

Phrasal verbs with look: after, for, forward to and more

CEFR B1 · 20 questions · A4 / US Letter

Look keeps its basic idea of attention or eyes, and the particle decides what happens next: caring, searching, waiting, investigating or resembling.

The rule

Look after, look at and look for

- Look after means take care of someone or something: "She looks after her grandmother."
- Look at means direct your eyes at a thing: "Look at the photo."
- Look for means search: "I am looking for my glasses."
- The particle changes the whole meaning, so learn each phrase as one unit.

Look forward to

- Look forward to means wait with pleasure: "I look forward to the summer."
- To is a preposition here, so a following verb takes -ing: "I look forward to hearing from you."
- The base verb after to is a classic mistake: "I look forward to see you" is wrong.
- The phrase is common at the end of letters and emails.

Look up, look out and look into

- Look up means search for information: "Look up the address."
- Look out is a warning meaning be careful: "Look out! The step is broken."
- Look into means investigate: "The bank is looking into the problem."
- Look up is separable: "look it up", never "look up it".

Look like, look as if and look through

- Look like compares appearance and takes a noun: "She looks like her mother."
- Look as if introduces a clause: "It looks as if it will rain."
- Look through means read or check quickly: "Look through your notes."
- Look plus an adjective describes appearance: "You look tired today."

Word order and the pronoun rule

- Look up is separable, so a pronoun goes between verb and particle: "look it up".
- With a noun, both orders work: "look up the word" or "look the word up".
- Look after, look for, look into and look forward to are not separable.

- Keep the preposition with its object: "look after him", never "look him after".

Questions

Write your answer on the line under each question. Check your work with the answer key on the last page.

1. Can you ___ my dog while I am away?

2. I am ___ seeing you next week.

3. She ___ her keys everywhere, but they were in her bag.

4. The police are ___ the robbery.

5. ___! There is a car coming.

6. If you do not know the word, ___ in the dictionary.

7. My sister ___ our grandmother every weekend.

8. He ___ his watch and saw that it was late.

9. It ___ it is going to rain.

10. You ___ your father in that photo.

11. I am looking ___ a job with better hours.

12. We must ___ this complaint before Friday.

13. She ___ the letter and smiled.

14. ___ your notes before the exam.

15. ___ the word "ocean" in your dictionary.

16. The children are ___ the school trip.

17. Nurses ___ patients all day.

18. The manager promised to ___ the problem.

19. I ___ hearing from you soon.

20. She ___ her mother; they have the same smile.

Answer key

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1. **look after** — Look after means take care of, so it fits caring for the dog while you are away.
2. **looking forward to** — Look forward to means wait with pleasure, and to takes the -ing form seeing.
3. **looked for** — Look for means search, so looked for describes the search for the keys.
4. **looking into** — Look into means investigate, which is what the police do with a robbery.
5. **Look out** — Look out is a warning meaning be careful.
6. **look it up** — Look up is separable, so the pronoun it goes between look and up.
7. **looks after** — Look after means take care of, and every weekend shows a habit with looks.
8. **looked at** — Look at means direct your eyes at something, so looked at his watch fits.
9. **looks as if** — Look as if introduces a clause about how something seems.
10. **look like** — Look like compares appearance and takes a noun after it.
11. **for** — Look for means search, so looking for a job is the correct phrasal verb.
12. **look into** — Look into means investigate, which is the work the complaint needs.
13. **looked at** — Look at means direct your eyes at something, so looked at the letter fits.
14. **Look through** — Look through means read or check quickly, which is what notes need before an exam.
15. **Look up** — Look up means search for information, here a word in a dictionary.
16. **looking forward to** — Look forward to means wait with pleasure, so the children are excited about the trip.
17. **look after** — Look after means take care of, which is a nurse's job.
18. **look into** — Look into means investigate, so the manager will examine the problem.
19. **look forward to** — Look forward to means wait with pleasure, and the -ing form hearing follows to.
20. **looks like** — Look like compares appearance and takes a noun, so looks like her mother is correct.