

trians. 2. to astound someone. (Figurative.) ☐ *His statement just bowled me over.* ☒ *The announcement bowled over everyone.*

box someone or something in to trap or confine someone or something. (Literal and figurative uses. *Someone* includes *oneself*.) ☐ *He boxed her in so she could not get away from him.* ☒ *They tried to box in the animals, but they needed more space.* ☐ *Don't try to box me in.*

brace someone or something up to prop up or add support to someone or something. (*Someone* includes *oneself*.) ☐ *They braced the tree up for the expected windstorm.* ☒ *They braced up the tree again after the storm.* ☐ *Help me brace him up until we get his bed made.* ☐ *He had to brace himself up with a splint before he could walk.*

branch off (from something) to separate off from something; to divide away from something. ☐ *A small stream branched off from the main channel.* ☐ *An irrigation ditch branched off here and there.*

branch out to develop many branches, tributaries, or interests. ☐ *I got tired of sales and branched out.* ☐ *The river branches out near its mouth.*

branch out (from something) 1. [for a branch] to grow out of a branch or trunk. (Having to do with plants and trees.) ☐ *A twig branched out of the main limb and grew straight up.* ☐ *The bush branched out from the base.* 2. to expand away from something; to diversify away from narrower interests. ☐ *The speaker branched out from her prepared remarks.* ☐ *The topic was very broad, and she was free to branch out.*

branch out (into something) to diversify and go into new areas. ☐ *I have decided to branch out into some new projects.* ☐ *Business was very good, so I decided to branch out.*

break away (from someone) AND **break free (from someone); break loose (from someone)** 1. to get free of the physical hold of someone. ☐ *I tried to break away from him, but he was holding me too tight.* ☐ *She broke free from him, at last.* ☐ *I broke free from the intruder.* ☐ *I could not break loose from my captors.* ☐ *At*

last, I broke free. **2.** to sever a relationship with another person, especially the parent-child relationship. ☐ *He found it hard to break away from his mother.* ☐ *She was almost thirty before she finally broke free.* ☐ *I found it hard to break loose from my parents.*

break down **1.** [for a mechanical device] to cease working. ☐ *The car broke down in the middle of the expressway.* **2.** [for someone] to have an emotional or mental collapse. ☐ *Finally, after many sleepless nights, he broke down totally.*

break down (and do something) to surrender to demands or emotions and do something. ☐ *Max finally broke down and confessed.* ☐ *I knew he would break down.* ☐ *I had to stop and break down and cry. I was so depressed.* ☐ *I was afraid I would break down and cry.*

break free (from someone) See *break away (from someone)*.

break in (on someone) **1.** to burst into a place and violate someone's privacy. ☐ *The police broke in on him at his home and arrested him.* ☐ *They needed a warrant to break in.* **2.** to interrupt someone's conversation. ☐ *If you need to talk to me, just break in on me.* ☐ *Feel free to break in if it's an emergency.*

break in on something to interrupt something; to intrude upon something. ☐ *I didn't mean to break in on your discussion.* ☐ *Please don't break in on us just now. This is important.*

break into something See *break up (into something)*.

break in(to something or some place) to force entry into something or a place criminally; to enter some place forcibly for the purpose of robbery or other illegal acts. ☐ *The thugs broke into the liquor store.* ☐ *They broke in and took all the money.*

break loose (from someone) See *break away (from someone)*.

break off (from something) [for a piece of something] to become separated from the whole. ☐ *This broke off from the lamp. What shall I do with it?* ☐ *This piece broke off.*

break out **1.** [for widespread fighting] to emerge, erupt, or begin. ☐ *Fighting broke out again in the streets.* **2.** [for a disease] to erupt and become epidemic. ☐ *Chicken pox broke out in Tony's school.*

break (out) into tears to begin to cry. ☐ *Every single child broke out into tears in the movie.* ☐ *The child broke into tears and started howling.*

break out of something to get out of a confining place or situation; to escape from something or some place. ☐ *He couldn't break out of a paper bag!*

break out (with something) [for the skin] to erupt with a specific disease such as measles, chicken pox, rubella, etc. ☐ *Nick and Dan broke out with chicken pox.* ☐ *They both broke out at the same time.*

break someone down to cause a person to submit; to pressure a person to submit to something. ☐ *The police broke her down, and she confessed.* ☒ *They found it easy to break down the suspect.*

break someone in to train someone to do a new job; to supervise someone who is learning to do a new job. (Someone includes oneself.) ☐ *Who will break the new employee in?* ☒ *I have to break in a new typist* ☐ *She broke herself in on the new job by practicing at home.*

break someone up to cause someone to begin laughing very hard. (Someone includes oneself.) ☐ *Everything she says just breaks me up.* ☒ *The joke broke up the audience.* ☐ *He broke himself up with the realization of what a silly mistake he had made.*

break something down to destroy a barrier. ☐ *The court broke a number of legal barriers down this week.* ☒ *I did not break down your door!*

break something in 1. to crush or batter something to pieces. ☐ *Why are you breaking the door in? Here's the key!* ☒ *Who broke in the door?* 2. to use a new device until it runs well and smoothly; to wear shoes, perhaps a little at a time, until they feel comfortable. ☐ *I can't travel on the highway until I break this car in.* ☒ *I want to go out this weekend and break in the car.* ☒ *I hate to break in new shoes.*

break something off ((of) something) to fracture or dislodge a piece off something. (The *of* is colloquial.) ☐ *He broke a piece of the decorative stone off the side of the church.* ☒ *He didn't mean to break off anything.* ☐ *He didn't mean to break it off.*

break something up

break something up to put an end to some kind of fighting or arguing. ☐ *Okay, you guys, break it up!* ☐ *Break it up and leave the area!* ☒ *The teacher broke up the fight in the school yard.*

break something up (into something) to break something into smaller pieces. ☐ *We broke the crackers up into much smaller pieces.* ☒ *Please break up the crackers into smaller pieces if you want to feed the ducks.* ☐ *They broke the crackers up.*

break through (something) to force [one's way] through an obstruction. ☐ *The fire fighters broke through the wall easily.* ☐ *They broke through with no difficulty.*

break up 1. [for something] to fall apart; to be broken to pieces. (Typically said of a ship breaking up on rocks.) ☐ *In the greatest storm of the century, the ship broke up on the reef.* ☐ *It broke up and sank.* 2. [for two people] to end a romance; [for lovers] to separate permanently. ☐ *Terry and Albert broke up. Did you hear?* 3. [for married persons] to divorce. ☐ *After many years of bickering, they finally broke up.* 4. [for a marriage] to dissolve in divorce. ☐ *The marriage finally broke up.* ☐ *It broke up almost immediately.* 5. to begin laughing very hard. ☐ *The comedian told a particularly good joke, and the audience broke up.* ☐ *I always break up when I hear her sing. She is so bad!*

break up (into something) AND **break into something** to divide into smaller parts. ☐ *The glass broke up into a thousand pieces.* ☐ *It hit the floor and broke up, flinging bits everywhere.*

break up (with someone) to end a romantic relationship with someone. ☐ *Jill broke up with Albert.* ☐ *I just knew they would break up.*

breathe something in to take something into the lungs, such as air, medicinal vapors, gas, etc. ☐ *Breathe the vapor in slowly. It will help your cold.* ☒ *Breathe in that fresh air!*

breathe something out to exhale something. ☐ *At last, he breathed his last breath out, and that was the end.* ☒ *Breathe out your breath slowly.*

breeze along to travel along casually, rapidly, and happily; to go through life in a casual and carefree manner. ☐ *Kristine was just*