

English Phrasal Verbs in Use

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Phrasal verbs: the basics

A What are phrasal verbs?

Phrasal verbs are verbs that consist of a verb and a particle.

| verb | particle | example | meaning |
|-------------|----------------|--|---|
| look | up | You can look up any new words in your dictionary. | You can find the meaning of any new words in your dictionary. |
| get | through | I tried to phone her but I couldn't get through . | I tried to phone her but I couldn't get a connection. |
| make | out | I just can't make Jim out at all. | I just can't understand Jim's behaviour. |

Particles are small words which you already know as prepositions or adverbs. Here are some of the most common phrasal verb particles: **about** (a)round **at** away **back** down for in **into** off on **out** over **through** to **up**

B What do I need to know about phrasal verbs?

First you need to know the meaning of the whole phrasal verb as a unit. The Mini dictionary in this book will help you. For example, **look** means to use your eyes and **up** means the opposite of down, but the phrasal verb **look up** can have several different meanings:

Look the word **up** in the dictionary. [**look up** = search for information in a book/computer]

I'll **look you up** next time I'm in London. [**look up** = visit someone you have not seen for a long time] Things are **looking up**. [**look up** = improve]

Next you need to know the grammar patterns of phrasal verbs, e.g. whether the verb takes an object. The table shows the way the grammar patterns are shown in this book and in many dictionaries. Note that **sth** means **something**; **sb** means **someone**.

| grammar pattern | comment | example |
|--|--|---|
| eat out | the verb is used without an object | We were too tired to cook at home so we decided to eat out . [eat in a restaurant] Not: We decided to eat out a meal. |
| bring back sth or bring sth back | the verb must have a non-human object | This photograph brings back happy memories . [makes me remember or think about something from the past] Not: This photograph brings back my sister . |
| ask out sb or ask sb out | the verb must have a human object | I'd love to ask Sally out . [invite Sally to go to a place like a cinema or a restaurant] Not: I'd love to ask my dog out. |
| look after sb/sth | the object can be either human or non-human | I'll look after the baby while you're cooking. Will you look after my bike while I'm away? |
| ring sb back | the object must come before the particle | I'll ring you back later. [phone you again] Not: I'll ring back you . |
| look after sb/sth | the object must come after the particle | Can you look after the dog while I'm away? Not: Can you look the dog after while I'm away? |
| drop off sb/sth or drop sb/sth off | the object can be before or after the particle | I dropped off the package at her house. [delivered/left] I dropped the package off at her house. |

Exercises

1.1 Underline the twelve phrasal verbs in these sentences.

- 1 I sent off the order last week but the goods haven't turned up yet.
- 2 I came across an interesting book in the library. I took down the title. Here it is.
- 3 We asked some friends around to watch a film, but the video was playing up and it eventually broke down.
- 4 I brought up this problem at the last meeting. It's really time to sort out the problem.
- 5 I wish he'd stop messing us about! He's put the meeting off three times and now he wants to call it off altogether.

1.2 Match the twelve phrasal verbs from sentences 1–5 in exercise 1.1 above with their meanings from the box below.

cause inconvenience deal with stop working find invite home arrive
post cancel write postpone not work properly mention

1.3 Decide which of these sentences contain errors. Explain why they are wrong and suggest a correct answer. Use the table in B to help you.

- 1 That song you just sang brings back memories of my days at college.
- 2 She looked the children after when their mother was in hospital.
- 3 I promised to ring my brother back. He called earlier when I was busy.
- 4 We ate out a wonderful dinner last night.
- 5 It was a beautiful summer evening so I asked the cat out for a drink.

1.4 Sometimes phrasal verbs are followed by a particular preposition to make three-part verbs. Try to learn these prepositions with the phrasal verbs. Look at these examples of three-part verbs, then complete the sentences below with a preposition from the box. Use a dictionary or the Mini dictionary at the back of this book if necessary.

EXAMPLES I'm looking forward to the weekend.
She's been going out with him for six months now.

with against with on with

- 1 She seems to **look down** people who are less intelligent than her.
- 2 The school decided to **do away** the language lab as no-one was using it.
- 3 I **came up** a serious problem when I tried to save my work onto a disk.
- 4 How can some students **get away** doing no work and yet pass the exams?
- 5 Her son is so horrible. I don't know how she **puts up** him.



2

Phrasal verbs: what they mean

A The most common verbs

Here are the most common verbs that form part of phrasal verbs:

break bring call come cut get give go keep knock

look make pass pick pull put run set take turn

Units 6–12 deal with a selection of these verbs which form a large number of useful, everyday phrasal verbs.

B Meanings

The basic meanings of the verbs in A refer to concrete actions (e.g. *break* means separate into pieces), but when they are part of phrasal verbs, they often have abstract meanings too. Sometimes the concrete meaning can help you guess the abstract meaning, for example, you can **look back** to wave goodbye to someone as you leave in a car (concrete meaning – look behind you), or you can **look back** on your past life (abstract meaning – remember or recall).

| verb | concrete meaning | abstract meaning |
|-------------|--|---|
| give | I gave my essay in yesterday. [handed it to the teacher] | Her parents finally gave in and let her go to the party. [agreed to something they had refused before] |
| get | She got on the bus. [entered] | Jim and Mary don't get on . [don't like each other and are not friendly to each other] |
| come | Would you like to come round this evening? [come to my home] | He was unconscious for three hours but came round in hospital. [became conscious again] |

C Synonyms of phrasal verbs

A phrasal verb can often be replaced by a single verb with more or less the same meaning. The single-verb synonyms are often, but not always, more formal (see Unit 5, section C).

| phrasal verb | single-verb synonym |
|--------------|---------------------|
| put off | postpone |
| take off | remove |
| turn up | arrive |

| less formal | more formal |
|--|--|
| Let's put off the meeting until Friday. | Let's postpone the meeting until Friday. |
| Please take off your shoes when you enter the temple. | Please remove your shoes when you enter the temple. |
| Everyone turned up on time for the meeting. | Everyone arrived on time for the meeting. |

TIP

If you know a single-verb synonym of a phrasal verb, write it in your vocabulary notebook, and note whether or not the phrasal verb is more informal.

Exercises

2.1 Complete these sentences using verbs from the list in A opposite.

- 1 The car b..... down on the way to the airport.
- 2 The heavy snow blocked the roads and c..... the farm off completely.
- 3 It took him a long time to g..... over his illness.
- 4 It isn't easy to learn German but you must k..... on trying.
- 5 If you'd like a lift to the station tomorrow, I can p..... you up at 9 a.m.
- 6 This is a really stupid programme. Please t..... the TV off.

2.2 In which of the sentences in exercise 2.1 above could you put the particle in a different position?

2.3 Decide whether the phrasal verbs in these sentences are concrete or abstract in meaning, by writing C for concrete or A for abstract in the brackets.

EXAMPLE He looked up (C) and saw a hot-air balloon in the sky.

- 1 I would never go against () my parents' wishes.
- 2 Shall I cut out () this ad for the new CD player? We might want to buy one.
- 3 About five miles into our journey the engine cut out () and we broke down () completely. It was over an hour before the rescue service turned up ().
- 4 Do we need to dress up () tonight or is it informal?
- 5 I shall never really appreciate what my grandparents went through () during the war.

2.4 Replace the underlined verbs in these sentences with phrasal verbs made using the verbs and particles from the boxes below. If necessary, use the Mini dictionary at the end of this book.



make chase brush leave fall

up for out aside out

- 1 They just ignored my complaints; it made me very angry.
- 2 I believed his story about having lost all his money. How stupid I was!
- 3 I couldn't understand what he was saying with all the noise.
- 4 Could you pursue Janet's report? She promised it last week but I haven't seen it yet.
- 5 If you are phoning from outside the country, omit the first zero in the city code.

2.5 Use more formal equivalents from the box instead of the phrasal verbs in these sentences. Write the formal verbs in the correct form.

decline issue organise cancel escape

- 1 The government have put out a statement condemning the recent protests.
- 2 The union accepted the new pay deal and called off the strike.
- 3 The number of people not owning a TV set nowadays has gone down dramatically.
- 4 There was a disturbance in Blackmoor Prison yesterday and three prisoners got away.
- 5 Could you see to lunch for our visitors? There will be four of them.

3

Particles in phrasal verbs

This unit looks at the role of particles in phrasal verbs. A particle is either a preposition (e.g. from, to, with) or an adverb (e.g. out, up, about). You can create phrasal verbs by adding different particles to a basic verb.

A What do particles mean?

In some phrasal verbs the particle has a clear basic meaning. Look at the examples of different particles used with the verb *invite*. On the right, in speech bubbles, you can see what the original speaker probably said.

Jack **invited** me **out**.

Let's go out together.

Rosie **invited** me **in**.

Please come in!

Jill **invited** me **over**.

Come to our place.

Paul **invited** me **round**.

Come to my house for dinner or a drink.

Mark **invited** me **up**.

Come upstairs to my flat.

Susie **invited** me **along**.

Come with us!

Bill **invited** me **back**.

Come back home with me.

B What other meanings can particles have?

Most particles convey a number of different senses. For example, *over* can have various meanings, including:

- changing position, e.g. in **fall over** [fall to the ground] or **move over** [change the place where you are sitting or standing to make room for someone else].
- an idea of thoroughness, e.g. in **read over** [read thoroughly] or **talk over** [discuss something thoroughly before making a decision].

The meanings of particles are looked at in more detail in Units 13–21.

C Where does the particle go?

With verbs that have an object:

- Sometimes the particle has to go *before* the object of the verb, e.g. I'm **looking for** my keys (not: ~~I'm looking my keys for~~).
- Sometimes it must go *after* the object, e.g. I **have** a lot of work **on** (not: ~~I have on a lot of work~~).
- Sometimes the particle may go either *before* or *after* the object, e.g. The thunder **woke up** the children *or* The thunder **woke** the children **up**.

Note that if the object is a pronoun (e.g. him, them), then the particle must go *after* it, e.g. The thunder **woke** them **up** (not: ~~The thunder woke up them~~).

Exercises

3.1 Look at section A and then answer the questions about these sentences.

- 1 My brothers were going to the circus and they asked me along.
Did the speaker go the circus on her own, with her brothers or do we not know for sure?
- 2 When I took Di a birthday present, she asked me in but I had to get to my lecture.
Did the speaker go into Di's house?
- 3 When I saw Mark on the balcony, he asked me up.
Who was in a higher position, Mark or the speaker?
- 4 When the Richardsons asked me back after the concert I was happy to accept.
Where did the speaker go after the concert?
- 5 My cousin has asked me to go over to his flat this evening.
What word could replace *over* with no change in meaning?

3.2 Look at B opposite. Are the phrasal verbs underlined in the sentences below examples of the (a) or the (b) meanings of *over*?

- 1 Think it over before you make up your mind what to do next.
- 2 You may turn over the page now and read the exam questions.
- 3 It's raining too hard to drive. Pull over to the edge of the road.
- 4 Look over your answers before the end of the exam.

3.3 Look at C opposite. Then read these definitions and decide whether the sentences below are correct or incorrect. If necessary, correct them.

have on has, having, had
have sth on to have an arrangement to do something (never in continuous tenses)
have sb on to persuade someone that something is true when it is not, usually as a joke
have on sth or **have sth on** if you have clothes or shoes on, you are wearing them (never in continuous tenses; never passive)

- 1 I have on three important meetings tomorrow.
- 2 John has an amazing tie on.
- 3 Sue was only having on her sisters when she told them she was planning to become a model.
- 4 I'm having a lot of work on today.
- 5 I don't believe you! I'm sure you're having me on.
- 6 Ruth was wearing her new jeans this morning and she had on them yesterday.

3.4 Put the words in the correct order to make sentences.

- 1 to / you / for / make room / Can / move / over / your sister?
- 2 finished / she / over. / Harry / it / to read / When / her essay, / asked / Jill
- 3 his house / tomorrow. / Jim / back / me / has invited / to
- 4 when he / Paul / his driving test. / his parents / he'd failed / only having / was / told them / on
- 5 tomorrow? / What / you / on / do / have
- 6 the light / in her bedroom, / was / she / at home. / Sue / had / I knew / on / so

4

Nouns and adjectives based on phrasal verbs

A Nouns made from verb + particle

In English we often create nouns from verbs, e.g. *to invite / an invitation*. In the same way it is sometimes possible to create a noun from a phrasal verb. Look at these examples.

- Tom: I got **ripped off** when I phoned that 0877 number [informal: was charged too much].
The call cost five pounds a minute!
- Lily: Yes, those numbers are a big **rip-off**.
- Mona: Her son **dropped out** of college last year. [gave up his course]
- Ed: Mm. There were a lot of **dropouts** that year. I wonder why?
- Mick: Somebody **broke in** last night and stole a computer from the school. [entered by force to steal something]
- Pat: Really? That's the second **break-in** this year!

Rules for the use of verb + particle noun forms

- The plural is formed by adding *-s* to the particle, not the verb, e.g. **break-ins**, **dropouts**, **rip-offs** (not: *breaks-in*, *dropouts*, *rips-off*)
An exception is **goings-on** [strange or amusing events], which is always plural.
There was a lot of gossip about the **goings-on** at the office party.
- Verb + particle noun forms are sometimes written with a hyphen, e.g. **break-in**, **check-in**, **cover-up**; and sometimes without, e.g. **dropout**, **checkout**, **crackdown**.
Nouns with *-out* and *-over* are usually written as one word, e.g. **dropout**, **lookout**, **checkout**, **handout**, **changeover**, **leftovers**.
Nouns with *-in*, *-up* and less common particles usually have a hyphen, e.g. **lie-in**, **mix-up**, **put-down**, **run-through**.
- In pronunciation, the stress is on the verb, not the particle.
a **BREAK-in** at the office college **DROPouts**

B Nouns made from particle + verb

Some phrasal verbs have noun forms where the particle is first. The stress in pronunciation is usually on the particle.

| <i>phrasal verb</i> | <i>particle + verb noun</i> | <i>example</i> |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| set out | outset | I knew from the outset that there would be problems. [beginning] |
| fall down | downfall | The economic crisis caused the downfall of the government. [sudden failure or end] |
| look on | onlooker | Crowds of onlookers watched as the police arrested the man. [someone who watches an event but doesn't take part] |

C Adjectives

There are also adjectives which are based on phrasal verbs. Make a note of any you meet. e.g. a **broken-down** vehicle [vehicle whose engine had stopped working] a **breakdown** truck [truck which helps drivers who have broken down] **blocked-up** drains [drains where the water cannot flow properly]

Exercises

- 4.1** Complete the following table. If a noun form does not exist, write 'none' in the table. Use a dictionary if necessary. Decide whether the noun is written with a hyphen or as one word.



| phrasal verb | verb + particle noun |
|--------------|----------------------|
| show off | show-off |
| warm up | |
| hold on | |
| hide out | |
| turn over | |
| tear down | |

- 4.2** Circle the correct noun form in these sentences. Use a dictionary if necessary.



- 1 There was a big pile-up / up-pile on the motorway involving five vehicles.
- 2 The government has announced a series of backcuts / cutbacks in funding for universities in order to save money.
- 3 When the higher taxes were announced there was a public outcry / cryout.
- 4 Several standerbys / bystanders did nothing while the thieves robbed him of his cash.
- 5 The new drug marks a throughbreak / breakthrough in the treatment of cancer.

- 4.3** Complete these sentences with adjective forms of phrasal verbs from the box below.

throwaway outgoing bygone getaway off-putting

- 1 The robbers abandoned their car in a car park near the airport.
- 2 I find his manner very He's so unfriendly.
- 3 They decided to use paper plates and cups for their party.
- 4 Let's invite Sally – she's very and loves parties.
- 5 The pictures of the steam trains were like something from a era.

- 4.4** Write down the infinitive form of the phrasal verbs from which the adjectives in exercise 4.3 above are formed.

- 4.5** Match the sentences on the left with a suitable response on the right.

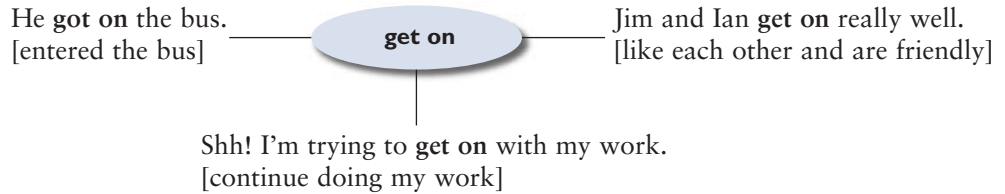
- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 I was looking for a way to turn off the photocopier. | I know, I need to watch my outgoing. |
| 2 Have you heard about the scandal in the office? | Yes, but I don't understand the input. |
| 3 The economy is not doing so well these days. | There's the on/off switch. |
| 4 A database can organise all the information you type into it. | Yes, there's been a downturn. |
| 5 You have to consider how much you spend each month. | Mm, amazing goings-on! |

5

Metaphor and register

A Multiple meanings of phrasal verbs

A phrasal verb can have a number of different meanings, e.g.



Often there is no direct connection between the various meanings and you just have to learn each different meaning of the phrasal verb. The best way to do this is by trying to remember a sentence using the phrasal verb.

B Literal and metaphorical meaning

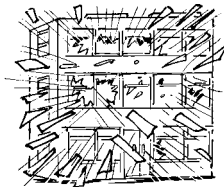
Sometimes the basic meanings of a phrasal verb and the additional meanings are clearly linked. This is because some additional meanings are based on a metaphor or image which has a direct connection with its literal or basic meaning. A metaphor is a way of expressing something by comparing it with something else that has similar characteristics. Here is an example:

LITERAL (BASIC) MEANING

blow up a balloon
 inflate or fill with air



→ **blow up** a building
 make it explode



METAPHORICAL MEANING

someone **blows up**
 suddenly becomes very angry



Sometimes a phrasal verb only exists as a phrasal verb in the metaphorical meaning, but you can guess what it means from the meaning of the basic verb without the particle. For example: These statistics look strange. Have we **slipped up** somewhere?

Here **slip up** [make a mistake] clearly comes from **slip** [fall usually because the floor is wet or the ground is icy].

C Register

Another important aspect of phrasal verbs is register. Phrasal verbs are typical of spoken English or informal writing, e.g. letters to friends and articles in popular journalism. There are often one-word equivalents, or synonyms, for use in a more formal spoken or written style. For example: **miss out** a question *or* **omit** a question. See section 2C in Unit 2 for other examples.

As with all English vocabulary, there are some different uses from one geographical area to another. For example, British, American and Australian users of English all talk of **clearing up** a room [putting things away tidily], but only British and Australian speakers would use **tidy up** as a synonym.

See Unit 69 for more examples of how phrasal verbs differ in North America and Australia.

Exercises

5.1 Match the different meanings a–f of *take in* with the appropriate sentences 1–6 below.

- a) make smaller
 - b) allow in through a hole
 - c) deceive
 - d) give a bed to
 - e) include
 - f) understand the meaning or importance
- 1 Because so many passengers were stranded at the airport, some local families offered to take them in overnight.
 - 2 The news is so shocking – I still can't take it in.
 - 3 The excursion will take in two of the most beautiful castles in the region.
 - 4 Marie has lost weight – she's going to have to take in a lot of her clothes.
 - 5 Rob was totally dishonest but he was so charming that I was taken in by him.
 - 6 We'd better return to the shore at once – the boat seems to be taking in water.

5.2 These pairs of sentences show phrasal verbs which can be used in both literal and metaphorical ways. Explain the two meanings and the connection between them.

- 1 a) I **stepped in** a puddle of water and my feet are soaking now.
b) She **stepped in** to stop the argument from becoming more serious.
- 2 a) This programme is rubbish. I wish you'd **switch off** the TV.
b) The lecture was so boring that I **switched off**.
- 3 a) There's a hole in my bag. I think my pen must have **dropped out**.
b) He **dropped out** of college and became a mechanic.
- 4 a) We **tied** the boxes **down** on the roof of the car.
b) Mark dreams of travelling but he feels **tied down** by his family and work responsibilities.

5.3 Use your knowledge of the basic verb in the underlined phrasal verbs as well as the context of the sentence in order to work out the meanings of the phrasal verbs.

- 1 What are you driving at? I wish you would say exactly what you mean!
- 2 The teacher did all she could to drum the vocabulary into her pupils before the exam.
- 3 The old education system used to cream off the best pupils and teach them in separate schools.
- 4 The noise of the children's music completely drowned out the television.

5.4 Write a one-word formal equivalent for each of the underlined phrasal verbs.

As the rain didn't let up, the football game was called off. So the team got down to discussing its strategy for the next match instead. We didn't get out of the clubhouse until the cleaners turned up in the evening.

FOLLOW UP

If you encounter a phrasal verb that you thought you knew but it does not seem to make sense, use other clues in the context to work out what the meaning might be. It may be quite different from the meaning that you already knew.

6

Come

A **Come expressing an idea of movement or change of state**

| <i>phrasal verb</i> | <i>meaning</i> | <i>example</i> |
|---|--|--|
| come along | arrive at a place | Not many people bought tickets for the concert in advance, but quite a few came along and bought tickets at the door. |
| come apart | separate into pieces | The antique picture frame just came apart in my hands. |
| come around or come round | become conscious again | A nurse was with me when I came round after the operation. |
| come out | disappear or become less strong (of dirt or colour on clothing/material) | Let your shirt soak overnight and the stain will probably come out . |
| come out | become public knowledge after it has been kept secret (of the truth) | If this story comes out about the Prime Minister, he'll have to resign. |
| come out | be given to people (of results or information) | When do your exam results come out ? |
| come out | leave after a period in a place (of hospital/prison) | Jane's coming out of hospital at the weekend. She's much better now. |

B **Come expressing an idea of happen**

I was planning to arrange a surprise holiday for her birthday, but I'm not sure it's going to **come off**. [happen successfully or as planned]

I've had to organise the school fair again this year – I'm not quite sure how that **came about**. [happened, especially something which is not planned]

Dennis: Will you tell your boss about your plans to stand for the local council?

Norma: Only if the subject **comes up**¹ in conversation. I nearly told him at work this morning, but then something **came up**² and we had to deal with it straightaway. Mind you, I don't know if a place on the council is going to **come up**³ for a while yet, so perhaps I'll wait.

¹ is mentioned or discussed

² happened unexpectedly, usually a problem or difficult situation

³ become available

C **Other meanings of come**

I am doing a research project for my degree on the psychology of ageing, but I've **come up against**¹ a few problems. I **came across**² someone who's done an almost identical study, so I've got to **come to**³ a decision: do I want to continue with it or not? I guess in the end my decision will **come down to**⁴ what my professor recommends.

¹ encountered or had to deal with (a difficult situation)

² discovered (or met) by chance

³ make (a decision about something)

⁴ depend mostly on or be influenced most by

Exercises

6.1 Complete these sentences with a particle from A opposite.

- 1 Do you have any glue? The cover of my address book is coming and I want to stick it together again.
- 2 I spilt some orange juice on the tablecloth. Do you think it will come if I put it in the washing machine?
- 3 The last thing I remember was feeling very dizzy. The next thing I knew, I came in hospital and a doctor was standing by my bed.
- 4 The government is going to release a report on traffic congestion. I wonder when it's coming
- 5 We were just chatting at the corner when Jim Gore came with his girlfriend.
- 6 I hear Bruce's operation was successful. When is he coming of the clinic?
- 7 Some very shocking facts have come about government corruption, thanks to an investigation by a national newspaper.

6.2 Use a phrasal verb from the opposite page to complete these dialogues.

- 1 Anne: We lost everybody's e-mail address and had to start all over again.
Ken: Really? How did that ?
Anne: Oh, it was some computer virus.
- 2 Rick: David keeps saying he's going to sail around the world.
Ivan: Huh! Do you think it will ever ?
Rick: Probably not. He's such a dreamer.
- 3 Brian: We'll let you know what we decide. We'll phone you.
Fran: When do you think you'll ?
Brian: Probably at the meeting on Friday.
- 4 Olga: I thought you were coming to the dinner party last night.
Ulla: Yes, I was intending to, but right at the last minute something
Olga: Oh, I see. Well, you must come next time.

6.3 Rewrite the underlined words in these horoscopes, using phrasal verbs with *come*.

SCORPIO ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

You may have to deal with a few problems at work today, but don't worry, they're only temporary, and a new job opportunity will arise which could change your life. The name of an old friend is mentioned in conversation, bringing back powerful memories.



TAURUS ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

You will meet someone by pure chance who seems to share the same world view as you, but be careful, they are not what they seem to be. Don't forget that, in the end, true love is mainly about finding someone you can trust.



FOLLOW UP

Horoscopes are often good places to find everyday, informal phrasal verbs. Read your horoscope regularly in an English newspaper or magazine, even if you don't believe it, and note down any phrasal verbs.

7

Get

A Learning phrasal verbs in pairs associated with a context

| <i>phrasal verbs</i> | <i>meaning</i> | <i>example</i> |
|---|--|---|
| get together (often + with) | If two or more people get together, they meet in order to do something or spend time together. | It's nice to get together with people you get on with . |
| get on (often + with) | If two or more people get on, they like each other and are friendly to each other. | |
| get on (often + with) | continue doing something, especially work | I must get on with my work. I got behind because I spent too much time on the Internet. |
| get behind (often + with) | If you get behind with work or with payments, you have not done as much work or paid as much as you should by a particular time. | |
| get sth over with | do and complete something difficult or unpleasant that must be done | Let's get this meeting over with , or else we'll never get away before the rush hour and it will take ages to get home. |
| get away | leave a place or person, often when the situation makes it difficult for you to do so | |
| can't/couldn't get over sth | be very surprised or shocked that something has happened or that something is true | I can't get over how she manages to get away with doing so little work. It's obvious to everyone, but the boss never seems to notice. |
| get away with sth/doing sth | succeed in not being criticised or punished for something wrong that you have done | |

B More phrasal verbs with get

Gerry: How do you manage to survive without a job?

Kimberly: Oh, I **get by** with a bit of help from my parents. [have just enough money to pay for the things I need, but nothing more]

Lauren: The problem is that the regulations don't allow us to use next year's budget.

Juliet: Oh, don't worry. We'll **get around/round** it somehow. [find a way of dealing with or avoiding a problem]

Yanis: Have you rung the travel agent's yet to confirm our bookings?

Ronan: Sorry, I haven't **got around/round** to it yet, but I'll do it after lunch, I promise. [do something that you have intended to do for a long time]

Polly: I really think you ought to apologise to you-know-who about you-know-what.

Ivan: I'm sorry, I don't know what you're **getting at**. Who? What? [If you ask someone what they are getting at, you are asking them what they mean, usually because they have said something indirectly.]

Ellen: Do you think I can **get away with** not using any handouts in my lecture? [do something successfully even though it is not the best way of doing it]

Lou: Yes, the students just throw them away anyway.

Exercises

7.1 Choose the correct particle to complete these sentences.

- Why don't you get your homework with so you can enjoy the rest of the evening?
a) around b) over c) by d) away
- As soon as Sue and I met, we knew we were going to get well.
a) round b) at c) on d) up
- I just can't come out with you tonight as I've got so with my work.
a) up b) over c) away d) behind
- Why does Rita always get with arriving late? It doesn't seem fair.
a) by b) away c) on d) over
- I'm going to have to get to filling in my tax form soon.
a) round b) over c) away d) behind
- I hope you'll be able to get from work at a reasonable time tonight.
a) away b) behind c) at d) over
- Your mother couldn't get the cost of restaurants in London.
a) up b) round c) by d) over

7.2 Match each question on the left with the most likely response on the right.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 How do you and Joe get on? | I manage somehow, though it isn't easy. |
| 2 What exactly are you getting at? | I just wasn't organised enough. |
| 3 How do you get by on a student grant? | Sure, that would be nice. |
| 4 How did you get so behind? | I certainly hope so. |
| 5 When are you going to get round to it? | Let me put it another way for you. |
| 6 Shall we get together this evening? | We're great friends. |
| 7 Will you manage to get away soon? | Soon, I promise. |

7.3 Rewrite the underlined parts of these sentences, using a phrasal verb from the opposite page. Make any other necessary changes.


- I've been planning to sort out my files but I haven't found time to do it yet.
- I can't believe how much money they spent on their New Year's party.
- Don't try to travel without paying your train fare – an inspector might come on and want to see your ticket.
- The teachers in the school often meet after work on Fridays in a café near the school.
- They avoided the problem of offending anyone and just invited all their friends to the wedding.
- I usually find it quite hard to understand what Professor Mactoft is trying to say in his lectures.
- I hope no-one will mind if I don't send any Christmas cards this year.
- Emily has not done nearly as much work on her thesis as she should have done by now.

FOLLOW UP

Learning verbs in pairs associated with a particular context can help you remember them. Look again at all the phrasal verbs on the opposite page. Try to make different pairs and write them in sentences putting them in context, as in section A.

Exercises

18.1 Draw lines to match the verbs in the left-hand column with the best definitions in the right-hand column.

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>1 mess 2 hang 3 lie 4 sit 5 laze</p> |  <p>about/(a)round</p> | <p>lie down doing very little spend time sitting down and doing very little relax, enjoy yourself and do very little behave stupidly or waste time spend time somewhere not doing very much</p> |
|---|--|---|

18.2 Now use the verbs from exercise 18.1 to fill the gaps in these sentences. Write the verbs in the correct form and use each verb once only.

- 1 She just around on the sofa all day reading magazines.
I wish she'd get a job.
- 2 We could be round here for hours waiting for a taxi. Let's walk.
- 3 After the meeting we were just around chatting for a while.
- 4 My idea of a perfect weekend is just around at home with a good book.
- 5 I wish the kids would stop about.

18.3 Rewrite the underlined words in these sentences, using phrasal verbs from the opposite page.

- 1 Do you want to stay here after the meeting? I finish work at 5 p.m. and I could go with you and show you the most interesting places in the old town.
- 2 Nothing much happened at the demonstration. We just stood in one place not doing much and held our banners up.
- 3 They spend most weekends just doing things without much purpose in their boat; they don't really sail it seriously.
- 4 On my first day, the boss went with me through the workshop and introduced me to various people I'd be working with.
- 5 At the drinks party people were just wandering here and there hoping to find someone they knew.
- 6 Look, I'm sorry, I don't want to cause you problems and waste your time, but I wonder if we could postpone our meeting till next week?

18.4 Here are some other phrasal verbs with *about/around*. Read the sentences and try to explain in your own words what they mean. Use a dictionary if necessary.



- 1 I've got to go now but I'll see you **around**.
- 2 Don't **order** me **about**! I'm not your servant, you know.
- 3 Shop assistant: Can I help you?
Customer: No thanks. I'm just **looking around**.
- 4 My suitcase got a bit **bashed about** on the plane.
- 5 He told the kids to stop **fooling around**.

Note that with all the verbs in this unit the particles *for* and *with* must go before the object of the verb.

A For

Each response in the dialogues below contains two phrasal verbs with *for*. Learning verbs in pairs associated with the same context can help you remember them.

- Nina: I've been given the chance to apply **for** that new post in Head Office. What do you think?
- Gary: I think you should **go for** it [try to get or achieve it]. We'll all be **rooting for** you [informal: showing support for you in a competition, or hoping that you will succeed].
- Melanie: How's your new babysitter?
- Brad: We **couldn't ask for** a better babysitter [the new babysitter is the best of her kind]. She just **lives for** our kids and they just adore her [believes that the kids are the most important people in her life].
- Val: I saw you going into Betty's flat with her this morning. Is anything wrong?
- Irene: Her washing machine had flooded the kitchen. She **sent for** a plumber and got it fixed but it left a terrible mess [send someone a message asking them to come to see you]. We had planned to go into town and I was **calling for** her on the way there, but in the end we stayed at home and tidied the mess in the kitchen [visiting her place in order to collect her].
- Joe: What does 'R' mean on that sign?
- Ray: I think it **stands for** 'restaurant' [is the first letter of a word or name and is used to represent it]. Let's stop. You must **be dying for** something to eat [informal: be wanting something very much, especially food or drink].

B With

| <i>phrasal verb</i> | <i>meaning</i> | <i>example</i> |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| could do with sth/sb | need or want something or someone (informal) | I could do with a cup of tea. |
| deal with sth | if something [e.g. book, film, article] deals with a particular subject or idea, it is about that subject or idea | His latest book deals with the civil war of 1984–1989. |
| stick with it | continue doing something even though it is difficult (informal) | I know studying for a PhD is hard, but I think you should stick with it . |
| go with sth | if one thing goes with another, they suit each other or they look or taste good together | That shirt goes really well with your blue jacket. |
| put up with sb/sth | accept unpleasant behaviour or an unpleasant situation, even though you do not like it | I don't know how she puts up with his bad temper. |
| catch up with sb | meet someone you know, after not seeing them for a period of time | I hope to catch up with Freda when I'm in Berlin. I haven't seen her for years. |

Exercises

19.1 Look at the phrasal verbs in A. Then match the questions 1–6 with the appropriate answers a–f below.

- 1 Do you think I should buy these shoes – they're a bit expensive?
 - 2 Oh dear, look at that accident.
 - 3 What did you think of the restaurant?
 - 4 Do you know what CV means?
 - 5 Would you like to go to a café?
 - 6 Who are you supporting in the league?
- a) Couldn't have asked for anything better!
 - b) Yes, go for it!
 - c) Quick! Send for an ambulance!
 - d) Yes, I'm dying for an ice cream.
 - e) We're rooting for the Reds, as usual.
 - f) Sure! It stands for curriculum vitae.

19.2 Complete these sentences with an appropriate verb. Write the verb in the correct form.

- 1 He for a doctor as soon as he felt the pains in his chest.
- 2 Martha for her work so she's going to find it very hard when she has to retire.
- 3 These boots don't really with this skirt, but they're comfortable.
- 4 You for a nicer teacher. She's so patient and kind.
- 5 I'll have to have a word with Gina. I can't up with her rudeness any longer!
- 6 Your hair is too long – you with a haircut.
- 7 You should with the course. It would be a shame to give up now.
- 8 I love going back to my home town and up with all my old friends.

19.3 Use a phrasal verb from the opposite page to complete these dialogues.

- 1 Anne: This fish tastes delicious with your tomato sauce.
Jenny: Yes, they do well each other, don't they!
- 2 Bob: Shall we go to the concert together?
Tina: Good idea. I'll you on the way there.
- 3 Tessa: I'll go and put the kettle on.
Tony: Great, I'm a cup of tea.
- 4 Joan: I thought the film was great.
Ivan: Yes, I thought it the theme of love really sensitively.
- 5 Mark: Let's meet for a coffee and a chat next week.
Karen: Yes, I can't wait to you.

19.4 Rewrite these sentences, using phrasal verbs from the opposite page.

- 1 I couldn't tolerate such noisy neighbours as yours.
- 2 It's been such a busy week. I can't wait for the weekend.
- 3 Jean's shoes match her handbag perfectly.
- 4 All the students at his university were hoping Kyle would win the golf championship.
- 5 I have the best job you could imagine.
- 6 Her grandson is the most important person in Stella's life.

A Through

Through in phrasal verbs gives an idea of going from one side of something to the other, or from the beginning to the end of something. Note that with most of these phrasal verbs *through* must go before the object of the verb.

If you **sleep through** a loud noise or activity, it does not wake you.

I'm sorry I'm late. I'm afraid I **slept through** my alarm.

If you **live through** something, you experience a difficult situation or event.

People who have **lived through** a war often have rather a different outlook on life.

If you **flick/flip through** a magazine or book, you look briefly at its pages.

I usually **flick/flip through** a magazine before buying it.

If you **look through** something, you read it quickly and not very carefully.

If you **go through** something, you carefully read or discuss it to make sure that it is correct.

I'll **look through** the report tonight and then we can **go through** it properly tomorrow.

If you **take someone through** something, you explain it or show them how to do it.

Don't worry – Jack will **take you through** the job before we leave you on your own.

If you **see through** a person who is trying to trick you, you realise what they are really like or what they are trying to do.

He is so charming that few people **see through** him and realise that he is just a conman.

B Back

Back in phrasal verbs usually conveys the idea of returning.

If you want to return something you have bought by post, perhaps because it is the wrong size or is damaged, you **send it back**. If you go to the shop to exchange it in person you **take it back**. Shops usually have to agree to **take back** things they have sold you if you find they are not in good condition when you get home. If you **call/phone/ring someone back** or **e-mail someone back**, you are replying to a phone message or e-mail from them.

Note that with the verbs above, *back* can go before or after the object of the verb.

If someone, especially a child, **answers (someone) back**, they reply rudely to someone they should be polite to.

Mother: Say thank you to Mrs Brown.

Child: Say thank you yourself.

Mother: Don't **answer me back** like that.

An interesting use of *back* is in the expression: **We go back** ten years.

This is an informal way of saying: We have known each other for ten years.

If you **bite back**, you do something bad to someone because they did something bad to you. However, if you **bite something back** or **bite back something**, you stop yourself from saying something that shows your true feelings or thoughts.

When Emma is criticised she doesn't hesitate to **bite back**.

When Karl asked me what I thought of his lime-green suit, I had to **bite back** my initial response.

Exercises

20.1 Write what you could say in these situations using phrasal verbs with *through*.

- 1 Your boss asks you to explain to a new member of staff how things are done in the office, step by step. What could you say to the new person?
- 2 A friend warns you that another person, Leo, is trying to trick you. Reassure the friend that you realised what Leo was really like the first moment you met him.
- 3 You arrive late for an important meeting. You set your alarm clock but didn't wake up when it rang. Apologise and explain what happened.
- 4 You have done some calculations at work, and there seems to be a mistake. Ask a colleague to read the figures carefully to see if they can see any mistakes.
- 5 A colleague offers to read in detail a 12-page report you have written. Tell them that that will not be necessary and that you'd be grateful if they just looked at it very briefly. (Give three possible answers.)
- 6 A friend asks you why a person you know always seems so sad. Explain that that person has experienced some terrible things over the last few years.

20.2 Complete these sentences using verbs from B.

- 1 This new jacket just doesn't look right on me; the colour is all wrong. If I it back to the shop, do you think they'd it back? I bought it over a week ago.
- 2 I had to back some angry words when they told me I had lost my job.
- 3 I bought this clock on the Internet, but it's not as nice as it looked on the computer screen. I think I'll it back.
- 4 I don't think she'll just accept his insults. She's the sort of person who will back if she's attacked.
- 5 We're old friends. We back to the 1980s when we were at college together.
- 6 Children nowadays seem to lack respect for their parents and won't hesitate to back.

20.3 Complete the sentences using an appropriate phrasal verb from the opposite page.

- 1 Joe rang while you were out. Please could you
- 2 I don't like these trousers I bought today. I think I
- 3 Harry missed his train this morning because he
- 4 Ellen isn't really reading the magazine; she's just
- 5 I wanted to tell her how upset I was but I managed to



Mr Trotsky was one of those people everyone could see through immediately.