amalgam of** sound ideas and foolish notions.

AMALGAMATE

He **amalgamated** the gold and silver *into* an alloy.

They decided to **amalgamate with** the larger company.

She is **amalgamating** her plans *with* his.

AMASS

He **amassed** a large fortune *by* fair means and foul *for* the purpose of exerting political control.

AMATEUR

The boy was an **amateur** (i.e. not an expert) *at* chess.

He remained an **amateur among** professional athletes by never accepting a salary.

Although she has had every opportunity to study, she remains an **amateur** (i.e. a dilettante) *in* the arts.

He was an **amateur of** (i.e. had a fondness for) the more exotic sports.

AMAZE

He was **amazed** (i.e. surprised) *at* the crowd.

She was **amazed** (i.e. bewildered) *by* his magic skills.

The gymnast was constantly **amazing** us *with* his feats of contortion.

AMAZEMENT

I was filled with **amazement at** such reckless daring.

AMENABLE

The problem is not **amenable to** mathematical analysis.

AMOUNT (N)

What is the **amount of** her bill for groceries?

AMOUNT (V)

That **amounts to** very little in practical terms.



AMPLIFY

The professor was requested to **amplify** his lectures *by* illustrating them.

The lecturer **amplified** *on* so many themes, that the audience lost the gist of his presentation.

AMUSE

He was **amused** *at* the bird's efforts to escape

The children were highly **amused** *by* the clown's antics.

Amuse the baby *with* that rattle.

ANAGRAM

His pen name is an **anagram** *of* his real name.

ANALOGOUS

"Einstein's observations on the way in which, in certain circumstances, lengths appeared to contract and clocks to slow down, are **analogous** *to* the effects of perspective in painting."

(Paul Johnson, A History of the Modern World)

ANALOGY

There's an **analogy** (i.e. equivalency) *between* the military careers of Hitler and Stalin.

"The child is the **analogy** (i.e. simile) *of* a people yet in childhood." (Lytton)

He explained an electrical current by drawing an **analogy** (i.e. comparison) *with* a flow of water through a pipe.

Some still bear a remote **analogy** *with* (resemblance to) their Mongolian ancestors.

ANALYSIS

They made an **analysis** *of* the situation before proceeding.

ANATHEMA

An unorthodox approach is **anathema** *to* many in the arts.

ANCHOR

After anchoring his boat *by* the buoy, he swam to shore.

I will **anchor** the barge *near* the boathouse.

The boat seemed to be **anchored** *to* its own shadow.

ANGER

Anger *at* the insult prompted his acid reply.

Anger *toward* the offender exaggerates the offense.

ANGLE (N)

"The navigator sites himself in global terms, even universal ones, measuring the **angles** *between* his ship and the equator, the sun, the stars and the hypothetical meridian which stretches north and south from Greenwich to the poles." (Jonathan Raban, Coasting)

ANGLE (V)

"I was too busy trying to **angle** (i.e. direct) the bow of the boat *into* the next wave to be frightened."

(Jonathan Raban, Coasting)

"For some years now, the Soviet Union has been **angling** (i.e. trying slyly) *to* detach Japan from the western powers." (London Times, World Book Dictionary)

"Whether **angling** (i.e. fishing) *for* big ones or going after bream in a lake, good fishing is only minutes away from most Southern cities."

(Time mag., Oxford English Dictionary)

ANGRY

I was not so much **angry** *with* her as *at* what she had done.

Note: It's **angry** *with* a person, but *at* a thing.

Get **angry** *about* the political corruption you observe.

ANIMADVERT

The critic was wont to **animadvert** *on* (or *upon*) untrained performers.

ANIMATE

His remark was **animated** (i.e. motivated) *by* malice.

The teacher **animated** (i.e. enlivened) the lesson *with* witty comments.

ANIMUS

His **animus** *against* the Church was obvious to everyone.

ANNEX

Britain **annexed** Labrador *to* Newfoundland on the flimsiest of pretexts.

ANNEXATION

Most were in favour of **annexation** *to* the larger neighbouring country.

ANNOUNCE

They are **announcing** it *in* the newspapers?

The butler was told to **announce** each guest *in* a loud voice.

I will **announce** it *on* (or *over*) the radio. (Note: but only *on* TV)

The birth of a grandchild was **announced** *to* the family *by* phone.

ANNOYED

She was extremely **annoyed** *about* the damage to her front door.

I was **annoyed** *at* him for arriving late.

They were **annoyed** *by* his persistent coughing.

He **annoys** her *in* church *by* praying aloud.

She was **annoying** him *with* her endless questions.

I was **annoyed** *with* him for bringing up the subject.

ANSWER

She had a different **answer** *for* everyone.

He refused to give a direct **answer** *to* my question.

ANSWER

I cannot **answer** (i.e. be responsible) *for* him.

“In every man’s heart, there is a secret nerve that answers (i.e. responds) *to* the vibrations of beauty.”
(Christopher Morley)

This man **answers** *to* (i.e. matches) your description.

You will have to **answer** *to me*, my boy (i.e. you are responsible to me).

She **answered** (i.e. replied to) my question *with* an insult.

ANSWERABLE

You are **answerable** *to* me *for* the safety of the ship’s crew.

ANTAGONISTIC

The nationalistic spirit was the main force **antagonistic** *to* (or *towards*) the ruler’s schemes.

ANTECEDENT

Contrary to the report, the tremors were **antecedent** *to* the quake.

ANTERIOR

They lived in ages **anterior** *to* the Flood.

ANTIDOTE

The public health authorities could find no **antidote** *against* the new mysterious malady.

Economic opportunity is a good **antidote** *for* social discontent.

Is there a universal **antidote** *to* snakebite?

ANTIPATHY

They shared an **antipathy** *to* the avant-garde novelist.

ANTITHESIS

Exploitation of one’s fellows is the very **antithesis** *of* Christianity.

ANTITHETICAL

The guild mentality of doctors is basically **antithetical** *to* their oath.

ANXIOUS

The mother was **anxious** *about* her child’s health.

She’s **anxious** *at* the delay involved in the processing of her passport.

The parents were **anxious** *for* the safety of their young in the sailboat.



APATHY

The students' **apathy** *toward* their studies was justified by the limitations of the school program.

APOLOGIZE

You should **apologize** *to* the guest *for* your oversight.

APOLOGY

I think you should make an **apology** *to* your mother.

APPAL

They were **appalled** *at* the idea of being bussed to school.
I was **appalled** *by* the prevailing conditions in the mine.

APPARENT

Their guilt is **apparent** *in* their every gesture.
His guilt was **apparent** *to* all.

APPEAL (N)

The householders who had lost everything in the flood made an **appeal** (i.e. a call) *for* assistance.
The law provides for an **appeal** (i.e. a calling to account) *from* a lower to a higher court.

APPEAL (V)

"He (Gandhi) is a man of God. You (Winston Churchill) and I are mundane people. Gandhi **appealed** *to* religious motives. You never have. That is where you have failed."
(General Smuts)
She **appealed** *to* him *with* all the wiles she could muster.

APPEAR

He hopes to **appear** *among* the first names listed as passing with honours.
The general will **appear** *at* the front *with* all the insignia of his rank.
You are summoned to **appear** *before* the court.
The submarine **appeared** *below* the surface *near* the harbour.
It would **appear** (i.e. seem) *from* the reports that there are no survivors.

"Within just a few millions years (of the Cambrian explosion), nearly every major kind of animal anatomy **appears** *in* the fossil record for the first time."

(Stephen Jay Gould, *Discover* mag., 1989)

"There are no street names (in Tokyo). All streets are anonymous: street names do not **appear** *on* any map."
(Josh Freed, *Montreal Gazette*)

If you are patient, the sun will **appear** *through* the mist.

The bacteria will **appear** *to* the eye *through* the microscope.

The geologist was certain that rich mineral deposits would **appear** *under* the next layer of rock.

Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

APPEND

The secret codicil was **appended** *to* the billionaire's will.
Why don't you **append** that glossary *to* your Chronicles?

APPENDAGE

The tail is an **appendage** *of* the tadpole; it is gradually absorbed in the process of metamorphosis.

APPENDIX

The **appendix** (i.e. addition) *to* his book is detailed and helpful.

APPETITE

Emily Carr had an **appetite** *for* the beauty of the forests of British Columbia.

APPLICATION

All **applications** (i.e. requests) *for* tickets must be made *to* the Registry.

"The **application** (i.e. use) *of* what you know will enlarge your understanding."

(John Le Carré, *The little drummer girl*)

APPLY

The idea was a clever one, but it would have to be **applied** (i.e. put into practice) *by* experts.

Equipped with his engineering degree, the young man was ready to **apply** (i.e. bid) *for* a position.

Make sure you **apply** (i.e. direct) this cost *to* the right budget.

APPOINT

He was **appointed** *as* my assistant *by* the director.

She was **appointed** *to* the position of Chairperson.

APPOINTMENT

His **appointment** *as* coach is the talk of the town.

Their **appointment** *by* the mayor is questionable, to say the least.

Her **appointment** *to* the Bench is effective January 1st.

APPORTION

The father tried to **apportion** his property equally *among* his heirs.

King Solomon's suggestion that a child be **apportioned** *between* two claimants was a clever ruse to identify the real mother.

The relief worker was instructed to **apportion** an equal amount of food *to* each family.

APPOSE

He **opposed** a seal *to* the certificate.

APPOSITE

It is a perfect **opposite** *to* that simile.

APPOSITION

The experiment he used in the course of his lecture was **in apposition** *to* his theory.

APPRECIATION

His sincere **appreciation** *of* my efforts encouraged me.

APPRECIATIVE

She was very **appreciative** *of* my tacit support.

APPREHENSION

Her **apprehension** (i.e. misgivings) *about* her stage performance undermined the whole company's morale.

He has an **apprehension** (i.e. perception) *of* the problem.

The citizens were relieved to learn about the **apprehension** (i.e. arrest) *of* the thief.

APPREHENSIVE

I was **apprehensive** *about* (or *for*) the children travelling alone.

The refugees were **apprehensive** *of* the future.

APPRENTICE

I want to be **apprenticed** *to* a super mechanic.

I was **apprenticed** *to* the garage trade *with* a top mechanic.

APPRISE

Go ahead: **apprise** me *of* the details of this case.

APPROACH

The **approach** *of* dawn reminded us of our peril.

The **approach** *to* the castle was a steep cliff.

APPROBATION

When did you get their **approbation** *of* this deal?

APPROPRIATE

Simple, comfortable clothing is **appropriate** *for* school children.

"The air of mystery is **appropriate** *to* the popular mystique of the Rothschilds, but not *to* the history of a bank." (The Economist)

APPROPRIATE

They have **appropriated** the idea of monarchy *to* their own ends. (The Economist)

APPROVE

I do not **approve** *of* your conduct.

**APPROXIMATE (A)**

Ten minutes of stretching exercises is approximate to hours on the golf course. (Brit.)

APPROXIMATE (V)

His methods of government began to **approximate to** his predecessor's.

APPROXIMATION

Five hundred miles is an **approximation of** the distance between the two cities.

The prosecutor's indictment was a close **approximation to** the truth.

APROPOS

Apropos of nothing, she suddenly interrupted the proceedings.

APT

She is very **apt** (i.e. skilled) **at** darning socks.

"The time was **apt for** (i.e. appropriate to) reminiscence." (Evelyn Waugh)

He is **apt** (i.e. likely) **to** lose his temper.

ARCH

The darkening sky was **arched with** a shimmering rainbow.

ARGUE

In the Army, we were enjoined not to **argue about** religion or politics.

Instead of **arguing against** everything, why don't you argue **for** something for a change?

"To argue that there is a guiding intelligence behind, above, or within the universe is not the same as **arguing for** a benign, personal Deity."

(Patrick Glynn, National Review mag.)

He spent his life in swivel chairs, **arguing with** dictating machines.

ARISE

"Cancer **arises from** a number of insults to the DNA (the master molecule of life). Viruses are one insult. They start the process rolling." (Claudia Wallis, Time)

"What fascinates me is this (re human embryo) . . . The egg gets fertilized. The cells start dividing. Some end up as fingernails. Some end up as the liver. And then consciousness **arises out of** it. How?"

(Dr.L.E.H.Trainor, professor emeritus, Univ. of Toronto)

Do you believe that trouble will **arise over** the final score?

ARM (V)

"A vaccine is a small dose of a natural (though dead or weakened) virus meant to stimulate the immune system to make antibodies, and thus to **arm** itself **against** later invasion by that virus."

(Cambridge University, Mass., The Economist)

He **armed** his men **for** an assault on the bridgehead.

"Trawler skippers, grand as kings, standing on bollards **armed with** whistles, raising a scratch crew for a voyage." (Jonathan Raban, Coasting)

ARMOUR, ARMOR

It's the body's **armor against** infection.

ARRAIGN

The felon was **arraigned at** the bar **for** his crime.

The young man was **arraigned on** a charge of vandalism.

ARRANGE

The wine bottles were carefully **arranged around** a pyramid of crystal wine glasses.

"There is a universal tendency for things to be **arranged** (i.e. constructed) **in** the least intricate, most probable way. The characteristic of life is that it works against this tendency, creating complexity where there was none."

(James Lovelock, The Economist)

Please **arrange** (i.e. plan) **for** the wedding on the last Saturday of this month.

Type: 'a' stands for adjective; 'adv' for adverb; 'n' for noun; 'ppl.a.' for past participle adjective; 'v' for verb; and 'vv' for Versatile Verb.

ARREST (V)

The youths were **arrested** *by* the police *for* the crime of arson.

He was **arrested** *in* school.

You cannot **arrest** a citizen *on* suspicion of a crime *without* a warrant.

ARRIVE

The wedding party **arrived** *at* the church in good time.

Will they **arrive** *by* plane?

“Board a Boeing 747 in New York and there is roughly a 99.9999% chance that you will **arrive** safely *in* London.” (The Economist)

The fire brigade **arrived** *on* (or *upon*) the scene and soon took charge.

Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

ASCEND

The rocket **ascended** *beyond* our view.

“The scientific establishment reveals its basic bias when it says that man descended, instead of **ascended**, *from* the monkey.” (Charles N. Prieur)

“In 1930, in (French) Indo-China alone, there were nearly 700 summary executions. If Gandhi had tried his passive resistance there, Ho Chi Minh wrote, ‘he would long since have **ascended** *into* heaven’.”

(Paul Johnson, A History of the Modern World)

The explorers will **ascend** the river *to* its source.

ASCENDANCY

She hated his **ascendancy** *over* her.

ASCRIBE

“Schizophrenics . . have . . an unfamiliar odor, recently **ascribed** *to* trans-3-methylhexanoic acid, in their sweat.”

(Lewis Thomas, The lives of a cell)

ASK

The travel agent **asked** *about* our itinerary.

“Hoover had **asked** Rudy Vallee in 1932 *for* an anti-Depression song; the wretched fellow produced ‘Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?’”

(Paul Johnson, A History of the Modern World)

Napoleon always **asked** *of* his generals, “I know he’s good. But is he lucky?”

ASPERSION

I can do without your **aspersions** *on* my reputation.

ASPIRANT

There are numerous **aspirants** *for* the post of theatre director.

ASPIRE

He **aspires** *after* (i.e. covets) fame, not truth.

“If you **aspire** *to* (i.e. reach for) the highest place, it is no disgrace to stop at the second, or even the third, place.”

(Marcus Tullius Cicero)

ASSAULT (N)

“The **assault** *on* the truth by such propagandists as Goebbels can have tragic consequences. Words ought to be somewhat outrageous for they are, after all, assaults of thoughts on the unthinking.” (John Maynard Keynes)

ASSEMBLE

The hikers were instructed to **assemble** *at* a fork in the trail.

The teacher **assembled** all the children in the primary grades *for* a picnic.

“We haven’t yet learned how to stay human when **assembled** *in* masses.” (Lewis Thomas, The Lives of a Cell)

“There is an inherent tendency of matter to **assemble** itself, in an orderly way, *into* more and more complex forms, as though the ‘desire’ to attain consciousness and personal relationship were built into the nature of matter itself.” (Lewis Thomas, The Lives of a Cell)

The dancers have been requested to **assemble** *on* stage.

ASSENT

He nodded his **assent** *to* the task.



ASSENT

Would you please **assent** *to* our suggestions *with* a nod of your head?

ASSIDUOUS

I've always been **assiduous** *in* my duties.

ASSIGN

Why don't you **assign** that work *to* me?

ASSIMILATE

He was careful to **assimilate** his behaviour (i.e. conform) *to* that of his neighbours.

"I am foreign material, and cannot **assimilate** *with* (i.e. become incorporated into) the Church of England."
(J.H. Newman)

ASSIST

They **assisted** *as* spectators rather than *as* participants.

Cornelius Mussus **assisted** *at* the Council of Trent.

He wanted to **assist** me *in* my observations.

"Could you **assist** a poor man *with* a copper, Sir?"
(Oxford English Dictionary)

ASSOCIATE (N)

The chief engineer was an **associate** *of* the architect in the construction of the stadium.

ASSOCIATE (A)

"Many of the traits **associated** *with* Type-A behaviour, including fast-paced speech and eating, and a sense of urgency about time, do not seem to increase the risk of heart attack . . . Only hostility appears to be related to disease." (Redford Williams of Duke University)

Note: never associated *to*

ASSOCIATION

"Most of the **associations** *between* the living things we know about are essentially cooperative ones . . . It takes long intimacy, long and familiar interliving, before one kind of creature can cause illness in another."

(Lewis Thomas, The lives of a Cell)

A university should function as an **association** *of* scholars for the advancement of knowledge.

Close **association** *with* good literature develops both the mind and the spirit.

ASSUMPTION

"Atheism is abnormality. It is not merely the denial of a dogma. It is the reversal of a subconscious **assumption** *in* the soul; the sense that there is a meaning and a direction in the world it sees."

(G.K. Chesterton, The Everlasting Man)

He dreamed of a sudden **assumption** (i.e. elevation) *into* the heady community of the elite.

The acting manager bustled about with an **assumption** (i.e. appropriation) *of* authority.

ASTERN

He maneuvered his sloop slightly **astern** *of* the leader's.

ASTONISH

They were **astonished** *at* his doing such a thing.

"The people were **astonished** *at* his doctrine."

(Bible: Matthew 7:28)

You will be **astonished** *by* the musical ability of this child prodigy.

The magician will **astonish** the audience *with* his tricks.

ASTONISHMENT

Imagine their **astonishment** *at* his sudden wealth and fame.

ASTOUND

Weren't you **astounded** *at* their giving up so quickly?

I was **astounded** *by* his skills as a magician.

"He liked to **astound** his readers *with* paradoxes, such as the fact that, when the largest human cell (the female ovum) and the smallest (the male spermatozoon) meet and fuse, the biological miracle of conception occurs."
(Mind Alive mag.)

ASTUTE

How very **astute** you are *at* leaving no trace of your passage.

Their were surprisingly **astute** *in* the way they solved that problem.

ATONE

“Nothing can **atone** *for* the insult of a gift, except the love of the person who gives it.” (Old Chinese proverb)

ATTACH

The notary instructed his clerk to **attach** (i.e. affix) the codicil **at** the top of the last page of the will.

A legal writ will **attach** him (i.e. make him liable) *for* the debt he owes.

No blame may **attach** *on* (or *upon*) (i.e. adhere to) her for the accident.

“Since it consists only of a relatively short strand of DNA protected by a shell of protein, a virus cannot eat or reproduce by itself. What it can do is **attach** itself *to* a host cell and inject its DNA inside.”

(David H. Freedman, Discover mag.)

ATTACHMENT

The **attachment** (i.e. affection) **between** David and Jonathan in the Old Testament became a model for devoted friendship.

The machine had **attachments** *for* special cleaning tasks. The **attachment** of a child *to* an animal (i.e. the bond between) can be profound.

ATTACK (N)

A night **attack** *by* long-range bombers destroyed the city. Most of the household members suffered from an **attack** *of* the flu.

“R.L. Stevenson’s The Lantern-Bearers is an **attack** *on* realism that’s unreal.”

(G.K. Chesterton, Generally Speaking)

ATTACK (V)

The intelligence agent informed us that the enemy planned to **attack** *with* tanks at dawn, *against* our weakest positions.

I will **attack** you *on* this bill, if you introduce it.

The cabinet member decided to **attack** the opposition *through* its waffling position on electoral reform.

ATTAIN

I couldn’t **attain** *to* those heights of achievement *in* several lifetimes.

ATTEMPT (N)

At least make an **attempt** *at* it.

It wasn’t the first time they made an **attempt** *on* her life.

ATTEND

It’s your turn to **attend** *to* (i.e. take care of) him.

ATTENDANT

Debilitating weakness is one of the symptoms **attendant** *to* this particular disease.

“Historically, for each 1 percent increase in joblessness in the U.S. economy, the direct result has been 38,886 deaths, 20,240 cardiovascular failures, 494 cases of death from cirrhosis of the liver **attendant** *to* alcoholism, 920 suicides, and 648 homicides.” (Harvey Brenner)

ATTENTIVE

They were singularly **attentive** *to* his appeals for reform.

ATTITUDE

The actress assumed an **attitude** *of* mock despair.

“We cannot escape the Calvinist **attitude** *to* money — that it is something to be accumulated . . . that it is naughty to spend it.” (Pierre Berton, The Smug Minority)

Her **attitude** *toward* the course of study changed as her knowledge increased.

ATTRIBUTE (N)

“But mercy is above this sceptred sway . . . It is an **attribute** *to* God himself.” (Shakespeare)

Kindness is an **attribute** *of* the humane person.



ATTRIBUTE (v)

"In his book, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*, written 12 years after he published his more famous *On the Origin of Species*, Darwin attributed the origin of human races to our sexual preferences (the survival of the sexiest). Natural selection played no role, Darwin claimed."

(Jared Diamond, Discover mag.)

ATTRIBUTION

"Christianity, one star commentator declared, quoting without attribution from Disraeli, "was completed Judaism or it was nothing".

(John Le Carré, The little drummer girl)

ATTUNE

He was thoroughly attuned to their way of life.

AUDIENCE

Our senator has an audience of the president on Tuesday. (formal)

I had an audience with the Spanish Minister. (Disraeli)

AVAIL

I suggest you avail yourself of this rare opportunity.

AVAILABLE

"Lenders . . wish . . to have their assets as available as they can." (Rogers, Oxford Universal Dictionary)

That book is available at your corner store.

The documents will be available for your perusal this afternoon.

Here, hospital care is available only in emergencies to insured persons.

"Experts agree that not more than 20% of all positions available on the job market are advertised through newspapers, employment centres or placement agencies.

This means that over 80% of vacant positions are not advertised." (Pointe-Claire Job Search Centre, funded by Human Resources Development Canada)

"Mental health is directly proportionate to the number of perceived options available to any individual. One

who is mentally disturbed often lives in a world in which almost every door seems to be closed."

(G. Leonard, Esquire mag., Dec. 1982)

This should be available to you within 5 days.

AVENGE

The father will avenge the murder of his son by bringing the criminal to justice.

Hitler's victims seek to avenge themselves on (or upon) the Nazi perpetrators who have so far escaped punishment.

AVERSE

"The boy (Frederick William II) was of an easy-going and pleasure-loving disposition, averse from sustained effort of any kind." (Encyclopedia Britannica)

"To be averse to something indicates opposition on the subject's part." (Michael Gartner: Advertising Age)

"Our advice is to use different from and averse to." (Fowler, The King's English)

Note: Oxford's King's English finds from uncomfortable; prefers to in all instances.

AVERT

She averted her eyes from the ghastly tableau.

AWAKE

The young campers awake at sunrise to the sound of the bugle.

He awoke from his stupor, but it was too late to catch the train.

AWAKEN

"Scientists are awakening to its (Antarctica's) critical importance as the storehouse of 70 percent of the world's fresh water supply and the source of much of its weather."

(Lennard Bickel, Antarctica, at the other end of the world)

AWARE

"In man, evolution became aware of self." (Julian Huxley)

AWAY

Stay **away** *from* the fire.

The author decided to **do away** *with* (i.e. delete) his last chapter altogether.

AWKWARD

He proved **awkward** *at* the task of organizing the computer program.

Although **awkward** *on* land, the vehicle was efficient in the water.

The child was **awkward** *in* her gestures.

B

BABBLE

“He **babbled**, for a long time, *about* the generosity and goodness of his brother.” (Charles Dickens)

“I bubble in the eddying bays, I **babble on** the pebbles.” (Tennyson, Brook)

“Griefs too sacred to be **babbled to** the world.” (D. Mitchell, Dream Life)

BACK

Make sure you **back against** the wall.

Our house **backed onto** a cliff.

Why don't you **back** the car *out of* the garage?

OK, now **back** all the way *to* the street.

On a hot day, she **backs** her car *under* those trees.

BAFFLE

I am **baffled** (i.e. puzzled) *by* his position in this dispute.

The vessel **baffled** (i.e. struggled) *with* a gale throughout her voyage.

We can **baffle** (i.e. confuse) the enemy *with* this ruse.

BAIT

The promise of riches was the **bait for** gold prospectors.

BALANCE (N)

“**Balance of** trade is . . . the estimation of the difference of value between the exports and imports of a country.” (Oxford Universal Dictionary)

Try to strike a happy **balance between** capitalism and freedom *in* your speech.

BALANCE (V)

I'm trying to **balance** (i.e. weigh) his arguments *against* yours.

Can you **balance** (i.e. steady) yourself *on* one foot?

The seal was **balancing** (i.e. steadying) the ball *on* its nose.

Make sure this set of figures **balances with** (i.e. equals) that one.

BALK

The horse **balked at** the jump, unseating its rider.

BAMBOOZLE

They were **bamboozled by** the con artist.

So the lawyer **bamboozled** him *into* accepting the politician's rather weak defence.

BAN (N)

Individuals have always had to live under the **ban of** a society that could not tolerate dissent.

The city council placed a **ban on** parking cars on the street overnight.

BAN (V)

“Following a Prussian decree of 1816 which **banned** (i.e. barred) Jews *from* the higher ranks of law and medicine, he (the father of Karl Marx) became a Protestant and . . . had his six children baptized.”

(Paul Johnson, Intellectuals)

Good air and sunny skies are **banned** (i.e. interdicted) *to* them *for* life.

BANDY

The ball was **bandied** (i.e. tossed) *from* one player *to* another *with* lightning speed.

Are you ready to **bandy** (i.e. exchange) words *with* me?

BANISH

Romeo was **banished from** Verona.

I am **banishing** them *from* this country *for* life.

Napoleon was **banished to** Elba.

BAR

“At the Lateran Council in 1215, they (the Jews) were barred from owning land and all military and civil functions.”

(from Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 1974)

They are **barring** him *from* the next jazz festival.

BARE (A)

He swept the driveway **bare** *of* leaves.

BARGAIN (V)

The woman **bargained** (i.e. haggled) almost an hour *with* the merchant *for* the antique vase she wanted.

He is **bargaining** *for* (i.e. expecting) good weather.

BARK

The huge dog **barked** *at* every passerby.

The sergeant **barked** his orders *to* the company.

He is **barking** *up* the wrong tree.

BARRIER

The Rocky Mountains were a **barrier** *between* Canada's coasts till the railway was built.

North America was a **barrier** *to* Europeans trying to reach Asia by sea.

BASE (N)

The financial experts outlined a sound **base** (i.e. program) *for* reform of the economy.

The climbers rested at the **base** (i.e. bottom) *of* the mountain.

BASE (V)

I am **basing** my conclusion *on* your behaviour up to now.

“Chinese medicine is **based** *on* the belief that a life force, or qi, flows through 14 channels in the body and can be stimulated by the insertion of needles (at the 360 acupuncture points).”

(George Howe Colt, Life mag.)

“Biologists don't know how patterns are created **on** real mollusks. But mathematical models **based** *on*

hypothetical interacting chemicals match them with uncanny accuracy.” (Carl Zimmer, Discover mag. 1992)

BASIS

“Isidore's Etymologies . . . became the **basis** *for* all teaching in the West for about 800 years.”

(Paul Johnson, The History of Christianity)

“It is necessary therefore to have a **basis** *for* our discussion (i.e. shared assumptions).”

(J. Bright, Oxford English Dictionary)

The prosecutor's accusations had no **basis** (i.e. foundation) *in* fact.

The **basis** (i.e. principal ingredient) *of* this cosmetic preparation is a vegetable oil.

BASK

She loved to **bask** *in* the sun.

BATHE

“From sunrise to sunset, Mars **bathes** *in* dazzling lasershine.” (National Geographic)

He bathed the seedling *with* a secret chemical.

BATTEN

“Melancholy sceptics with a taste for carrion, who **batten** (i.e. glut) *on* the hideous facts of history — persecutions, inquisitions.” (Emerson, Oxford English Dictionary)

BATTER

She was **battered** *by* her husband at least twice last year.

“The sample was **battered** *with* beams of charged atoms.” (The Economist mag.)

Sam wasn't beating my rugs, he was **battering** them *with* a baseball bat.

BATTLE (N)

“Lymphocytes, the small white blood cells that lead the body's **battle** *against* infection and cancer.”

(Rob Wechsler, Discover mag.)

The professors engaged in a **battle** *of* words over the precise meaning of a term.

"The revival has ignited a bitter lobbying **battle** *between* Big Steel and its customers."

(Christine Gorman, Time mag.)

BATTLE (v)

"One should never put on one's best trousers to go out to **battle** *for* freedom and truth."

(Henrik Ibsen, An Enemy of the People)

The waves **battled** *with* the winds.

BEAM (v)

The madman wanted his manifesto **beamed** (i.e. broadcast) *around* the world.

Radio programs were **beamed** *at* (i.e. transmitted to) Eastern Europe *from* England.

His moon face **beamed** (i.e. smiled warmly) *down at* her from its great height.

"A compact disc (CD) stores music in digital form in some 15 billion microspic pits on its aluminum surface . . . a laser (then) scans the pits and **beams** (i.e. transmits) their information *to* a computer chip for conversion into sound."

(Stephen Koepp, Time mag.)

BEAR (v)

Her song was **borne** (i.e. carried) *on* the wind.

Your complaint doesn't **bear** *on* (i.e. has no relation to) the subject at all.

Our guns were brought to **bear** (i.e. bracketed) *upon* (or *on*) the enemy's batteries.

"There is nothing in the world so much admired as a man who knows how to **bear** (i.e. suffer) unhappiness *with* courage." (Seneca)

She **bore** (i.e. endured) her pain *with* great fortitude.

BEARING

How does that have a **bearing** *on* this case?

BEAT (v)

The rioters are **beating** (i.e. pounding) *against* their cell bars with their tin cups.

The ship **beat** (i.e. ploughed) *along* the rocky coast.

"His mission: to **beat** (i.e. best) the archetypal mind-polluters *at* their own game." (James Geary, Time mag.)

"They shall **beat** (i.e. hammer) their swords *into* plowshares." (Isaiah 2:4)

They **beat** (i.e. bared) a path *to* his door.

"And the winds blew, and **beat** *upon* that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock." (Matthew 7:25)

He had **beaten** (i.e. smashed) the poor animal *to* a pulp. The mother's heart **beats** (i.e. pounds) *with* joy at the news of her son's success.

He was **beaten** (i.e. struck) *with* sticks *till* he lay senseless.

BECKON

She **beckoned** *to* him imperiously *from* the dais.

He is **beckoning** me *with* his finger.

BECOME

Don't you care what **becomes** *of* (i.e. happens to) the valuable library book.

It does not **become** (i.e. befit) us *to* neglect our civic duty by failing to vote.

BECOMING

Her period costume was very **becoming** (i.e. flattering) *to* the aging actress.

BEG

He **begged** (i.e. asked) *for* alms from the people leaving church.

The nuns went door to door, **begging** food *for* the poor.

Please don't beat him; I **beg** *of* (i.e. beseech) you.

BEGIN

I will **begin** *after* breakfast.

The blood drops **began** *at* the door.

I must **begin** *by* doing something. Anything.

"Professional pianists and violinists . . . almost always **begin** to play *by* the age of seven or eight."

(James Shreeve, Discover mag., Oct. '96)

He had **begun** *from* a point directly north of here.

The war **began** *on* (or *upon*) a soft, sunny morning.

“Civilizations decay quite leisurely. For 250 years after moral weakening *began in* Greece *with* the Sophists, Hellenic civilization continued to produce masterpieces of literature and art.”

(Will and Ariel Durant, The Story of Civilization)

“The (American Civil) war *began over* the expansion westward of slavery, not its elimination.”

(The Economist)

I’m *beginning to* lose patience with you.

Don’t *begin under* any circumstances.

“If you would change the face of the world, *begin with* the face in the mirror.” (Anon.)

Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

BEHALF

The lawyer spoke eloquently *on behalf of* his client.

BEHAVE

“Electrons had been thought to exist only as subatomic particles until . . . the quantum theory suggested that electrons could *behave as* both particles and waves.”

(Jamie Murphy, Time mag.)

They *behaved like* madmen.

They *behave ruthlessly toward* (or *to*) their tenants.

BEHAVIOUR

The comedian’s *behaviour before* an audience commanded attention.

Children should be taught what is acceptable *behaviour in* a church, theatre or concert hall, as well as *on* public vehicles and *on* the street.

The *behaviour of* some individuals *toward* the elderly is inconsiderate.

BELIEF

There were numerous varieties of Christianity which . . . centred on *belief in* the resurrection.”

(Paul Johnson, The History of Christianity)

Strangely, sickness onto death causes most people to betray their *belief in* God.

(Walt) Whitman wanted his poems to embody “an implicit *belief in* the the wisdom, health, mystery, beauty of every process, every concrete object, every human and other existence, not only consider’d from the point of view of all, but of each.”

(Christopher Patton quoting Whitman)

BELIEVE

“Economists are one of the last groups of professionals on earth who still *believe in* perpetual motion machines.” (Paul Erlich)

BELONG

“The tensions in a harp are so tremendous and unrelenting that it becomes unplayable after fifty years, and *belongs on* a dump or *in* a museum.”

(Kurt Vonnegut Jr., Jailbird)

Your mother’s portrait belongs *over* the fireplace.

Most fruit trees *belong to* the rose family, including peach, apricot, plum, cherry, apple and pear trees. And - yes - the strawberry, which is considered a tree because it has a wooden stem.

That gift *belongs under* the Christmas tree.

His book *belongs with* the classics.

Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

BELOVED

“It gave the rustic scenery the kind of self-contained serenity *beloved of* romantic painters of the nineteenth century.” (The Economist)

BENEFICIAL

Why are these tax breaks *beneficial to* everyone but me?

BENEFIT (N)

The actors staged a *benefit for* one of their fellow artists in distress.

You should give him the *benefit of* the doubt.

That is of very little *benefit to* me.

Note: “Benefits *of* the benefactor; benefits *to* the beneficiary” (Fowler, The King’s English)

BENEFIT (v)

That child is so ill, he's unlikely to **benefit** *by* any kind of holiday.

"Only a few privileged individuals out of the total number of people who have a given disease ever **benefit** *from* the results of sophisticated medical technology, and even fewer doctors develop the skill to use them."

(Ivan Illich, Toward a History of Need)

BENT (N)

They all have a **bent** *for* (i.e. bias to) the obvious.

BEND (v)

They left the bar **bent** (i.e. intent) *on* mayhem.

BEQUEATH

"It is this idolatry of self which they (the Romans) have **bequeathed** *to* us in the form of patriotism."

(Simone Weil)

BEREAVE

She was **bereaved** *of* three generations of her family in the Holocaust.

He was soon **bereft** *of* all his worldly goods.

BESET

He was **beset** (i.e. attacked) *by* his neighbours as soon as he stepped out the door.

She was **beset** (i.e. harassed) *by* problems all her married life.

He then **besets** (i.e. studs) the ring *with* priceless gems.

They were caught **besetting** (i.e. studding) jewelry *with* fake gems.

BESOTTED

The next morning, **besotted** (i.e. stupefied) *with* drink, he took the ferry back to the mainland.

She was **besotted** (i.e. infatuated) *with* words.

BESTOW

He rashly **bestowed** the award *on* (or *upon*) his own brother.

BIG

There's nothing **big** (i.e. elevating) *about* bigotry.
(Charles N. Prieur)

That's **big** (i.e. generous) *of* you.

She is **big** *with* child (i.e. pregnant)

BILK

The vagrant **bilked** him *of* all his savings

BIND

They **bound** (i.e. covered) the volumes *in* red leather.

"Opiate drugs like morphine and heroin can **bind** (i.e. adhere) *to* cells in the brain."

(Rob Wechsler, Discover mag.)

Make sure you **bind** (i.e. tie) their hands *with* those ropes.

BLAME (N)

She put the whole **blame** *on* me.

BLAME (v)

"Doppler radars will give pilots advance warning of wind shear conditions, which have been **blamed** *for* a number of plane crashes." (Gordon Graff)

He **blamed** the whole mess *on* his brother.

"I **blame** it *on* heredity."

(Evelyn Waugh, A little learning)

BLEND

The diplomat's manner was a skilled **blend** *of* tact and good humour.

BLEND

"The town and country met and **blended** (i.e. became one) *in* almost perfect harmony."

(M. Moorcock, Oxford English Dictionary)

“Like chameleons, squid have chromatophores — pigment cells in their skin — that allow them to change colour to *blend* (i.e. melt) *into* their surroundings.”
(Mark Kemp, *Discover* mag.)

“Her manner was smoothly *blended* (i.e. was a smooth mixture) *of* graciousness and condescension.”
(World Book Dictionary)

The four escapees *blended* (i.e. mingled closely) *with* the crowd.

“Pleasant Spring scents . . . to *blend* (i.e. mix in) *with* the robust aroma of coffee and fried bacon.”
(P.G. Wodehouse, *Oxford English Dictionary*)

BLESS

They were *blessed* (i.e. prayed for) *by* the chaplain before going into battle.

She *blessed* (i.e. thanked) him *for* his kindness.

“The bellman’s drowsy charm to *bless* (i.e. protect) the doors *from* nightly harm.”
(Milton, *Oxford English Dictionary*)

“The Word liveth . . . ; and the nations shall *bless* (i.e. sanctify) themselves *in* Him.”
(Jer. 4:2, *Oxford English Dictionary*)

I was *blessed* (i.e. endowed) *with* good health all my life.
We found him *blessing* (i.e. praying over) his congregation *with* all manner of wild incantations.

BLIND (A)

“Winston Churchill . . . though alert to danger in India . . . was always *blind to* perils further east.”
(Paul Johnson, *A History of the Modern World*)

BLIND (V)

“Clouds *blind* (i.e. hide) the stars *from* my view.”
(*Oxford English Dictionary*)

His prejudice *blinds* him (i.e. closes his eyes) *to* the facts of the case.

She was suddenly *blinded* (i.e. made sightless) *by* the sun.
“*Blind with* (i.e. blinkered by) science.”
(*Oxford English Dictionary*)

BLOCK (V)

The whole street was *blocked by* the fallen crane.

At rush hours, the main arteries are *blocked with* traffic.
They *blocked* the road *with* their trucks.

BLOT (N)

After a lifetime of public service, his financial misdemeanor was a tragic *blot on* his reputation.

BLOW (N)

“It was like a *blow to* the pit of my stomach.”
(Anthony Hyde)

BLOW (V)

The old man watched the dry autumn leaves *blow across* the road.

The factory whistle *blows at* 7 a.m.

The innkeeper used a small bellows to *blow* the embers *into* flame.

The wind *blew* all the leaves *into* my garden.

It is not good table manners to *blow on* your food.

The sudden gust of wind *blew* my newspaper *under* the porch.

The wind is *blowing through* the cracks in the house.

Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

BLUNDER

The horses had to *blunder* their way *alongside* the river.

The driver *blundered into* the wrong lane.

He *blundered upon* a scouting party and was taken prisoner.

BOARD (V)

I *boarded* (i.e. had my meals) *with* the sailors at the hostel.

He is *boarding* his windows *against* (i.e. shielding them from) the hurricane *with* barn siding.

BOAST (V)

He couldn’t help *boasting about* his deed.

To *boast of* a virtue is to hollow it with pride. (Anon.)

She **boasted** *to* him *about* her infidelities.

Note: Sometimes, 'boast' is a transitive verb and needs no preposition to *pre-position* the object. As in:

"Critic . . . A person who **boasts** himself hard to please, because nobody tries to please him."

(Ambrose Pierce, *The Devil's Dictionary*)

BOAT (V)

They **boated** *down* the river, singing at the top of their lungs.

"Leopoldine, daughter of Victor Hugo, drowned with her young husband, while **boating** *on* the Seine . . . His other daughter, Adèle, died mad."

(Charles McCarry, *National Geographic* mag.)

BOGGLE

The mind just **boggles** *at* this concept of the universe.

BOIL (V)

Water deprived of its air will not **boil** *at* 212 °F.

"Martyrs were stoned, or crucified, or burned in fire, or **boiled** *in* oil." (Tennyson, *Oxford English Dictionary*)

I want it **boiled** *down* *into* (i.e. reduced to) a sentence.

The mob surged and **boiled** (i.e. stormed) *through* every room of the palace.

The revolutionaries **boiled** *with* rage at the injustices inflicted upon the hapless serfs.

BOOK (V)

Shall I **book** (i.e. charge) it *to* you or *to* your father? (British)

BOOST (N)

We're relying on you to give a **boost** (i.e. encouragement) *to* your Alma Mater.

Inflation was increased by a **boost** (i.e. surge) *in* prices.

The child needed a **boost** (i.e. lift) *over* the fence.

BORDER (V)

"Goethe said that many of his best poems were written in a condition that **bordered** *on* (i.e. approximated) *somnambulism*." (Lyall Watson, *Supernature*)

The garden is **bordered** *with* (i.e. hedged by) evergreens.

BORN

"We are **born** *for* cooperation, as are the feet, the hands, the eyelids and the upper and lower jaws."

(Marcus Aurelius)

"Children **born** *in* Italy in 1348, the year of the Great Plague, grew no more than 24 teeth instead of the normal 32." (Elwin Newman, *Sunday Punch*)

They were **born** *into* wealth.

"We are **born** *of* love. It is the only principle of existence and its only end." (Benjamin Disraeli)

"It is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, it is in dying that we are **born** again *to* eternal life." (St. Francis of Assisi)

"A baby is **born** *with* prefabricated flexure lines on its hand; and what can be the survival value of these?" (Hugh Montefiore, *The Probability of God*)

BORROW

"The original idea of our civilization, the only one that we have not **borrowed** *from* the Greeks, is the idea of the spirituality of labour." (Simone Weil)

BOUNCE (V)

She **bounced** (i.e. sprang) *from* her chair *in* a fury.

The children **bounced** (i.e. bounded) *on* the trampoline with great glee, until one of them **bounced** (i.e. rebounded) *off* the edge and fell to the floor.

"One (guard) even **bounced** *upon* the (King's) bed and felt every inch for any threatening thing."

(George Garrett, *Death of the Fox*)

The ball **bounces** (i.e. bounds) *over* the wall occasionally.

Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

BOUND (V)

The property was **bounded** (i.e. hemmed in) *by* the river on one side and woods on the other.

They left at dawn, **bound** (i.e. headed) *for* they knew not what adventure.

The dancer **bounds** (i.e. leaps) *into* the air as if free of gravity.

The retriever loved to **bound** (i.e. leap) *through* the tall grass.

She was **bound** (i.e. compelled) *to* go for it.

Note: As for all VV (versatile verbs), they can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

Note: If the 'bound' you're looking for is the past tense of the verb 'bind', see 'bind'.

BOUNDARY

"It also promises to resolve the **boundary between** people and animals." (Matt Cartmill, Discover mag., Nov. '98)

Ideas are the **boundaries of** thought.

BOW (V)

The wreath-layers **bowed to** the Unknown Soldier.

The old lady's back was **bowed** (i.e. arched) *by* age.

The boat's bridge is **bowed** (i.e. bent) *like* an arch.

The Japanese lawyer **bowed** us (i.e. escorted us with bows) *into* his office.

Disgusted with the partnership, they **bowed** (i.e. backed) *out of* the agreement.

The whole crowd suddenly **bowed** (i.e. inclined their heads in reverence) *as one to* their sovereign.

BRAND (V)

"The remnants were eventually **branded as** (i.e. accused of being) heretics."

(Paul Johnson, The History of Christianity)

The bulls were branded *with* hot irons.

BREACH (N)

"The breaking of that trust (in words) . . . is symptomatic of **breach of** trust *with* God." (The Economist)

BREAK (V)

"One of the extraordinary properties of holograms is their resistance to damage or loss of memory. A tiny fragment or chip **broken** anywhere *from* the plate essentially holds all the information of the whole plate." (Yatri, Unknown Man)

They **broke** (i.e. smashed their way) *into* the house while the owner was away on vacation.

The composer loved to listen to the sea **break** (i.e. crash) *on* the rocks.

"The classic example of entropy is a car rusting in a junkyard; entropy **breaks down** the orderly machinery *into* crumbling rust."

(Dr. Deepak Chopra, Ageless Body, Timeless Mind)

Without warning, King Charles the First **broke in upon** (or *on*) (i.e. interrupted unexpectedly) a sitting of the House of Commons, hoping to trap the leaders.

He decided to **break with** (i.e. sever himself from) the past and start afresh.

BREAKTHROUGH

"**Breakthroughs in** miniaturization could lead to robots the size of a flea." (Philip Elmer De Witt, Time mag.)

BREATHE

"In every single breath of yours there are no less than 2 billion atoms that were once **breathed by** this great man (Leonardo da Vinci)."

(Heinz Haber, The Walt Disney story of our friend the atom)

"66 species of dolphins, porpoises, and other toothed whales inhabit the earth's water . . . **breathing from** openings on the tops of their heads."

(Justine Kaplan, Omni mag.)

"Ideas are the mightiest influence on earth. One great thought **breathed into** a man may regenerate him." (Channing)

"The air **breathes upon** us here most sweetly." (Shakespeare)

BRIBE (V)

She bribed her dog *with* scraps from the table.

BRIDLE (V)

The young wife bridled (i.e. expressed resentment) *at* every criticism against her husband.

BRIEF (V)

He found himself briefed *by* the whole assemblage.

I was briefed *on* the subject as soon as I stepped into the office.

BRIGHTEN

"Only a very tired seagull would have **brightened at** the sight of its dank greenstone cliffs."

(Jonathan Raban, *Coasting*)

The new owners **brightened** the old house **with** fresh paint.

BRIM (v)

"Current cosmology is **brimming with** exotic theories."
(*The Economist*)

BRING

The government intends to **bring** a court action *against* companies which pollute the environment.

"The family of a landless Indian peasant now spends about six hours a day merely finding the firewood it needs for cooking and heating. Another four to six hours are spent *bringing* water *from* a well."

(Alvin Toffler, *The Third Wave*)

"The only absolute response to absolute power is the absolute love which our Lord **brought into** the world."
(Malcolm Muggeridge)

The new lens **brought** the scene *into* sharp relief.

Why don't you **bring** him *through* the garden?

Speaking about the late master lyricist Alan J. Lerner, historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr. said, "Few men in our melancholy age **brought** so much pleasure *to* so many people." (*Time* mag.)

Bring it to me now!

"The average cost of developing a new drug and **bringing it to** market is \$350 million to \$500 million."

(Gary Taubes, *Discover* mag., Feb. '99)

Why wait? **Bring it with** you this evening.

BRISTLE (v)

I **bristle at** the very thought of it.

"Transparent, *bristling with* weapons and possessing a Houdini-like ability to slip between other cells, the white cells are the body's chief fighters" (against disease).

(Dr. Paul Brand, & Philip Yancey, *In His Image*)

"He would **bristle** all the land *with* castles."

(Lytton, *Oxford English Dictionary*)

"All France **bristles with** indignation."

(*World Book Dictionary*)

BROOD (v)

They **brooded on** the terror that would come with the night.

"Jackson Pollock (was) a genius whose spirit continues to **brood over** American culture."

(Robert Hughes, *Time* mag.)

She **brooded upon** her child's deathly pallor.

BRUSH (v)

It is impolite to **brush against** someone on a bus, if this can be avoided.

He **brushed by** me as he left the house.

The little boy was told to cheer up and **brush** the tears *from* his eyes.

BUBBLE (v)

"Some of the earth's strangest creatures live around hydrothermal vents — hot springs that *bubble from* volcanic fissures in the ocean depths."

(*Discover* mag., Oct. '96)

BUCKLE (v)

The mother **buckled** her child *into* the car seat.

BUILD

"Mitochondria, like chloroplasts, are *built according to* an elaborate blueprint." (*Life Science Library*, *The Cell*)

"**Build** better schoolrooms *for* the boy than cells and gibbets for the man." (Eliza Cook)

The robin had **built** its nest *in* the eavestrough.

"Nature has *built* its own carefully constructed electronic devices *into* all organisms."

(*Life Science Library*, *The Cell*)

"Nanotechnologists . . . believe in a 'bottom-up' approach. Take atoms and molecules . . . and custom *build* them *into* larger objects — ultra-strong materials, designer foods, even tiny robots." (Michael Krantz, *Time* mag.)

"Proteins are very large molecules *built of* simpler units called amino acids." (*Mind Alive* mag.)

“Istanbul (known for 1600 years as Constantinople) is the only city in the world to be **built on** two continents.”
(James Stewart-Gordon, Reader’s Digest)

It was the first bridge **built over** that river.

Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

BUILDUP (N)

“Glaucoma is the **buildup of** fluid in the eyeball, causing increased pressure and eventual damage to the optic nerve.” (Andrew Purvis, Time mag.)

BULK (V)

“The question of the Russian zone of occupation in Germany therefore did not **bulk in** our thoughts or **in** AngloAmerican discussions, nor was it raised by any of the leaders at Teheran.”
(Winston Churchill about the Iron Curtain)

BURDEN (V)

“Let us not **burden** our remembrance **with** a heaviness that is gone.” (William Shakespeare)

BURN (VV)

She was **burned** brown **by** the sun.

“Thanks to electromagnetism, the sun does not explode, but **burns** smoothly **for** billions of years.”
(Sheldon Lee Glashow, Discover mag., 1989)

“Many people didn’t even know of the atom’s existence — until that day in 1945 when a frightful flash **burned** the word “atom” **into** the mind of modern man.”
(Heinz Haber, The Walt Disney story of our friend the atom)

Candles **burn in** every corner of the church.

Lightning struck the old farmhouse, and it **burned to** the ground.

The cigarette had **burnt through** the upholstery.

She **burned with** desire.

“Oh, oh, oh,” Falstaff cries as the supposedly merry wives of Windsor **burn** him **with** tapers.”
(Otto Friedrich, Time mag.)

Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

BURST (V)

With the sudden heat, the apple trees **burst into** bloom.

“The Fourth of July fireworks **burst into** being a second ahead of their muffled bangs.” (John Updike)

He suddenly **burst** (i.e. charged) **through** the doorway.

“In August 1986, bubbles of carbon dioxide accumulating at the bottom of (Lake Nyos in Cameroon) . . . **burst to** the surface; a blanket of dense carbon dioxide and water vapor spread over nearby villages, killing cattle and 1,700 people.”

(Discover mag., Oct. 1988)

The pantry was **bursting** (i.e. overloaded) **with** every kind of baked delicacy.

BURY (VV)

She was **buried by** the same priest who had married her only a few weeks before.

They **buried** their beloved father **in** a small orchard within sight of the homestead.

They are **burying** him **under** the bridge, where he died.

BUSY

I never thought I would be this **busy in** my old age.

I’m sorry, but I’m too **busy to** attend the meeting tonight.

He was **busy with** another set of problems.

BUY (V)

She ran out to **buy** cigarettes **at** the corner store.

I **bought** a doll **for** Anita and a teddy bear for Sue.

They always **bought** their fish **from** the same passing peddler.

They only **buy** fruit **in** season.

Consumers are **buying** too much **on** credit.

It was possible in the 19th century for a soldier to **buy** himself **out of** the army.

Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.



CALL (v)

I **called** (i.e. stopped for a short spell) *at* his shop *on* the way home.

Why don't you have her sister **call** *for* her (i.e. pick her up).

He **called** *for* (i.e. demanded) his morning cup of coffee.

"Americans must **call** *on* more brain space to learn a second language than they did to assimilate English."

(Sharon Begley with John Carey and Ray Sawhill, Newsweek mag., 1983)

I **called** *to* her as she crossed the square.

CALVE

In 1982, an enormous chunk of freshwater ice **calved** *from* an ice shelf on Ellesmere Island.

CAPABLE

"Only a virtuous people are capable *of* freedom." (Benjamin Franklin)

"Stem cells (are) capable *of* generating an endless supply of red cells, white cells and platelets."

(Peter Radetsky, Discover mag.)

"The new digital video disc (DVD) . . . is capable *of* storing 4.7 gigabytes of data per side — enough to show a full-length feature film with stereo sound and a cinema-quality picture." (The Economist mag, June 1, '96)

CAPACITATE

"Current research shows the human brain to be marvelously designed and capacitated *beyond* the wonders with which it was invested by innocent imagination." (Scientific American mag.)

"We are infinitely capacitated *for* the future."

(Dr. Lewis Thomas, The Lives of a Cell)

CAPACITY

"The human liver has a great capacity *for* regeneration (i.e. ability to regenerate) . . . and can rebuild a large

portion of itself within a month."

(Harold M. Schneck Jr., New York Times)

The **capacity** (i.e. volume) *of* that reservoir is staggering.

CAPTURE (v)

"A newly discovered molecule is thought to be a component of interstellar dust. Its essence is better captured *by* R. Buckminster Fuller's geodesic dome, the many-sided structure whose perfect symmetry ensures perfect stability." (Sarah Boxer, Discover mag.)

He **captures** the spawning salmon *with* a net.

CARE (v)

I just don't **care** (i.e. worry) *about* that.

It's incumbent on the healthy to **care** *for* (i.e. look after) the sick.

She doesn't **care** *for* (i.e. like) candies.

I think she is **caring** *for* his two children this afternoon.

CARELESS

He was **careless** *about* details.

"Yet a boy **careless** (i.e. having no care) *of* books." (Wordsworth, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

CARRY

"One hair-thin strand of (pure glass fiber) can carry (i.e. transport) as many telephone conversations as 625 copper wires and with greater clarity."

(Stephen Koepp, Reader's Digest)

"Because babies usually carry their mother's antibodies for the first year or so of their life, all of them — even the perfectly healthy ones — will test positive using antibody tests." (Yvonne Baskin, Discover mag. 1990)

"In four centuries, the European slave trade carried over ten million slaves from Africa, over sixty percent of them between 1721 and 1820."

(Paul Johnson, A History of Christianity)

“Mitochondrial DNA has a unique characteristic that makes it very useful for tracing lineages. It is carried in the egg, but not in the sperm, so it is passed on to children only from their mothers.”

(David Noonan, Discover mag., Oct. '90)

They carried the old man *in* a chair *into* the garden.

“An endless supply of oxygen, amino acids, nitrogen, sodium, potassium, calcium, magnesium, sugars, lipids, cholesterol, and hormones surge past our (100 trillion) cells, carried on blood cell rafts or suspended in the (blood) fluid. Each cell has special withdrawal privileges to gather the resources needed to fuel a tiny engine for its complex chemical reaction.”

(Dr. Paul Brand & Philip Yancey, In His Image)

“Light is suited to carrying enormous numbers of precise digital signals at high speed over long distances.”

(Stephen Koepp, Reader's Digest)

“Human red-blood cells are saucer-shaped and fairly flat, permitting the ready transfer of the oxygen and carbon dioxide they carry throughout the body.”

(The Cell, Life Science Library)

“A complex protein, produced in a nasal gland, has been identified as the chemical messenger that carries aromas to the odor-sensing nerves in the nose.”

(AP Washington/Montreal Gazette)

Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

CASE (N)

It was a case of pure neglect.

“Paul, attempting to interpret Christ, did not even try to construct a case for the legitimate use of force.”

(Paul Johnson, A History of Christianity)

That's the whole case in question.

CAST (V)

They cast me for (i.e. chose me to play) the part.

“Horses cast (i.e. rejected) from the cavalry.”

(Universal Oxford Dictionary)

“A figure cast (i.e. formed) in soft wax.”

(Hogarth, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

“To cast (i.e. thrown) into hell.”

(Jowett, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

“The discovery in Antarctica of the fossil beak of a giant carnivorous “terror bird” . . . 10 to 12 feet tall and probably the most dangerous bird ever to have existed . . . is casting (i.e. shedding) new light on the role of that continent in the evolution and worldwide spread of species.” (Walter Sullivan, New York Times)

“Cast (i.e. throw) thy bread upon the waters.” (Ecclesiastes, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

CATALYST

“In field after field — astronomy, quantum mechanics, nuclear physics, cosmology — (John) Wheeler's ideas have been the catalyst for breakthroughs.”

(John Boslough, Reader's Digest)

CATER

“He that . . . providently caters for the Sparrow.”

(A.Y.L.II, iii, 44, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

“Most of the cells in the cortex (newest part of the brain) respond only to lines of a particular orientation, between them catering for orientations at all degrees from vertical to horizontal and back.”

(Hugh Monterfiore, The Probabilities of God)

More than 2000 galleries (in Japan in 1987) — 300 of them crowding Tokyo's exclusive Ginza — cater to collectors.

CAUSE (N)

His sudden appearance was a cause for deep concern.

“God is the supreme and universal Cause of all things.” (Edmund Berkeley, Oxford English Dictionary)

CAUSE (V)

“It takes long intimacy, long and familiar interliving, before one kind of creature can cause illness in another.” (Lewis Thomas, The Lives of a Cell)

“Fever and other flu symptoms are caused by the body's efforts to rid itself of the (influenza virus) invader.”

(Robert M. Sapolsky, Discover mag., 1990)

“I will cause the sun to go down at noon.”

(Amos, The Bible)

CELEBRATE

“Until the first half of the 20th century, the conquest and colonization of a weaker nation was celebrated as a patriotic event. Today, even mild economic exploitations are loudly condemned across the world as imperialism.”

(F.M. Esfandiary, Optimism One)

They are **celebrating** their release *in* a bistro in Montmartre.

They **celebrated** their 40th wedding anniversary *on* Wednesday.

“Lord Manny Shinwell **celebrated** his 100th birthday *with* a good cigar and several flagons of whisky.”

(James Brady, Advertising Age)

CENSOR

All references to actual persons were **censored from** his script.

CENTRAL

That was **central to** his debate.

CENTER, CENTRE

“Supreme authority was at last **centred in** a single person.” (Fowler’s Modern English Usage)

The eyes usually **center on** a point about one-third down the page. That’s why they call that point the ‘optical center’.

Note: NEVER centre *about* or *around*

CERTAIN

Are you **certain about** that?

I am **certain of** only one thing at the moment.

CHALK (V)

She quickly **chalked** her name *on* the blackboard.

“This difference has been **chalked up to** a presumed involvement in language processing.”

(James Shreeve, Discover mag., Oct. ’96)

CHAMPIONSHIP

“The majority (of the council of regency) deeply resented his **championship** (i.e. advocacy) *of* the poor *against* greedy landlords and capitalists.”

(Encyclopedia Britannica re the Earl of Somerset)

They won the tennis **championship** (i.e. supremacy) *of* the world for the second year running.

CHANCE (N)

Her **chance of** succeeding was one in a million.

He had no **chance** (i.e. opportunity) *to* save himself.

CHANCE (V)

They **chanced** (i.e. happened) *on* (or *upon*) the fossil on the first day.

You never know; you might **chance on** the right number tomorrow.

CHANGE (N)

“A change in the weather is enough to renew the world and ourselves.” (Marcel Proust)

After a quick **change of** clothes, he returned to his office.

Each photo incorporates a small **change to** the original.

CHANGE (V)

“The basic idea is that synapses (in the brain) change in efficiency according to their frequency of use.”

(The Economist mag., June 13, ‘87)

His smile **changed to** fury *at* the mention of that name.

“Irradiation changes the molecular composition of food in unpredictable ways . . . So does barbecuing.”

(Dennis Demlinger)

The situation **changed from** bad *to* worse.

Plants can do something no animal can do: change nonliving substance into living substance, i.e. inorganic into organic.

She **changed** her confession *under* duress.

Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

CHANNEL (v)

“The Protestant Ethic with its emphasis on thrift, unremitting toil, and the deferral of gratification . . . channeled enormous energies into the tasks of economic development.” (Alvin Toffler, The Third Wave)

Isn't it time you **channelled** your energy *into* something constructive?

CHARACTERISTIC (A)

“Nowhere more than here (at the front of the skull) has there been greater expansion of the brain matter during the transition from primate to man, and this accounts for the high forehead characteristic of homo sapiens.” (Hugh Montefiore, The Probability of God)

CHARACTERISTIC (N)

“Superstition is . . . not the **characteristic of** this age.” (Junius, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

CHARGE (N)

The **charge** (i.e. accusation) *against* them is vandalism.
That nurse is in **charge of** (i.e. responsible for) too many children!

Yes, there is a **charge** (i.e. price) *on* that item.

The judge's **charge** (i.e. instructions) *to* jury members was to be thorough in weighing the evidence.

The two were **charged with** (i.e. accused of) theft.

CHARGE (v)

Why don't you **charge** that *against* (i.e. deduct from) his salary?

I will only **charge** (i.e. invoice) you *for* the first two days.

The interest is **charged** (i.e. applied) only *on* the second part of the debt.

Should I **charge** (i.e. bill) that order *to* your room?

“A magnetron is a . . . vacuum tube in which a wire coated with excess electrons gets charged (i.e. loaded) with electricity . . . and generates electromagnetic waves.” (Mark Rowan, Discovery mag.)

They've been **charged with** the job (i.e. given the responsibility) of keeping the stadium clean.

I'm **charged with** (i.e. accused of) a crime I did not commit.

CHASTENED

“A nation with a low birth rate shall be periodically chastened by some more virile and fertile group.” (Will and Ariel Durant, The Lesson of History)

CHEAT (v)

“Cheat me *in* the price, but not *in* the goods.” (Thomas Fuller)

“Cheating on a large scale is supposed to have something about it that's imperial and therefore impeccable.” (G.K. Chesterton)

CHECK (v)

He **checked** (i.e. searched) his pockets *for* loose change.

Why don't you **check on** his whereabouts (i.e. find him).

You **check on** (or *upon*) (i.e. investigate) the man, while I check his bank account. (American)

Are you **checking** (i.e. keeping tabs) *on* me again?

CHEER (N)

Three **cheers for** the winner.

There was a wild round of **cheers from** the bleachers.

CHINK

“As the wind veered, it discovered **chinks in** the landscape.” (Jonathan Raban, Coasting)

CHOCKABLOCK

“At the beginning of the 20th century, Vienna was chockablock with giants of the age: Freud and Wittgenstein, Mahler, Berg and Schoenberg, Klimt, Schiele, Kokoschka, Hoffman, Wagner, Loos — as well as the young Adolf Hitler.”

(Kurt Andersen, Time mag.)

CHOICE

You have a **choice between** squealing on him or going to prison.

I'll give you the **choice of** weapon.

CHOOSE

The writer **chooses** *according to* preferences learned from personal experience.

He **chose** *among* all the horses in that corral.

She is busy **choosing** *between* the three cookies on that tray.

“The average doctor (in 1990) has some 50,000 drugs to **choose from** when writing out a prescription. Bewildered by the choice, few doctors ever prescribe more than 100.” (Discover mag.)

CIRCULATE

“While T cells **circulate in** the blood, (our) body’s billions of macrophages (large scavenging white blood cells) tend to collect in organs and tissues such as the spleen, skin, and lining of the abdomen and lungs” (Jeff Miller, Discover mag.)

CITE

You could cite all those *as* precedents.

“Well over half our total (English) vocabulary is foreign: of the five English words **cited by** Tovarish Vasilyev *as* “torturers” of the Russian tongue, not one is ‘pure’ English.” “Boss” comes from Dutch, “plantation” from Latin, and “referee”, “office” and “service” from French.” (Robert Claiborne, Our Marvelous Native Tongue)

CLAIM (N)

I’m afraid she has a **claim on** (or *upon*) my time.

“No law has any **claim over** us unless our conscience approves it as right and just.” (Roman Catholic Church)

He will lay **claim to** your property tomorrow.

“A **claim to** kindness.”

(Johnson, Universal English Dictionary)

CLASH (N)

The **clash between** the two families goes back to the Reformation.

“The **clash of** arguments and jar of words.” (Cowper)

The **clash on** that issue was heard around the world.

CLASH (V)

The new philosophy **clashed against** rooted tradition.

That **clashes with** everything I’ve ever learned.

CLASSIFY

“All viruses are named and **classified according to** the diseases they cause, and what they affect.” (Mind Alive mag.)

All these are **classified as** sponges.

CLAW (V)

The only thing I could do was **claw at** his eyes.

They **clawed** their way *over* the dead bodies, *into* a grotto.

She **clawed through** the sand, looking for her contact lens.

I **clawed** a path *under* the debris *till* I found daylight.

Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

CLEAR (A)

“Clear *as* the sun.” (Song of Solomon, Old Testament)

Steer **clear of** (i.e. away from) that door!

That’s very **clear to** me!

CLEAR (V)

First, he **cleared** a path *around* the house.

The firemen **cleared** their way *into* the burning house.

Our job is to **clear** that bridge *of* the enemy.

“If your cholesterol-removal system is working well, it doesn’t matter if you eat cheeseburgers . . . because you’re going to be able to **clear** the cholesterol *out of* the cells.” (Larry Husten, Discover mag.)

They are **clearing** their way *through* the brush.

She **cleared** the debris *under* the porch, worried about what she might find.

Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

CLEAVE

“Today . . . the created world has lost its sacredness. Christians have abandoned it, not to paganism, but to physics, geology, biology, and chemistry. We . . . have **cleaved** nature *from* the supernatural.” (Philip Yancey, Fearfully & Wonderfully Made)

“Gravitational tides can **cleave** a giant star *in* two.”
(David H. Freedman, Discover mag., Nov. '99)

CLEVER

He's **clever** *at* math and *with* words.
That's very **clever** *of* you.

CLIMB (V)

First, **climb** *by* him, then loosen that rope.
Young man, **climb** *down* that tree this minute.
He **climbed** *into* the foliage and waited patiently.
He is **climbing** *over* anyone who stands in his way.
Go ahead; **climb** *through* the window.
Life expectancy, just 20 years in Greek and Roman times, could **climb** *to* 90 by the year 2030 and 100 by the year 2050.

Climb *up* the trellis, boy.

Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

CLING

She is **clinging** *to* me *for* dear life.
“Adjectives — brilliant, egotistic, rude, unorthodox — **clung** *to* (Admiral Hyman G.) Rickover like barnacles to boats . . . (He) first grasped the potential of nuclear power at sea.” (Michael Duffy, Time mag.)

CLOAK (N)

The dealer's antique shop serves as a **cloak** *for* (i.e. conceals) his shady activities.
“Humility is made the **cloak** *of* pride.”
(Robert Southey, World Book Dictionary)

CLOAK (V)

The novelist liked to **cloak** (i.e. disguise) his plots *in* obscurities and ambiguities.
Evil purposes can be **cloaked** *under* fine speeches.
“To **cloak** her guile *with* sorrow.”
(Spenser, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

CLOG

Ischemia (heart attack) happens when coronary arteries, either **clogged** *with* fatty deposits or temporarily contracted by stress, are contracted even more by spasms or are blocked by a clot; depriving the heart muscle of blood and thus oxygen.

CLOISTER (V)

“By afternoon, Loch Linnhe was arched and **cloistered** *with* rainbows.” (Jonathan Raban, Coasting)

CLOSE (A)

“Mercury, the planet **closest** *to* the sun, is also the densest in our solar system: between 60 and 70% iron.”
(Robert Kunzig, Discover mag.)

CLOSE (V)

“Flowers . . . expand at 6 or 7, and **close** *at* 2 in the afternoon.” (W. Withering, Oxford English Dictionary)
London's Globe theatre, where Shakespeare opened his plays, was reduced to ashes in 1613. Though soon after rebuilt, it was **closed** *by* Cromwell in 1644.
The door **closed** *on* my foot.
That car is **closing** *on* (i.e. overtaking) us.
Close the doors *to* all reporters.
They **closed** *with* (i.e. neared) the other ship, then boarded it.

CLOTHE

“A good intention **clothes** itself *with* power.” (Emerson)

CLUE

It was the only **clue** I had *to* his character.

CLUMSY

He is **clumsy** *at* his job *with* whatever tool they give him.
He is even **clumsy** *in* the way he walks.

CLUSTER

In another classroom, children **cluster** *around* a computer.

CLUTTER (v)

The yard was **cluttered** *with* the debris of many years.

CO-OPT

They **co-opted** me *to* (or *on to*) the special commando force.

COAT

“One-foot-square panels, coated with amorphous silicon, (are) the most widely used thin-film material for converting sunlight to electricity.”

(Tony Baer, Discovery mag.)

Now she wants to **coat** the whole thing *with* boat varnish.

COEVOLVE

“Each type of bacterium has coevolved with its mammalian host.” (Sarah Richardson, Discover mag.)

COEXIST

“Suppose that there is an infinite number of universes **coexisting** *with* this one.” (The Economist)

COEXTENSIVE

“The Church . . . was already **coextensive** *with* the empire.” (Paul Johnson)

COGNATE

He is **cognate** *with* the Royal family of England.

COGNIZANT

The police are **cognizant** *of* his every move.

COHERE

The new metal **coheres** *with* the wood underneath.

COINCIDE

“The birth of religion coincides with the appearance of humanity on the stage of history.” (Mind Alive mag.)

COLLABORATE

You **collaborate** *with* me and I’ll make you rich.

“Globally-linked computers . . . allow investigators to collaborate or kibitz on experiments while continents apart.” (Gary Stix, Scientific American mag., Dec.’94)

COLLABORATION

She counted on the **collaboration** *of* everyone present.

Your **collaboration** *with* her on that job made all the difference.

COLLAPSE (v)

Grievously wounded, the man **collapsed** *against* me.

She **collapsed** *in* a heap.

After too many drinks, the writer’s discourse **collapsed** *into* incoherence.

The arena’s roof **collapsed** *on* the players inside.

The whole contraption is sort of **collapsing** *onto* itself.

There was great merriment when the chair **collapsed** *under* him.

Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

COLLATE

Try to **collate** your facts *with* mine.

COLLECT

We should all **collect** (i.e. gather) *at* her home.

The women were **collecting** the fabric *for* a quilt.

Radar images of the earth, **collected** *from* orbit *by* . . . space shuttle, reveal our planet with startling clarity.

“Flower nectar is usually collected within one mile of the hive.” (Garner and Sue Wilson, Montreal Gazette)

COLLIDE

“In all materials, in solids as well as gases and liquids, the atoms are constantly in motion, vibrating and colliding with each other, creating thermal energy. The wilder the motion, the greater the heat.”

(William Booth, Washington Post)

The van **collided** *with* her car and she is badly hurt.

COLLISION

“The world before our time survived suffocating ice ages and cataclysmic *collisions with* meteors.”

(*The Gazette*, Montreal)

“The collision *of* harsh consonants.”

(Gray, *Universal Oxford Dictionary*)

COLOR, COLOUR (v)

The sea was colored red *by* the algae.

She then colours it *for* effect.

Colour it *with* any paints handy.

COMBINE (v)

“*Combining* antimatter *with* matter could be a way to lift future rockets into space.” (Tom Waters, *Discover* mag.)

COME

She came *across* his letter *by* accident.

He came *at* me before I had a chance to defend myself.

Don't let anything come *between* you two.

I will come *for* you tomorrow.

“Every atom of gold on earth *comes* ultimately *from* supernovas.” (*The Economist/Reader's Digest*)

“The oxygen people breathe originally *came from* (an) exploding star.” Claude Canizares, *Dallas Morning News*
Evil comes *from* enjoying what we ought to use and using what we ought to enjoy. (A great medieval philosopher)

“The common cold virus is troublesome, because it *comes in* at least 100 identifiable variations.”

(Leon Jaroff, *Time* mag.)

“99% of the creatures ever to have *come into* existence have vanished.” (Gregg Easterbrook, *Newsweek* mag.)

He came *to* grief before he was ten years old.

They came up *with* interpretations of their own.

COMFORTABLE

“It would be no sort of a life if we felt entirely *comfortable in* it.” (P.J. Kavanagh, *Finding Connections*)

Only one teacher in ten feels comfortable *with* that theory.

COMMAND (N)

They gave him command *of* (i.e. authority over) the regiment.

His command (i.e. mastery) *of* English was remarkable.

There were commands *to* stop at every junction.

COMMEND

I commend you *to* your principal *for* living up to your principles.

COMMENSURATE

He prayed for a punishment commensurate *with* the crime.

COMMENT (N)

I found his comments *about* me very hurtful.

If you have any comments *on* this subject, let's hear them now.

COMMENT (V)

She commented *on* everything I said.

COMMENTARY

The scribes filled whole libraries with their commentaries *on* the Holy Scriptures.

COMMISERATE

He refused to commiserate *with* her.

COMMISSION (N)

His commission (i.e. appointment) *as* first officer had just come through.

I should get a commission (i.e. pro rata remuneration) *for* that sale.

He had to answer for the commission *of* (i.e. committing) a crime ten years ago.

There was a 15% commission (i.e. payment to middleman) *on* every copy.

“I have a commission (i.e. I am mandated) *to* find you.” (J. Rathbone, *Oxford English Dictionary*)

COMMISSION (v)

He was **commissioned** *by* the art gallery *to* do a painting.

COMMIT

"Today (1986), all but seven of the world's more than 170 nations are **committed to** a single written charter of rights. And every one of them owes something to the American model that turns 200 next year."

(Richard Lacayo, Time mag.)

COMMON

"China's plight was the result of the optimistic belief, **common to** intellectuals of the Left, that revolutions solve more problems than they raise."

(Paul Johnson, A History of the Modern World)

"All the psychological evidence seems to suggest that an infant is predisposed to learn certain things — the classic example being the 'deep structure' that seems to be **common to** all language. This obviously implies that the genes contain instructions for wiring up brains."

(The Economist mag., June 13, '87)

COMMUNE

Aubrey needed to **commune** *with* his peers.

COMMUNICATE

"In telecommunications . . . we are moving toward the capability to **communicate** anything *to* anyone, anywhere, *by* any form — voice, data, text, or image — *at* the speed of light."

(J. Naisbitt & P. Aburdene, Megatrends 2000)

She **communicated** *by* semaphore.

"I'm much more interested in **communicating** (information) *to* dolphins and learning how they **communicate** *with* one another."

(Louis Herman, Omni mag.)

"His (Shakespeare's) genius resides in his mysterious ability to **communicate with** times, spaces and cultures far removed from his own." (Northrop Frye)

COMMUTE

He always liked to **commute** *by* train *to* his cottage up north.

Francois-Xavier Prieur's death sentence for his leading part in Canada's 1837 Rebellion was **commuted to** (i.e. exchanged for a lighter sentence) exile for life in Australia.

They **commuted** (i.e. made regular trips) *to* and *from* New York every working day of the year.

COMPANION

Sandra is the **companion of** my friend Terry.

"**Companions in sin.**"

(Quarles, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

You are more of a **companion to** me than my own son.

COMPANY

She was in the **company of** a man who gave me the shivers.

He came **in company with** three other horsemen.

COMPARE

"(Stradivarius) produced perhaps 1500 violins . . . He made a handful of great instruments, but there are an awful lot that sound feeble **compared to** modern ones."

(Robert Teitelman quoting Norman Pickering, Forbes mag.)

"In England . . . property stands for more, **compared with** personal ability, than in any other (country)."

(Emerson, Oxford English Dictionary)

Note: Use **to** for illustration, **with** to examine qualities.

COMPARISON

There was no **comparison to** last year's record rainfall.

She suffered **in comparison with** the rest of her class.

COMPASSION

He has absolutely no **compassion for** the unemployed.

She took **compassion on** me.

COMPATIBILITY

There is simply no **compatibility between** their points of view.

"The **compatibility of** such properties in one thing."

(Barrow, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

Frankly, my **compatibility with** you is minimal.

COMPATIBLE

This is **compatible** *with* your views.

“It is essential that we continue to respect freedom of thought and expression in so far as this is **compatible** *with* the laws of the state and national unity.”

(General de Gaulle)

“Our location in the Universe is necessarily privileged to the extent of being **compatible** *with* our existence as observers.”

(Brandon Carter, cosmologist, National Review mag.)

COMPENDIUM

His book was a **compendium** *of* all the current gossip.

COMPENSATE

“The right brain tends to **compensate** *for* left-brain damage.” (Edwin M. Reingold, Time mag.)

COMPENSATION

“It is one of the most beautiful **compensations** *of* this life that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself.” (Charles Waldo Emerson)

His aggressive behaviour was **compensation** *for* his feelings of insecurity.

COMPETE

To a man, they refused to **compete** *against* me.

They are **competing** *for* the Stanley Cup.

I don't intend to **compete** *in* any other race this year.

“Animals **compete** fiercely *with* men for their food in an overpopulated world, unless they are thistle eaters like donkeys and camels.”

(Ivan Illich, Toward a History of Needs)

COMPETENT

He is only **competent** *at* archery in sports.

She is very **competent** *in* her own field.

The student is **competent** enough *to* try her hand at it.

COMPETITION

“From **competition** *among* traders (comes) reduction of prices.” (Bentham, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

There's **competition** *for* land *in* every country.

“**Competition** *to* the Crown there is none, nor can be.” (Bacon, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

“The Priesthood, which ever has been in some **competition** *with* Empire.”

(Bacon, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

COMPLACENT

She's so **complacent** *about* her state of health that she doesn't even bother to take her medicine.

COMPLAIN

Why don't you **complain** *about* me while you're at it?

She **complained** *of* the scurrilous review.

COMPLAINT

I have no **complaints** whatever *about* his conduct.

There has been many a **complaint** *against* him.

There were a lot of **complaints** *from* the east end of the city.

“**Complaints** *of* lower back pain alone costs U.S. industry \$4.6 billion in annual workers' compensation payments.”

(Institute of Industrial Engineers, Atlanta, 1988)

COMPLEMENT (N)

Justice is not always the **complement** (i.e. full amount) *of* the law.

The **complement** (i.e. full crew) *of* the ship was 118.

COMPLEMENTARY

That's **complementary** *to* the money I gave you last month.

COMPLETE (A)

The hat came **complete** *with* feathers.

COMPLETE (v)

Try to **complete** your book *for* me *by* the end of the month.
 “The Mausoleum, the huge, marble temple . . . completed *in* 350 B.C., in memory of King Mausoleus, “became one of the Seven Wonders of the World.”
 (Michael Gartner, Advertising Age)

COMPLIANCE

The stock exchange requires **compliance** *with* by-laws that are not always in the public interest.

COMPLIMENT (N)

Compliments *of* the season.
 A **compliment** *to* one person may be an insult to someone else.

COMPLIMENT (v)

They **complimented** him *for* doing such a great job.
 I **complimented** him *on* his appearance.

COMPLIMENTARY

That's **complimentary** *to* my last letter.

COMPLY

You must either **comply** *with* the rules of this school or get out.
 “When my hand surrounds an object — a ripe tomato, a ski pole, a kitten, another hand — the fat and collagen redistribute themselves and assume a shape to comply *with* the shape of the object being grasped.”
 (Dr. Paul Brand & Philip Yancey, Fearfully and Wonderfully Made)

COMPOSE

“An apple is **composed** (i.e. consists) *of* seeds, flesh, and skin.”
 (William Stunk Jr. and E.B.White, The Elements of Style)
 V.S. Naipaul is “one of the greatest living writers in the English language . . . His themes, his vision of human destiny in our time, are composed (i.e. written) *with* a perfection of language, a flawless structure, and above all a profound knowledge of the world.”
 (Elizabeth Hardwick)

COMPOST

“In human affairs as in nature, decay is compost *for* new growth.” (Barbara W. Tuchman, History as Mirror)
 A **compost** (i.e. combination) *of* leaves and grass.

COMPOUND (N)

It's a **compound** *of* many chemicals.

COMPOUND (v)

It's **compounded** *of* chalk and arsenic.
 I will try to **compound** salt *with* sugar.

COMPRESS (v)

“Diesels rely on heat generated by compressing air *in* their cylinders in order to ignite fuel.” (The Economist)
 I propose to **compress** air *to* the nth degree.

COMPRISED

That charge is **comprised** *in* the total.
 It is **comprised** *of* the bats, the ball and the net.

COMPROMISE

He will **compromise** *in* some things and not *in* others.
 I will **compromise** *with* you *on* any agreement but this one.

CONCEAL

He is **concealing** the kitten *behind* his back.
 In Shakespeare's play, As you Like It, Rosalind **conceals** her identity *by* dressing as a man.
 I will **conceal** the money *for* you *till* tomorrow noon, but no longer.
 I was told the loot is **concealed** somewhere *in* this house.
 She **concealed** the packets of heroin *on* her person.
 “Remember that what you are told is really threefold: shaped by the teller, reshaped by the listener, concealed *from* both by the dead man of the tale.”
 (V. Nabokov, The Real Life of Sebastian Knight)

CONCEIVE

“Only apes, it seems, alone among animals, can truly distinguish themselves from the world around them. But only the naked apes (man), apparently, can conceive of (i.e. grasp with the mind) not just ‘self’ but ‘others’.” (Karen Wright, Discover mag., Nov. ‘96)

CONCENTRATE

They are **concentrating** (i.e. bunching up) *at* every crossroads and *in* every public square.

“During the past five million years, evolution seems to have concentrated (i.e. focused) most of its energy *in* the process of human development.”

(Lyll Watson, Supernature)

“Venture capital tends to concentrate (i.e. come together) near the coasts. (In 1986) 44% of all such funds (U.S.) went to California.” (Therese Engstrom)

Forget the frills; **concentrate** (i.e. focus) *on* the essentials.

CONCENTRATION

Her **concentration** *on* the work at hand was almost manic.

CONCERNED

I am very **concerned** (i.e. worried) *about* her.

He is very **concerned** *for* (i.e. disturbed about) the way this is going.

“H.G.Wells is concerned (i.e. involved) *exclusively with* external activity . . . He doesn’t understand that interior recollection (is a) matchless force, even for natural human development.” (Teilhard de Chardin S.J.)

Whether he likes it or not, he is **concerned** (i.e. involved) *in* that very peculiar affair.

CONCLUDE

The politician’s harangue was **concluded** *by* a thump on the lectern.

It looks like the match will **conclude** *in* a tie.

“Both ceremonies **concluded** *with* the kiss of peace and High Mass.” (Paul Johnson)

CONCLUSION

It’s the obvious **conclusion** (i.e. inference) *from* everything said yesterday.

That’s the **conclusion** (i.e. deduction) *of* everyone there.

Write a **conclusion** (i.e. an end) *to* his unfinished story.

CONCUR

He **concurred** *in* the decision but not *with* the judge.

Note: To **concur** *in* an opinion or action, or *with* a person.

CONCURRENT

The cold spell was **concurrent** *with* the shortage of oil.

CONCURRENTLY

He visited us **concurrently** *with* the fall of the Berlin wall.

CONDEMN

He was **condemned** (i.e. censured) *by* his peers *for* breaking the curfew.

“**Condemned** (i.e. doomed) *in* business or *in* arts *to* drudge.” (Alexander Pope)

The spy was **condemned** (i.e. convicted) *of* treason and shot.

“Any of a thousand malfunctions in a space suit or the LM could condemn (i.e. doom) an astronaut *to* swift death.” (David R. Scott, National Geographic)

CONDENSE

The whole mess **condensed** *into* a revolting glob.

CONDESCEND

She **condescended** *to* enter my home.

CONDITION (N)

“Excessive forms of wealth and prolonged formal employment . . . destroy the social, cultural and environmental conditions *for* equal, productive freedom.” (Ivan Illich, Toward a History of Need)

“The air I breathe is the **condition** *of* my life, not its cause.” (Coleridge, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

CONDITION (v)

Too many people are **conditioned to** failure and dependent on public handouts.

I **condition** my travelling *on* the weather.

CONDITIONAL

That's **conditional on** (or *upon*) how much you pay back.

CONDOLE

"They are comforted and **condoled** . . . *by* their fellow-citizens." (Addison, Oxford English Dictionary)

I **condoled** (i.e. sympathized) *with* her *till* she burst into laughter.

CONDUCTIVE

"A dull place, and very **conductive to** sleep."
(Oxford English Dictionary)

CONFER

"Islam **conferred on** (i.e. granted) women the right to education, to inherit and to divorce over 1000 years before the first European woman suffragette."

(Akbar S. Ahmed, The Economist)

He **confers** (i.e. consults) *with* her every morning.

CONFESS

Only 19 years later did he **confess** (i.e. admit your guilt) *to* the police.

I **confess** my sins (i.e. acknowledge my sins orally) *to* whatever priest happens to be in the confessional.

CONFIDE

"He who most **confides in** the instructor will learn the sacred lesson best." (Oxford English Dictionary)

"Men do not **confide** themselves *to* boys . . . but *to* their peers." (Oxford English Dictionary)

She is **confiding in** her best friend.

CONFIDENCE

I have **confidence in** them.

He enjoyed the **confidence of** the police in spite of his many clashes with them.

CONFIDENT

"I do not feel too **confident about** his chances of success."
(Frederick T. Wood, English Prepositional Idioms)

"**Confident in** the security of his position, he derided their threats and machinations."

(Ainsworth, Tower Hill, OED)

"Were death never sudden, they who are in health would be too **confident of** life." (Paley, Natural Theology, OED)

CONFINE (v)

He was **confined** (i.e. cooped up) *in* his home *for* most of two years.

The sheriff **confines** him *in* a cell every weekend.

"Enthusiasm for 'the spirit of the world' is **confined** (i.e. restricted) *to* the Anti-Christ."

(R.H. Benson, Lord of the World)

CONFIRM

"This suspicion is **confirmed by** the enquiry." (Arthur Koestler)

They were **confirmed** (i.e. firm) *in* their belief that the earth was flat.

"When Macbeth is **confirming** (i.e. strengthening) himself *in* the horrid purpose."

(Johnson, The Oxford Universal Dictionary)

Re the chairmanship, please **confirm** (i.e. affirm) this position *to* your brother.

CONFLICT (N)

It was a **conflict of** interest pure and simple.

"The **conflicts of** the ice-masses in their rotation." (Kane)

CONFLICT (v)

He held grimly to his views although they **conflicted with** his experience.

CONFORM

"The true freeman is he who **conforms** himself *to* his reason." (Oxford English Dictionary)

His behaviour **conformed** *with* their expectations in every respect."

CONFRONT

They were suddenly **confronted** *by* (i.e. faced with) a bunch of motorcyclists.

"The Romans were **confronted** *with* (i.e. challenged by) a stiffnecked, subordinate people (the Jews)." (Paul Johnson, A History of Christianity)

He met me at the door, **confronting** me *with* today's news headline.

CONFUSE

The little animal froze, **confused** *by* the car's headlights.

I'm afraid you're **confusing** me *with* my twin brother.

Too many people **confuse** socialism *with* communism.

"The shift of linguistic usage, coupled (i.e. combined) with our own drive for self-regard, has meant that the concept (civilization) has become hopelessly **confused** *with* good table manners and polite conversation."

(The Times of London, 1989)

CONFUSION

"Love is an ideal thing, marriage a real thing; a **confusion** *of* the real with the ideal never goes unpunished."

(Goethe)

"The **confusion** *of* tongues."

(Bacon, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

CONFUTE

The speaker **confutes** (i.e. overwhelms) his opponents *by* facts and logic.

The lawyer's defense was **confuted** (i.e. refuted) *by* the prosecution.

She was not an easy person to **confute** (i.e. confound) *in* an argument.

CONGENIAL

Hard work is simply not **congenial** *to* me.

CONGRATULATE

I **congratulate** you *on* (or *upon*) your remarkable success.

I should **congratulate** him *for* what? He has failed at everything.

CONJUNCTION

This situation must have originated in a strange **conjunction** *of* circumstances.

His great height, **in conjunction** *with* his unusual hairiness, often scared little children.

CONNECT

"Cancer cells require a generous supply of blood, to survive and grow. So they **connect** *to* nearby arteries and veins by encouraging angiogenesis, the proliferation of networks of tiny capillaries." (Time mag.)

"The spinal cord is a cable-like bundle of nerves that connects the brain to the rest of the nervous system. It is **protected** *by* the bony spinal column, with 24 vertebrae stacked in a gentle S-curve between the skull and tailbone." (Don Colburn, Washington Post)

The police are busy **connecting** him *to* last night's robbery.

"Joan of Arc was not a victim of English nationalism: only eight of the 131 judges, assessors and other clergy **connected** *with* her trial, were Englishmen."

(Paul Johnson, The History of Christianity)

CONNECTION

"At the meeting of the Society of Neurosurgeons in Phoenix, Ariz., researchers confirmed the theory that the brain stores memories by 'hardwiring' new **connections** *between* groups of brain cells."

(Thomas Maugh, Los Angeles Times)

In **connection** *with* that matter, I'll call on her while I'm in Chicago.

CONNIVE

Politicians have always **connived** (i.e. winked) *at* infractions while pretending to correct them.

CONSCIOUS

Do you think she is **conscious** *of* the pain?

CONSENSUS

He wanted the **consensus** *of* the whole group.

The **consensus** *of* opinion was that it was the driver's fault.

Last year, we had a lot of controversy. This time around, we have a **consensus** *on* this matter.

Note: "Though generally current, (consensus of opinion) is avoided by some writers as redundant on the grounds that consensus means 'general agreement of opinion'." (World Book Dictionary)

After much debate, a **consensus** *on* budget priorities was reached by the council.

CONSENT (N)

I need the **consent** *of* the people.

"The Age of Consent: the age fixed by law at which a person's **consent** *to* certain acts (e.g. marriage, sexual intercourse) is valid in law."

(Universal English Dictionary)

CONSENT (V)

He will **consent** *to* that, if you cooperate with him on this.

CONSEQUENCE

The terrible **consequences** *of* his actions to his family did not deter him for a second.

CONSEQUENT

All his other problems are **consequent** *on* (or *upon*) his illness.

CONSIDERATE

That's not very **considerate** *of* you.

She was always very **considerate** *to* (or *towards*) her relatives.

CONSIDERATION

He doesn't show an iota of **consideration** *for* other people.

CONSIGN

Consigning (i.e. entrusting) her children *to* the care of a housekeeper, the young mother pursued her operatic career.

"Surgical trauma, the jarring aftermath of the surgeon's knife, may one day be **consigned** (i.e. relegated) *to* the annals of primitive medicine." (National Geographic)

CONSIST

"Our greatest glory **consists** (i.e. resides) not *in* never falling, but *in* rising every time we fall."

(Oliver Goldsmith)

"The true miracle of modern medicine is diabolical. It **consists** *in* (i.e. is based on) making not only individuals but whole populations survive on inhumanly low levels of personal health."

(Ivan Illich, *Toward a History of Need*)

"The Bahamas **consist** *of* (is composed of) 29 islands, 661 cays (islets) and 2387 rocks."

(Encyclopedia Britannica)

"Fully 10 per cent of our dry body weight **consists** *of* (i.e. is made up of) bacteria."

(Stephen Jay Gould, *The Spread of Excellence from Plato to Darwin*)

"Appetites are to be indulged only so far as **consists** (i.e. is consistent) *with* some . . . approved end."

(G. Grote, *Oxford English Dictionary*)

CONSISTENT

It's **consistent** *with* everything he said before.

"Morals are the rules by which a society exhorts . . . its members and associations to behaviour **consistent** *with* its order, security and growth."

(Will and Ariel Durant, *The Lesson of History*)

CONSONANT

It's **consonant** *with* his recent behaviour.

CONSPIRE

"The system as it stands **conspires** *against* the mothers among the poor: they are damned, if they stay, as parasites; they are damned, if they go to work, for neglecting their children."

(Pierre Berton, *The Smug Minority*)

"We all **conspired** not *to* tell him."

(I. Murdock, Oxford English Dictionary)

"All things **conspired** *to* make her birthday a happy one."
(World Book Dictionary)

"The private secretary, Joseph Tumulty, **conspired** *with* Woodrow Wilson (paralyzed by a third massive stroke) and his wife Edith to make her the president, which she remained for seventeen months."

(Paul Johnson, A History of the Modern World)

CONSTANCY

Constancy in love is a noble ideal.

"The secret of success is **constancy** *to* purpose."
(Benjamin Disraeli)

CONSTANT (A)

He is **constant** (i.e. assiduous) *in* his devotion to his ailing wife.

I expect him to be **constant** (i.e. faithful) *to* his pledge.

CONSTITUENT

They have concocted primeval soups which yield **constituents** *of* living things.

CONSTRUCT (V)

The pyramids were **constructed** *by* slaves.

He **constructed** his home *from* things he salvaged here and there.

Come winter, a palace is **constructed** *of* blocks of ice.

CONSTRUE

Syntactically, the noun 'aerodynamics' is **construed** *as* a singular.

I **construed** *from* your remarks that you are not in favour of our plan.

CONSULT

He **consulted** *with* her *about* matters of law.

I will **consult** you *on* that matter next wednesday.

CONSULTATION

"She established later, in **consultation** *with* me, that Aubry had been speaking of macroeconomics."

(Edwin Newman, Sunday Punch)

CONSUMPTION

There is an increase in the **consumption** *of* oil *for* home heating purposes *in* sub-zero weather.

We brought extra food for **consumption** *on* our journey.

"One convincing measure of a nation's development is its **consumption** *of* electricity. China consumed only 423 kilowatt hours of power per head in 1986, which compared with 3,327 Kwh for each person in Hongkong and 6,810 Kwh for each West German."

(The Economist)

CONTACT (N)

Each time the astronauts circled behind the moon, their **contact** *with* the earth was interrupted.

CONTAMINATE

Their water is **contaminated** *by* the neighbouring mine *with* all kinds of impurities.

The prison is **contaminating** the town's river *with* its sewage.

CONTEMPORANEOUS

His life was **contemporaneous** *with* Van Gogh's.

CONTEMPORARY (A)

All three were **contemporary** *with* Henry Ford.

CONTEMPORARY (N)

He was a **contemporary** *of* my father.

"Writers **contemporary** *with* the events they write of."
(M. Pattison, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

CONTEMPT

What you've done today has only added to my **contempt** *for* you.

You are fined \$200 for **contempt** *of* court. (legal)

CONTEND

How can any form of democratic government **contend** (i.e. struggle) *against* the anarchy now reigning on the continent?

He will **contend** (i.e. strive) *for* fame *to* his dying breath.
 “. . . Carthage shall **contend** (i.e. contest) the world *with* Rome.” (Dryden)

CONTENDER

“German was a strong contender *for* the position of leading European language in the nineteenth century.” (The Economist mag.)

CONTENT (A)

We are **content** *to* be alive.
 All three are **content** *with* that arrangement.

CONTENT (V)

I **contented** myself *with* the dictionary.

CONTIGUOUS

Her property is **contiguous** *to* mine.
 Every farm is **contiguous** *with* every other.

CONTINGENT

That is **contingent** *on* (or *upon*) keeping your end of the bargain.

CONTINUE

This highway **continues** *for* miles.
 “The children must **continue** *in* school *till* the end of June.” (World Book Dictionary)
 If I were you, I would **continue** *on to* the next town.
 “Most people **continue** to be emotionally responsive to music *throughout* their lives.”
 (James Shreeve, Discover mag., Oct. ‘96)
 “Our friendship **continued** *to* his death.”
 (D. Carnegie, Oxford English Dictionary)
 He **continued** *with* his work, ignoring the interruptions.

CONTINUOUS

The canal is **continuous** *with* the right fork of the river.

CONTRACT (N)

Your action yesterday makes the **contract** *between* us null and void.
 My **contract** *with* you ends today.

CONTRACT (V)

“The alternative view is that a loan freely **contracted** (i.e. arranged) *between* consenting parties has the blessing of market forces.” (The Economist, May 28, ‘88)
 “He **contracted** (i.e. incurred) debts *by* buying things he could not afford.” (World Book Dictionary)
 “The baker **contracted** *for* (i.e. signed to purchase) a load of flour.” (World Book Dictionary)
 The whole thing **contracted** (i.e. shrank) *into* a ball.
 I **contracted** (i.e. made a contract) *with* him yesterday *to* re-roof our house.
 Note: Contract, as in contracting a disease, needs no preposition.

CONTRADICTORY

One statement is **contradictory** *of* another.
 (Frederick T. Wood, English Prepositional Idioms)

CONTRARY

“We hate Christianity and Christians. Even the best of them must be considered our worst enemies. They preach love of one’s neighbour and mercy, which is **contrary** *to* our principles. What we want is hate . . . Only then will we conquer.”
 (Anatole Lunacharsky, Soviet Commissar of Education, Izvestia)

CONTRAST (N)

The **contrast** *between* the original and the fake is so striking, it’s a wonder anyone was fooled.
 Her manner was mild and quiescent **in contrast** *to* her violent behaviour of recent days.
 The **contrast** *with* his earlier conduct was remarkable.

CONTRAST (v)

“Methodism’s concentration on welfare and reform . . . contrasted with the more rigid, sin-oriented theology of the Baptists and Presbyterians.”

(Peter C. Newman, The Distemper of our Times).

CONTRIBUTE

They all **contribute** their share *to* the church.

I’ve been **contributing** *to* that charity for years.

CONTRIBUTION

I saw him make a **contribution** *of* fifty dollars.

Please make your **contribution** *to* the charity of your choice.

“This technique, of soliciting many modest contributions *to* the store of human knowledge, has been the secret of Western science since the seventeenth century, for it achieves a corporate, collective power that is far greater than one individual can exert.”

(Lewis Thomas, The Lives of a Cell)

CONTROL (N)

“Executives who speak most warmly about the stern rule of the market usually have excellent control over the income that they get themselves.”

(John K. Galbraith, Guide to Economics)

The **controls** *of* the speeding truck were beyond the young boy’s reach.

CONVENIENT

Stopping here on the way to work is not **convenient** (i.e. practical) *for* me.

His home is **convenient** (i.e. close) *to* the church.

(Oxford English Dictionary)

CONVERGE

“The sides of the ship **converged** *into* an angle.”

(Universal Oxford Dictionary)

“Footsteps were coming to the house, **converging** *on* it *from* different directions.”

(P. Pearce, Oxford English Dictionary)

The whole group suddenly **converged** *on* me.

“Every circumstance **converges** *to* the same effect on his mind.” (Hallam, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

“The interest of all the students **converged** *upon* the celebration.” (World Book Dictionary)

CONVERSANT

“He is **conversant** *in* Sanskrit and *in* Syriac, and is deeply knowledgeable of Hindu tradition.”

(MacMillan Publishing edition of Don Bede)

She made sure all her pupils were **conversant** *with* world history.

CONVERSE (N)

The **converse** (i.e. the opposite) *of* heaven is hell.

CONVERSE (V)

I will **converse** (i.e. talk) *with* him on my return from Italy.

CONVERT (V)

“Every second, 4 million tons of (the sun’s) mass are converted *into* pure energy and poured into space.”

(Heinz Haber, The Walt Disney story of our friend the atom)

He’s spent most of his life trying to **convert** sunlight *to* electricity economically.

CONVERTIBLE

Is this bond **convertible** *to* cash?

CONVICT (V)

She has been **convicted** *of* manslaughter, not murder.

CONVINCE

“In the absence of any other proof, the thumb alone would convince me *of* God’s existence.” (Isaac Newton)

COOPERATE

I promise to **cooperate** *in* every way possible.

“Large scavenger cells known as macrophages cooperate *with* T cells to sound the alarm when a virus or

bacterium invades the body and threatens to cause disease.” (Robert M. Sapolsky, Discover mag., 1990)

COOPERATION

“I’m asking for the **cooperation** *of* everyone here. Silence (when the lawyer knows his client is lying) is participation; it is cooperation with evil.” (Ellis Rubin, lawyer, Time mag.)

COORDINATE

Is there any way you can **coordinate** your arrival *with* mine?

COPE

“In 1971 Britain’s department of trade and industry thought that coping with (corrosion) cost Britain about 3 1/2% of its national income.” (The Economist)

COPY (v)

The painter was asked to **copy** his motif *across* (or *on*) the entire wall.

“Barbed wire was copied from osage orange thorns. Eli Whitney’s cotton gin was copied from the Indian charka.” (The Economist, Feb. 16, ’91)

CORRELATE

“In 1801 Sir John Herschel discovered an 11-year sunspot cycle, which . . . correlates with the thickness of annual rings in trees, the level of Lake Victoria, the number of icebergs, the occurrence of drought and famine in India, and the great vintage years for Burgundy wines.” (Lyll Watson, Supernature)

CORRELATION

“Apart from predicting university results, school examination scores (have) no correlation with later success.” (Prof. Robert Sternberg, Yale U.)

CORRESPOND

“Locke and Newton had **corresponded** (i.e. exchanged opinions) *on* the prophecies of Daniel . . .” (Brewster, The Oxford Universal Dictionary)

“The patterns and shapes of living things correspond to (i.e. match) **some of the most abstract ideas in math.**” (Carl Zimmer, Discover mag., 1992)

“We have too many high-sounding words, and too few actions that **correspond with** (i.e. live up to) them.” (Abigail Adams)

CORROSIVE

“The lesson of the 30 years since (the Hungarian Revolution) is that humanity in all its ordinariness and contrariness is more corrosive to the totalitarianism ideal than heroism.” (Charles Krauthammer, Time mag.)

COST (N)

The **cost** *in* lives *of* the two world wars in the 20th century is mind-boggling.

“Extremes of privilege are created at the cost of universal enslavement.” (Ivan Illich, Toward a History of Need)
The **cost** *to* me is minimal.

COUCH

Unfortunately, the proof is **couched** *in* the language of Einstein’s general theory of relativity.

COUNT (v)

That **counts** *as* (i.e. amounts to) a point in this game.
How I wish I could **count** (i.e. rely) *on* you!

If a person started counting at the moment of birth, and continued till the age of 65. he or she would still not have counted to a billion.” (David Louis, Fascinating Facts)

COUPLE

“Kings are **coupled** (i.e. sexually related) *to* divinity, but not so much *in* wedlock as *by* rude rape.” (George Garrett, Death of a Fox)

Her name has often been **coupled** (i.e. linked) *with* that of the verger.

“The shift of linguistic usage, **coupled** (i.e. combined) *with* our own drive for self-regard, has meant that the concept (civilization) has become hopelessly confused with good table manners and polite conversation.” (The Times of London, 1989)

COURSE (v)

The stream once **coursed** (i.e. flowed) *around* our house, *by* that barn and *across* the fields.

“One-fourth of the blood from each heartbeat *courses* (i.e. flows) *down* the renal artery *to* the twin kidneys.” (Dr. Paul Brand & Philip Yancey, In His Image)

Rivers and streams that *course* (i.e. flow) *through* forests of conifers are more vulnerable to acidity.

Coursed (i.e. ran) *like* a colt *across* its lawns.

“Blood, five litres or so in a typical adult, is the river of life, *coursing through* close to 100,000 km of blood vessels to deliver oxygen and nutrients to and haul waste products from every part of the body.”

(Roderick Jamer, CARP NEWS)

We know of two rivers that are still **coursing** *under* our city.

COURTEOUS

He was **courteous** *to* everyone but his wife.

COVER (v)

I asked my colleague to **cover** (i.e. substitute) *for* me, while I enjoyed a few hours away from the office.

He was **covered** *from* head *to* toe *with* mud.

“The implication of the Apollo findings was astonishing but unavoidable: the moon must once have been *covered with* an ocean of magma.” (Tom Waters, Discover mag.)

Alice is busy **covering** her baby brother *with* leaves.

“Beginning in 1885, the Czars commissioned Russian jeweler Carl Fabergé to create a series of egg-shaped treasures . . . no two alike . . . *covered with* jewels and gold . . . (He) produced between 54 and 57 of these Imperial eggs.”

(Gordon M. Henry, Time mag.)

CRAM

They were **crammed** *like* a swarm of bees.

“A room **crammed** *with* fine ladies.”

(Pepys, The Oxford Universal Dictionary)

She could **cram** all those chocolates *into* her mouth quite easily.

CRAVING (N)

I have an irresistible **craving** *for* chocolate.

CRAWL (vv)

They **crawled** *along* the ditch *to* the river.

I planned to **crawl** *around* the corner of the house, come darkness, and jump the guard.

Children love to **crawl** *into*, *under*, *over* and *through* things, anything, anywhere.

She **crawled** *for* miles, it seemed, before she found someone who would help her.

“Pus . . . is made of white blood cells that have *crawled through* the walls of your blood vessels to get at the site of infection.”

(Gary Taubes, “The Cold Warriors”, Discover mag., Feb. '99)

CRAZE (N)

There was a sudden **craze** *for* anything old-fashioned.

CRAZE (v)

“The surface of my coffee had **crazed** *into* a (i.e. formed a cracked) milky skin.” (Jonathan Raban, Coasting)

“.. **crazed** (i.e. driven insane) *with* care, or crossed in hopeless love.” (Thomas Gray, World Book Dictionary)

CREATE

“Proteins are *created from* amino-acid building blocks by the machinery of a living cell.”

(Philip Elmer-De Witt, Time mag.)

“Without exception, every time a Southern nation develops and becomes a producer, it buys more, it *creates* more jobs *in* the North than it eliminates.”

(Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, The World Challenge)

His aim: to **create** incredibly fine circuitry *on* electronic chips.

CREDIT (v)

The sum of \$100.00 has been **credited** (i.e. added) *to* your account.

“Thomas Lovejoy, a Washington biologist, is *credited with* (i.e. given the credit for) bringing the plunder of the



rain forests to the attention of the world.”
(Montreal Gazette)

CRITERION

That's a **criterion** *of* his good intentions.

CRITICIZE, CRITICISE

It was **criticized** *as* too impractical.
She was **criticized** *for* her bad behaviour.

CROSS (A)

I'm very **cross** (i.e. somewhat angry) *with* you *about* that.

CROW (V)

You're always **crowing** (i.e. boasting) *about* things you never did.
She **crowed** (i.e. exulted) *over* my bad luck.

CRUCIAL (A)

“DNA (is) the blueprint for producing all the proteins and chemicals that carry out the innumerable functions **crucial for** life.” (Business Week mag.)

Crucial to Napoleon's grand design for Europe was the conquest of Russia.

CRUELTY

“***Cruelty to*** animals is cruelty and a vile thing; but ***cruelty to*** a man is not cruelty, it is treason.” (G.K. Chesterton)

CRY (V)

I cry *for* you.
The baseball strike goes on, and fans are **crying** *into* their beer.
They're **crying** *over* spilt milk again.

CULL

He **culled** most of his wisdom *from* Mark Twain's books.

CULMINATE

“A series of stunning advances has ***culminated in*** microscopes able to distinguish individual atoms whose diameter is only about one angstrom — about four-billionths of an inch.” (Arthur Fisher, Discover mag.)

CURE (N)

“There is no **cure for** birth and death save to enjoy the interval.” (George Santayana)
The podiatrist had an excellent **cure for** sore feet.

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About the authors . . .

In her work with students at the Writing Development Centre at McGill University, Elizabeth C. Speyer noted that for those whose first language was not English, and even for English-speakers, preposition use presented difficulties. She is confident that this Guide will be helpful.

Charles N. Prieur's long career in advertising made him aware of the need for a Prepositionary of this kind. Over many years, he collected hundreds of examples of the peculiarities of preposition use, and the results of his work now benefit writers everywhere.