

# Phrasal Expressions

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B1 / B2.1

2019/20

NEVER EVER  
**EVER**  
GIVE UP!



- There are a number of phrasal expressions, ranging from phrasal adverbs (under my skin), phrasal nouns (make-up), phrasal adjectives (spot on), phrasal verbs (call off) to phrasal prepositions (in front of).
- A Phrasal Verb is a verb consisting of two or more parts; a verb and another particle (typically an adverb or preposition). Unlike prepositions, particles often change the meaning of the verb they combine with:
  - Verb + Preposition ► I **ran out** the door. (*I left quickly*)
  - Phrasal Verb ► Can I borrow some paper? I **ran out**. (*I used all my paper*)
- Most are formed from a small number of common verbs (such as get, go, come, play, put and set) and a small number of adjectives (set free), nouns (play house), adverbs (run away), prepositions (put up with) or a combination of them (bark up the wrong tree).
- Phrasal verbs sometimes have meanings that can easily be guessed (such as sit down or look for).
- But in most cases their meanings are quite different from the meaning of the verb they are formed from: for example hold up can mean 'to cause a delay' or 'to try to rob someone' and has no obvious connection with the idea of 'holding' something.

## What is a phrasal expression?

- Transitive phrasal verbs take objects. Most transitive phrasal verbs are separable; that is, we can put an object noun after the phrasal verb or between the verb and the particle.
  - Verb + particle + noun ► She turned on the light.
  - Verb + Noun + Particle ► They turned the light on.
- If the object of a separable transitive phrasal verb is a pronoun, it must separate the verb and the particle. It cannot follow the phrasal verb.
  - She turned it on.
  - *She turned on it.* (incorrect)
- Some transitive phrasal verbs are inseparable; that is, you cannot place the object between the verb and the particle.
  - She looked after the children **NOT** *She looked the children after*
  - She looked after them **NOT** *She looked them after*
- Some inseparable transitive phrasal verbs consist of three words. The verb + particle is followed by a preposition. The object always follows the preposition, as in *cut down on, drop out of, get on with, go along with, put up with, run out of, stick up for...*
- Intransitive phrasal verbs do not take objects.
  - We grew up overseas.
  - He dropped by yesterday.

## Separable or inseparable?

Noun Object She turned the offer down. She turned down the offer.		Pronoun object She turned it down. She turned down it. (incorrect)	
Bring up	Raise someone / introduce a topic	Hand in	Give something to a person in authority
Brush off	Remove something	Hand out	Distribute
Call off	Cancel something	Hold up	Delay something
Call up	Telephone someone	Leave out	Omit something
Clean up	Clean completely	Let out	Alter clothes to make them larger
Do over	Do something again	Look over	Examine something carefully or review it
Dry off	Dry with a towel	Look up	Look for information
Fill out	Complete a form	Make up	Invent something
Get up	Awaken someone	Mark down/up	Increase/decrease the price of something
Give back	Return something	Figure out	Come to understand

# Separable Transitive Phrasal Verbs

Pick out	Choose something		
Pick up	Lift something/someone	Think through	Consider something thoroughly
Put away	Put something in its usual place	Throw away	Get rid of something
Put off	Postpone something	Try on	Put on clothing to see how it looks
Put together	Assemble something	Turn down	Refuse a request; lower the heat/volume
Take away	Remove something	Turn in	Give something to a person in authority
Take back	Return something	Turn off	Stop a machine or light
Take off	Remove clothes	Turn on	Start a machine or light
Talk over	Discuss something	Turn over	Turn something so that it is facing down
Tear up	Destroy something by ripping	Use up	Use completely

## Separable Transitive Phrasal Verbs (cont.)

Noun object The teacher called on Sally. The teacher called Sally on. (incorrect)		Pronoun object The teacher called on her. The teacher called her on. (incorrect)	
Ask for	Request	Get around	Avoid something
Break into	Enter illegally	Get on with	Continue something
Call on	Ask someone to speak	Go along with	Agree with something/someone
Come across	Find something unexpectedly	Get over	Recover from something
Come by for	Pick someone up	Go over	Review something
Count on	Depend on someone	Look after	Take care of someone
Cut down on	Use less of something	Look into	Research a subject
Do without	Manage without	Look up to	Admire someone
Drop out of	Quit school	Put up with	Tolerate
End up with	Get something in the end	Run into	Meet someone unexpectedly
Find out	Discover something	Take after	Resemble someone

# Non-separable Transitive Phrasal Verbs

Intransitive phrasal verbs do not take objects:

My car broke down yesterday.  
What time do you usually get up?

Blow up

Explode

Grow up

Become an adult

Break down

Stop working properly

Hold on

Wait on the telephone

Burn down

Burn completely

Look out

Be careful

Catch up

Find out latest news

Make out

Manage or progress

Come back

Return

Move out

Stop living somewhere

Come over

Visit

Pass out

Lose consciousness

Drop by

Visit, esp. unexpectedly

Show up

Appear

Eat out

Eat in a restaurant

Start out

Begin

Fall down

Suddenly stop standing

Take off

Leave (usually by plane)

Get up

Get out of bed

Talk back

Answer in a rude way

Give up

Stop trying, lose hope

Turn up

Appear or arrive

Go down

Stop functioning, become lower, sink, set

Wake up

Stop sleeping

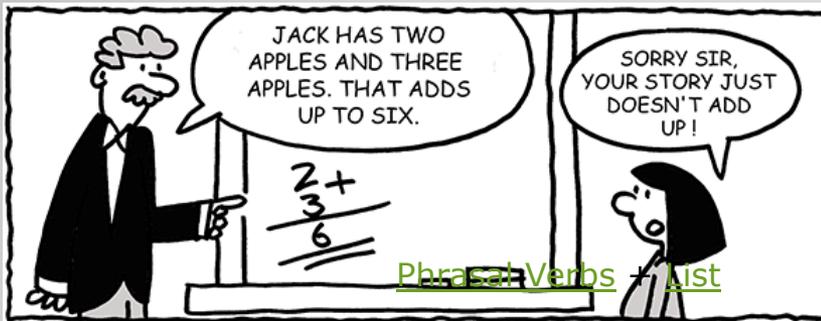
Go off

Stop functioning, start functioning, explode

Work out

exercise

# Intransitive Phrasal Verbs



- [Phrasal Verbs \(theory\)](#)
- [List of common phrasal verbs](#)
- [Phrasal Verbs Exercises](#)
- [Self-check exercise](#)

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