

Phrasal verbs: reference

Introduction

Phrasal verbs have two parts: a *verb* (e.g. *make, go, get*) and a 'small word' (e.g. *on, up, out, with*). This 'small word' may be an adverb or a preposition. Some phrasal verbs (Type 4, below) have two 'small words'.

Types of phrasal verb

Type 1: Verb + adverb (Units 4, 6)

take off The plane *took off*.
get up I *got up* at 6 o'clock.

These verbs are intransitive (they have no object).

Type 2: Verb + noun + adverb (Units 8, 10, 12, 14)

take ... off He *took* his shoes *off*.
give ... away She *gave* all her money *away*.

These verbs are transitive (they have an object: *shoes, money*).

If the object is a noun, the adverb can come *before* or *after* it. So we can say:

He *took* his shoes *off*. or
He *took off* his shoes.

If the object is a pronoun (*him, her, it, them*), the adverb must come *after* it. So we can say:

He *took* them *off*. but not ~~He took off them.~~

Type 3: Verb + preposition + noun (Units 16, 18)

look for I'm *looking for* my glasses.
take after She *takes after* her mother.

These are sometimes called 'prepositional verbs'. The preposition (*for, after, etc.*) must come *before* the noun. (We cannot say ~~I'm looking my glasses for.~~)

Type 4: Verb + adverb + preposition + noun (Units 20, 22)

run out of I've *run out of* matches.
get down to It's time to *get down to* some work.

These are sometimes called 'three-word verbs'. They are a combination of Types 1 and 3.

The meanings of phrasal verbs

With some phrasal verbs, the meaning is obvious:

He *got in* the car and *drove off*.
He *turned round* and saw me.

But many phrasal verbs have an 'idiomatic' meaning which cannot easily be guessed from the individual words:

They *turned up* an hour later (= arrived).
She *made* the story *up* (= invented).
I'm trying to *cut down on* cigarettes (= smoke less).

Source: Language in Use- Intermediate CUP

Some common 'idiomatic' phrasal verbs with their meanings

Type 1

carry on	= continue
find out	= discover
grow up	= become adult
set off	= start (a journey)
settle down	= live in one place
take off	= leave the ground
turn up	= arrive (unexpectedly)

Type 2

bring sg. up	= introduce (a topic)
bring s.o. up	= raise (a child)
give sg. away	= reveal (a secret); give (for no money)
give sg. up	= stop (doing)
let s.o. down	= disappoint
look sg. up	= find the meaning (of a word)
look s.o. up	= visit (after a long time)
make sg./s.o. out	= understand
make sg. up	= invent
pick sg. up	= take (from the ground)
pick s.o. up	= collect, meet
put s.o. down	= criticise/humiliate
put sg. off	= delay, postpone
put sg. up	= build, construct
put s.o. up	= have to stay (as a guest)
ring s.o. up	= telephone
run sg./s.o. over	= drive over (in a car)
take sg. up	= start (doing)
talk s.o. round	= persuade
think sg. over	= consider carefully
turn s.o./sg. down	= refuse
turn sg. up/down	= make louder/quieter
work sg. out	= find the answer (to a problem)

Type 3

call for sg./s.o.	= collect
come across sg.	= find (by chance)
cope with sg.	= manage
deal with sg.	= be concerned with
(could) do with sg.	= would like
(can't) do without sg./s.o.	= need
get over sg.	= recover from
go off sg./s.o.	= stop liking
look after sg./s.o.	= care for, be responsible for
look into sg.	= investigate
run into s.o.	= meet (by chance)
take after s.o.	= resemble (an older relative)
take to sg./s.o.	= like, be attracted to

Type 4

catch up with sg./s.o.	= draw level with
cut down on sg.	= reduce the amount of
get down to sg.	= start doing
get on with sg.	= make progress with, continue
get on with s.o.	= like being with
look down on s.o.	= despise
look out for sg./s.o.	= watch for, be careful of
look out on sg.	= have a view of
look up to s.o.	= respect
put up with sg./s.o.	= tolerate
run out of sg.	= have no more of
stand up for sg./s.o.	= defend

sg.= something s.o.= someone