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Phrasal Verb

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What are phrasal verbs?

Phrasal verbs are verbs that consist of a verb and a particle (preposition or adverb). Phrasal verbs can often have different meanings from the basic verbs that they use. For example, *speak* merely means to talk. However, the phrasal verb *speak up* means to talk louder

How are phrasal verbs different from prepositional phrases?

Be careful. While phrasal verbs can contain prepositions, these same prepositions can also be used in prepositional phrases. How do we tell the difference?

-I looked up the directions.

-Amy looked up the road.

In the first example, the preposition up is part of the phrasal verb looked up, a unit meaning “to locate information in reference materials.” The meaning of the sentence changes if the two words are not working together. In the second sentence, up the road is a prepositional phrase (the preposition up followed by the road, which is the object of the preposition). In this sentence, looked up is not functioning as a unit.

A

We often use verbs with:

in, out, on, off, up, down, away, back, by, through, about, along, over, forward, round or around

So you can say look out / get on / take off / run away etc. These are phrasal verbs.

We often use on/off etc. with verbs of movement. For example:

get on → The bus was full. We couldn't *get on*.

drive off → A woman got into the car and *drove off*.



come back → Sarah is leaving tomorrow and *coming back* on Saturday.




turn round When I touched him on the shoulder, he *turned round*.

B- 

Often the second word (on/off/out etc.) gives a special meaning to the verb:

break down  Sorry I'm late. The car broke down. (= the engine stopped working) 

find out I never found out who sent me the flowers. (= I never discovered)

take off  It was my first flight. I was nervous as the plane took off. (= went into the air)

give up  I tried many times to contact her. In the end I gave up. (= stopped trying) 

get on How was the exam? How did you get on? (= how did you do?)

get by My French isn't good, but it's enough to get by. (= enough to manage)

C-

Sometimes a phrasal verb is followed by a preposition. For example:

Phrasal verb – Preposition

look up – at

-We looked up at the plane as it flew above us.

run away – from

-Why did you run away from me?

-keep up – with

-You're walking too fast. I can't keep up with you.

look forward – to

-Are you looking forward to your trip?

D-

Sometimes a phrasal verb has an object. For example:

- I *turned on* the light. (the light is the object)

Usually there are two possible positions for the object. You can say:

- I *turned on* the light.

- I *turned* the light *on*.

But if the object is a pronoun (it/them/me/him etc.), only one position is possible:

- I *turned it on*. (not: turned on it)

In the same way, you can say:

- I'm going to take off my shoes.

- I'm going to take my shoes off.

But:

- These shoes are uncomfortable. I'm going to *take them off*. (not: take off them)

- Don't *wake up* the baby.

- Don't *wake* the baby *up*.

But:

- The baby is asleep. Don't *wake her up*. (not: wake up her)

- Don't *throw away* this box.

- Don't throw this box away.

But:

-I want to keep this box, so don't *throw it away*. (not: throw away it)

Phrasal Verbs 2: in/out

A. Compare in and out

in = into a room, a building, a car etc.

- How did the thieves *get in*?

- Here's a key, so you can *let yourself in*.

- Lisa walked up to the edge of the pool and *dived in*. (= into the water)

- I've got a new apartment. I'm *moving in* on Friday.

- As soon as I got to the airport, I *checked in*.

out = out of a room, a building, a car etc.

- Stay in the car. Don't *get out*.
- I had no key, so I was *locked out*.
- She swam up and down the pool, and then *climbed out*.
- Andy opened the window and *looked out*.
- We paid the hotel bill and *checked out*.

In the same way you can say go out, get out, move out, let somebody out etc.

Compare out and out of:

- She *climbed out*.
- She *climbed out of* the pool.

B. Other verbs + in

drop in (visit somebody at home without arranging to do this)

- I *dropped in* to see Chris on my way home.

join in (take part in something that is already going on)

- They were playing cards, so I *joined in*.

plug in (connect an electrical machine to the electricity supply)

- The fridge isn't working because you haven't *plugged it in*.

take somebody in (deceive somebody)

- The man said he was a policeman and I believed him. I was completely *taken in*.

fill in or fill out (write the necessary information on a form)

- Please fill in the application form and send it to us by 28 February.

Or: Please fill out the application form.

C. Other verbs + out

eat out (eat at a restaurant, not at home)

There wasn't anything to eat at home, so we decided to *eat out*.

drop out

(of college / university / a course / a race) = stop before you have completely finished

- Gary went to university but *dropped out* after a year.

get out of (avoid doing something that you arranged to do)

- I promised I'd go to the wedding. I don't want to go, but I can't *get out of* it now.

leave something out (omit; not include it)

In the sentence "She said that she was ill," you can leave out the word that.

cross something out (write a line through it)

Some of the names on the list had been crossed out.

Phrasal Verbs 3: out

A. out (not burning, not shining)

go out (Suddenly all the lights in the building went out)

put out (put out a fire / a cigarette / a light)

- I *put* the fire *out* with a fire extinguisher.

turn out (turn out a light)

- I turned the lights out before leaving.

blow out (blow out a candle)

- We don't need the candle. You can blow it out.

B. work out

work out (do physical exercises)

- Rachel *works out* at the gym three times a week.

work out (develop, progress)

- Good luck for the future. I hope everything *works out* well for you.

A: Why did James leave the company?

B: Things didn't work out. (= things didn't work out well)

work out: for calculations)

- The total bill for three people is £97.35. That *works out* at £32.45 each.

work (something) out (calculate)

- 345×76 ? I need a calculator. I can't *work it out* in my head.

work out / figure out (understand; think about a problem and find an answer)

- Investigators are trying to *work out* what caused the accident.

Or: Investigators are trying to *figure out* what caused the accident.

C- Compare up and down

up

- *put* something *up* (on a wall etc.)

- I *put* a picture *up* on the wall.

- *pick* something *up*

- There was a letter on the floor. I *picked it up* and looked at it.

stand up

- Alan *stood up* and walked out.

turn something up

- I can't hear the TV. Can you *turn it up* a bit?

down

- take something down (from a wall etc.)

- I didn't like the picture, so I *took it down*.

put something down

- I stopped writing and *put down* my pen.

sit down / bend down / lie down

- I *bent down* to tie my shoelace.

turn something down

-The oven is too hot. *Turn it down* to 150 degrees.

D- knock down, cut down etc.

knock down a building / blow something down / cut something down etc.

- Some old houses were *knocked down* to make way for the new shopping centre.
- Why did you *cut down* the tree in your garden?

be knocked down (by a car etc.)

- A man was *knocked down* by a car and taken to hospital.

burn down = be destroyed by fire

- They were able to *put out* the fire before the house burnt down.

E- down = getting less

slow down = go more slowly

- You're driving too fast. Slow down.

calm (somebody) down = become calmer; make somebody calmer

- Calm down. There's no point in getting angry.

cut down (on something) = eat, drink or do something less often

- I'm trying to cut down on coffee. I drink too much of it.