

What Does VOB Stand For?



By: Dachary Carey

Have you wondered, what does VOB stand for? While it's relatively easy to define those three letters, the actual VOB file format requires a little more understanding.

"VOB" is an abbreviation for "Video Object."

Yes, those three little letters stand for "video object." Is that everything you need to know about VOB? Of course not. VOB is a file format typically used in DVD video. VOB contains most of the actual video data for a DVD. While other files, including the IFO and BUP files, contain vital playback information, the VOB file is the primary file in DVD video playback, as it contains the video, audio and much of the DVD information.

VOB is a subset of MPEG-2.

MPEG-2 is a popular video playback format because it's a container that works well with multimedia file types and needs. VOB is a subset of the MPEG-2 format, with specific requirements and nuances. All VOB files are MPEG-2 files, by definition, but not all MPEG-2 files are VOB files. While many players that play MPEG-2 formats also play VOB formats, you might occasionally run into difficulties.

How to play VOB.

Playing VOB files is relatively easy, if you have the right software. As VOB is a standard on many commercial DVDs, most regular DVD players can play VOB files. This includes your typical DVD player software for a computer, such as WinDVD or Cyberlink Power DVD. You can also use some video players that support multiple video file types, such as VLC Player, to view VOB files. Which software you use depends in large part on how many other file types you'll want to open.

You may want to convert VOB files.

If you want to edit VOB files, you'll likely want to convert them to different file types. The two most popular file types for editing VOB files are MPEG and AVI. Because VOB files are already a subset of MPEG-2, it's relatively easy to convert them to MPEG files. They also take up less space than AVI files. However, if your needs dictate AVI files, you can always convert VOB files to that format.

You shouldn't convert or copy encrypted VOB files.

Because VOB files are popular on commercial DVDs, you'll often find the contents of VOB files are encrypted for copyright protection. While software exists that can break this encryption, video piracy is a crime, and utilizing this software may be illegal and could result in criminal charges. If you've got a protected disc, you're better off skipping it entirely or finding some other way in which to get the video snippet you want that doesn't require you to break encryption on protected content.