

## Phrasal Verbs in English

### What are Phrasal Verbs?

Phrasal verbs are verbs with two or three words: **main verb + particle (preposition or adverb)**

Examples:

I **wake up** at 7:30 every day.

Please **turn off** the TV.

My brother and I don't **get along**. We fight all the time.

She **came up with** a good idea.

Phrasal verbs are difficult because you often can't understand the meaning of each expression from the words themselves. Also, many phrasal verbs are very similar (take up, take on, take in, take over, etc.) and a number of phrasal verbs have multiple meanings.

In this lesson, you're going to learn **4 types of phrasal verbs** and how each one functions in an English sentence.

Phrasal verbs can be **transitive or intransitive**.

Transitive phrasal verbs can be **separable or inseparable**.

### Intransitive Phrasal Verbs

Intransitive phrasal verbs have **no direct object**. (A direct object is "acted upon" by the verb).

Examples of intransitive phrasal verbs:

I **woke up** at 10:30 AM.

You can **come over** to my house after school.

He's **going back** to Russia next month.

### Transitive Phrasal Verbs

Transitive phrasal verbs **have a direct object**.

Examples of transitive phrasal verbs (direct object is in *italics*):

You need to **fill out** *this form* to register for the course. (*fill out = complete*)

I'm going to **cut down on** *fast food* this year. (*cut down on = reduce*)

**Check out** *that website* – it's really great! (*check out = look at, go to*)

### Separable & Inseparable Phrasal Verbs

Transitive phrasal verbs can be **separable or inseparable**. If a phrasal verb is **separable**, it means you can separate the two words and put the direct object in the middle. If it is **inseparable**, then you can't do this.

Separable Phrasal Verb Example: TURN OFF

Please **turn off** *the TV*.

Please **turn *the TV* off.**

Inseparable Phrasal Verb Example: LOOK AFTER

I'll **look after *your dog*** while you're on vacation.

I'll **look *your dog* after** while you're on vacation – **INCORRECT**

### Word Order for Separable Phrasal Verbs

When the direct object is the specific name of a thing or person, it can be located after the phrasal verb or in the middle:

I **threw away *the old pizza*.**

= I **threw *the old pizza* away.**

However, when the direct object is a **pronoun (me, you, him, her, us, them, it)**, then it **MUST** go in the middle:

I **threw *it* away.**

I **threw away *it*.** – **INCORRECT**

Here's an example with a person:

They'll **pick up *John*** from the airport.

= They'll **pick *John* up** from the airport.

= They'll **pick *him* up** from the airport.

They'll **pick up *him*** from the airport. – **INCORRECT**

### How do you know if a phrasal verb is transitive or intransitive and separable or inseparable?

Unfortunately, there's no "rule" for looking at a phrasal verbs and knowing what type it is! The best way is just to study each phrasal verb in context with lots of examples.

## Intransitive Phrasal Verbs in English

Here's a list of 15 intransitive phrasal verbs with example sentences:

Phrasal Verb	Meaning	Example Sentence
<b>break down</b>	stop working	My car <b>broke down</b> and I had to take it to the mechanic.
<b>catch on</b>	become popular	Lady Gaga's music has <b>caught on</b> very fast.
<b>come over</b>	go to someone's house	If you <b>come over</b> after school, we can do the homework together.
<b>dress up</b>	wear very nice or formal clothes	We all <b>dressed up</b> for the Christmas party.
<b>drop by</b>	visit without an appointment	Sarah <b>dropped by</b> to return the book I had lent her.
<b>eat out</b>	eat at a restaurant or café (not at home)	I'm tired and I don't feel like cooking – let's <b>eat out</b> tonight.
<b>fall through</b>	when something that was planned fails	We were going to spend the holiday at the beach, but our plans <b>fell through</b> because we couldn't find a place to stay.
<b>get by</b>	survive with little money	My job doesn't have a high salary, but it's enough to <b>get by</b> .
<b>get up</b>	arise or get out of bed	My alarm clock goes off at 6:00, but I don't <b>get up</b> until 6:30.
<b>go back</b>	return to a place	I really enjoyed my visit to Germany; I'm planning to <b>go back</b> next spring.
<b>grow up</b>	get older, become an adult, become more mature	My son wants to be an astronaut when he <b>grows up</b> .
<b>pass out</b>	lose consciousness	The football player <b>passed out</b> after training for 5 hours in the hot sun.
<b>show up</b>	arrive	I agreed to meet Peter at the basketball game, but he never <b>showed up</b> .

<b>shut up</b>	stop talking (can be considered a rude way to say this)	My co-worker talks all day about stupid TV shows. I wish she would just <b>shut up!</b>
<b>throw up</b>	vomit	Billy <b>threw up</b> after drinking 20 beers.

### Separable Phrasal Verbs in English

Here's a list of 15 separable phrasal verbs with example sentences:

Phrasal Verb	Meaning	Example Sentence
<b>call (something) off</b>	cancel	It started to rain 10 minutes before the soccer game, so they <b>called it off</b> .
<b>cheer (someone) up</b>	make a sad person feel happy	My daughter was sad about missing the concert, but I bought her a CD to help <b>cheer her up</b> .
<b>chop (something) up</b>	cut something (usually food) into small pieces	The recipe says to take three onions and <b>chop them up</b> .
<b>do (something) over</b>	repeat a task	You didn't do this assignment correctly. You'll need to <b>do it over</b> .
<b>figure (something) out</b>	understand, find a solution	Could you help me with this math problem? I can't <b>figure it out</b> .
<b>give (something) out</b>	distribute	Please print 100 copies of this report and <b>give them out</b> to all the employees.
<b>let (someone) down</b>	disappoint another person	He really <b>let me down</b> when he forgot my birthday.
<b>pick (someone) up</b>	get a person in your car and take him/her to another place	The tour company will <b>pick you up</b> at the airport and take you to your hotel.
<b>put (something) away</b>	put something in the correct place	After you're done reading those magazines, please <b>put them away</b> .
<b>put (something) off</b>	delay, postpone, procrastinate	I know I should work on this project, but it's difficult so I keep <b>putting it off</b> .

<b>spell (something) out</b>	describe carefully and clearly in detail	It's my first day at this new job, so you'll need to <b>spell everything out</b> for me.
<b>throw (something) away</b>	put something in the garbage	I <b>threw the headphones away</b> because they were broken.
<b>try (something) on</b>	wear a piece of clothing temporarily to see if it's the correct size	I really like this dress. Can I <b>try it on</b> ?
<b>turn (someone/something) down</b>	reject or refuse	She got a job offer from a big company, but she <b>turned it down</b> to pursue a career in music.
<b>write (something) down</b>	write something on paper	Could you tell me your e-mail address again? I didn't <b>write it down</b> .

### Inseparable Phrasal Verbs in English

Here's a list of 15 inseparable phrasal verbs in English, with example sentences.

Phrasal Verb	Meaning	Example Sentence
<b>back out (something)</b>	fail to keep a commitment	The client <b>backed out of</b> the deal at the last minute.
<b>come across (something)</b>	find accidentally	While cleaning the house, I <b>came across</b> a check I had forgotten to deposit.
<b>count (something someone) on</b>	depend on, rely on	I'm <b>counting on</b> you to send me the information by the end of the day – I need it as soon as possible.
<b>fill in (someone)</b>	substitute for	The president of the company is traveling, so the vice-president is <b>filling in for</b> him at the meeting.
<b>get rid (something) of</b>	eliminate, throw away	We have rats in the house – we need to call the exterminator to <b>get rid of</b> them.
<b>go (something) over</b>	review	Before the test, let's <b>go over</b> the topic of phrasal verbs.
<b>look (something someone) after</b>	take care of	I can't go out tonight because I'm <b>looking after</b> my sister's children.

<b>look forward to</b> (something)	feel happy/excited about something in the future	I'm really <b>looking forward to</b> our family vacation in Florida – it's going to be awesome!
<b>look into</b> (something)	investigate	I'm <b>looking into</b> the possibility of taking an intensive English course in Australia next year.
<b>put up with</b> (something / someone)	tolerate something/someone / unpleasant	One of my colleagues is not very nice, but we <b>put up with</b> him because he does excellent work.
<b>run into</b> (someone)	meet unexpectedly	I <b>ran into</b> my ex-boyfriend at the supermarket – that was an unpleasant surprise.
<b>settle on</b> (something)	decide on, choose	I was debating what type of fitness class to take, and I finally <b>settled on</b> yoga.
<b>take after</b> (someone)	resemble in looks or personality	She's very friendly and extroverted – she <b>takes after</b> her mother.
<b>touch on</b> (something)	mention briefly during a speech or discussion	We <b>touched on</b> the issue of employee satisfaction during the meeting, but we didn't go into much detail.
<b>turn into</b> (something)	become	The caterpillar <b>turned into</b> a butterfly.