



**4** AmE a small metal or plastic pin with a message or picture on it **[SYN] badge** BrE: presidential campaign buttons

**5** **button nose/eyes** a nose or eyes that are small and round

**6** **on the button** especially AmE informal exactly right, or at exactly the right time: She got to our house at two, on the button.

**7** **press/push (all) the right buttons** to get what you want by behaving in a clever way: She seemed to push all the right buttons.

**8** **press/push sb's buttons** to make someone angry by doing or saying something that annoys them: He really knows how to push Dad's buttons.

**9** **at/with the push/touch of a button** used to emphasize how easy a machine is to use because it is controlled by pushing a button: The instrument can gauge a distance with the push of a button. → **as bright as a button** at BRIGHT(7)

**button<sup>2</sup>** v [I,T] **1** (also **button up**) to fasten clothes with buttons, or to be fastened with buttons: Sam, make sure Nina buttons up her jacket. **2** **button it!** BrE, **button your lip/mouth!** AmE spoken used to tell someone in a rude way to stop talking

**'button-down** adj [only before noun] **1** a button-down shirt or collar has the ends of the collar fastened to the shirt with buttons **2** a button-down company or style is formal and traditional: He didn't fit in with the button-down culture of his new boss.

**buttoned-up** adj informal someone who is buttoned-up is not able to express their feelings, especially sexual feelings

**but-ton-hole** /'bʌtnəʊl \$ -hoʊl/ n [C] **1** a hole for a button to be put through to fasten a shirt, coat etc **2** BrE a flower you fasten to your clothes **[SYN] boutonniere** AmE

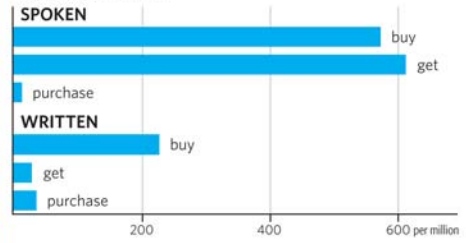
**but-ress<sup>1</sup>** /'bʌtrəs/ n [C] a brick or stone structure built to support a wall

**buttress<sup>2</sup>** v [T] formal to support a system, idea, argument etc, especially by providing money: The evidence seemed to buttress their argument.

**but-ty** /'bʌti/ n (plural **butties**) [C] BrE informal a SANDWICH

**bux-om** /'bʌksəm/ adj a woman who is buxom is attractively large and healthy and has big breasts

Frequencies of the verbs **buy**, **get** and **purchase** in spoken and written English.



All three verbs are used to mean 'get something by paying for it'. The graph shows that in this meaning **get** is extremely common in spoken English. However, **get** is informal and is not at all common in written English. **Purchase** is used in formal or business contexts. It is not very common and is used more in written English than in spoken English.

**buy<sup>1</sup>** **S1 S2 S3** /baɪ/ v (past tense and past participle **bought** /bɔ:t \$ bɔ:t/)

**1 a)** [I,T] to get something by paying money for it **[OPP] sell**: Where did you buy that dress? | Ricky showed her the painting he'd bought that morning. | **buy sb sth** Let me buy you a drink. | **buy sth for sb/sth** The money will be used to buy equipment for the school. | **buy (sth) from sb** It's cheaper to buy direct from the manufacturer. | **buy sth for \$10/£200 etc** Dan bought the car for \$2,000. | It's much cheaper to **buy in bulk** (=buy large quantities of something). **b)** [T] if a sum of money buys something, it is enough to pay for it: \$50 doesn't buy much these days. | **buy sb sth** \$15 should buy us a pizza and a drink.

**2** **buy (sb) time** to deliberately make more time for yourself to do something, for example by delaying a decision: 'Can we talk about it later?' he said, trying to buy a little more time.

**3** [T] informal to believe something that someone tells you, especially when it is not likely to be true: 'Let's just say it was an accident.' 'He'll never buy that.'

**4** [T] informal to pay money to someone, especially someone in a position of authority, in order to persuade them to do something dishonest **[SYN] bribe**: People say the judge had been bought by the Mafia.

**5** **buy sth at the cost/expense/price of sth** to get something that you want, but only by losing something else: The town has been careful not to buy prosperity at the expense of its character.

**6** **sb bought it** old-fashioned informal someone was killed

**7** **buy off-plan** if you buy property off-plan, you buy a house, flat etc that is just starting to be built, with an arrangement to pay part of the cost of the property at that time and the balance when the property is finished

**THESAURUS**

**buy** to pay money for something so that you can own it: I've just bought a new car. | The painting was bought by a museum in New York.

**purchase** formal to buy something, especially something large or expensive, in a business deal or by a legal contract: They purchased 5,000 acres of land.

**acquire** formal to become the owner of something large or expensive such as property, a company, or a valuable object: In 2007 the business was acquired by a Dutch company.

**get** especially spoken to buy something, especially ordinary things such as food, clothes, or things for your house: Did you remember to get some bread? | I never know what to get Dad for his birthday.

**snap sth up** informal to buy something immediately, especially because it is very cheap, or because you want it very much and you are worried that someone else might buy it first: Real estate in the area is being snapped up by developers.

White House spokeswoman sought to play down the significance of the event.

**play off** *phr v*

**1** BrE if people or teams play off, they play the last game in a sports competition, in order to decide who is the winner: *The top two teams will play off at Twickenham for the county title.*

**2** **play off sb/sth** AmE to deliberately use a fact, action, idea etc in order to make what you are doing better or to get an advantage: *The two musicians played off each other in a piece of inspired improvisation.*

**play sb off against sb** *phr v* to encourage one person or group to compete or argue with another, in order to get some advantage for yourself: *The house seller may try to play one buyer off against another, to raise the price.*

**play on/upon sth** *phr v* to use a feeling, fact, or idea in order to get what you want, often in an unfair way: *The ad plays on our emotions, showing a doctor holding a newborn baby.*

**play sth ↔ out** *phr v*

**1** if an event or situation is played out or plays itself out, it happens: *It will be interesting to see how the election plays itself out.*

**2** if people play out their dreams, feelings etc, they express them by pretending that a particular situation is really happening: *The weekend gives you a chance to play out your fantasies.*

**play up** *phr v*

**1** **play sth ↔ up** to emphasize something, sometimes making it seem more important than it really is: *Play up your strongest arguments in the opening paragraph.*

**2** **play (sb) up** BrE informal if children play up, they behave badly: *Jordan's been playing up in school. | I hope the kids don't play you up.*

**3** **play (sb) up** BrE informal to hurt you or cause problems for you: *My knee's been playing me up this week. | The car's playing up again.*

**play up to sb** *phr v* to behave in a very polite or kind way to someone because you want something from them: *Connie always plays up to her parents when she wants money.*

**play with sb/sth** *phr v*

**1** to keep touching something or moving it: *Stop playing with the light switch!*

**2** to try doing something in different ways to decide what works best: *Play with the design onscreen, moving text and pictures until you get a pleasing arrangement.*

**3** to consider an idea or possibility, but not always very seriously **[SYN] toy with**: *After university, I played with the idea of teaching English in China.*

**4** **money/time/space etc to play with** money, time etc that is available to be used: *The budget is very tight, so there isn't much money to play with.*

**5** **play with yourself** to touch your own sex organs for pleasure **[SYN] masturbate**

**6** **playing with words/language** to use words in a clever or amusing way

**play**<sup>2</sup> **S1 W2** *n*

**1** **THEATRE** [C] a story that is written to be performed by actors, especially in a theatre: *a play by Chekhov | This is a major theme of Miller's plays. | [+about] Edward Bond's play about class war*

**2** **AMUSEMENT** [U] things that people, especially children, do for amusement rather than as work: *Play is very important to a child's development. | a play area | through play The program aims to teach road safety through play. | at play the happy shouts of children at play*

**3** **EFFECT** [U] the effect or influence of something: *the free play of competition in the building industry | at play There are a number of factors at play (=having an effect) in the current recession. | bring/put sth into play (=use something or make it have an effect) A complex system of muscles is brought into play for each body movement. | Political considerations do come into play (=have an effect) when making policy.*

**4** **ACTION IN A GAME OR SPORT** a) [U] the actions of the people who are playing a game or sport: *Rain stopped play*

*after only an hour. b) [C] one particular action or set of actions during a game: On the next play, Johnson ran 15 yards for a touchdown.*

**5** in **play/out of play** if a ball is in play or out of play, it is inside or outside the area in which the rules of the game allow you to hit, kick, catch etc the ball: *He kicked the ball out of play.*

**6** **play on words** a use of a word that is interesting or amusing because it can be understood as having two very different meanings **[SYN] pun**

**7** **play of light** patterns made by light as it moves over a surface: *the play of light on the water*

**8** **make a play for sth** to make an attempt to gain something: *He made a play for the leadership last year.*

**9** **make a play for sb** to try to begin a romantic or sexual relationship with someone: *It's obvious he was making a play for her.*

**10** **LOOSENESS** [U] if there is some play in something, it is loose and can be moved: *There's too much play in the rope.*

→ **FAIR PLAY, FOUL PLAY**

## COLLOCATIONS

### VERBS

**write a play** *So far, he has written three plays.*

**go to (see) a play** *While we were in New York, we went to a play.*

**see a play** *I've never seen the play.*

**watch a play** *Some of the audience were talking instead of watching the play.*

**perform a play** *The play was performed by Brighton Youth Theatre.*

**act/perform/appear in a play | be in a play** (=be performing in a play) | **put on a play** (=arrange for it to be performed) | **direct a play** (=tell the actors what to do) | **produce/stage a play** (=arrange its performance) | **rehearse a play** (=practise it)

### ADJECTIVES/NOUN + play

**a stage play** (=a play in a theatre) *I occasionally write reviews of local stage plays.*

**a TV/radio play** (=a play written to be performed on TV/radio) | **a school play**

### COMMON ERRORS

⚠ Do not say 'give a play'. Say **put on a play**.

**play-a** /'pleɪə/ (also **player**) *n* [C] *spoken informal* a man who is good at meeting women and persuading them to have sex with him

**play-a-ble** /'pleɪəbəl/ *adj* **1** a piece of ground used for sports that is in good condition and suitable for playing on: *Despite the frost, the pitch was playable.*

**2** something that is playable can be played: **[+on]** *The disks are playable on home computers. | an old guitar that is still playable*

**'play-acting** *n* [U] behaviour in which someone pretends to be serious or sincere, but is not — **play-act** *v* [I]

**play-back** /'pleɪbæk/ *n* **1** [C usually singular, U] the playback of a tape that you have recorded is when you play it on a machine in order to watch or listen to it: *the playback button on an answering machine* **2** [C] BrE an action in a sports game that is shown again, so that people can see exactly what happened **[SYN] replay**

**'playback singer** *n* [C] a singer who records songs which are later used in films, especially Bollywood films. The actors in the films pretend that they are singing the songs themselves.

**play-bill** /'pleɪbɪl/ *n* [C] a printed piece of paper advertising a play

**play-boy** /'pleɪbɔɪ/ *n* [C] a rich man who does not work and who spends his time enjoying himself with beautiful women, fast cars etc: *a middle-aged playboy*

**'play-by-play** *n* [C usually singular] AmE a report on what is happening in a sports game, given at the same time as the game is being played

**'play date** *n* [C] AmE a time that is arranged for children to meet together to play