

PHYSICAL AND VISUAL ACTIVITIES FOR TEACHING PHRASAL VERBS

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How can we practice phrasal verbs in a lively dynamic way? Before we look at the activities we're going to look at what exactly are the objectives of all of these activities.

Objectives of these activities:

Firstly The activities are intended to be fun and lively, to make students actually enjoy learning and practising phrasal verbs (impossible as that may sound).

Secondly The activities try to show that phrasal verbs are combinations of two parts, in which the two parts, the verb and the particle, each give meaning to the pv.

Thirdly Finally the activities aim to stress the importance of the particle in giving meaning because this is the part that students usually find most difficult to grasp. To do this the activities try to show particle meanings physically and / or visually.

These activities are designed to help students understand better how combinations are made and to see the importance of the particles in giving the basic meaning to the phrasal verbs. The activities can be used during a class that focuses on phrasal verbs to break up the rhythm of the class or in a general class to use as revision.

1 SIMON SAYS

This simple children's game, in different variations, can be used to practice different aspects of phrasal verbs. It is particularly useful in focusing the students' attention on the meaning of the particle rather than the verb.

1. Elicit different particles from the students and write them on the board.
2. Students and the teacher stand in a circle next to a chair.
3. The teacher give instructions to the students using the particles. e.g. "Go behind the chair!", "Go on it!", "Go away from the chair!", "Go back!" And the students must stand behind, on, away, or go back to their chairs. The last student to complete the action, or one who does a different action is eliminated and must change roles with the teacher.

Variations:

It is useful to only use go at first so that students focus on the particle. However, once students have got the idea, other verbs can be used such as sit, stand, lie etc. In this way students can focus on the way combinations of meaning are made.

You can add the rule that students must only follow the instruction when the person giving the instructions begins "Simon says..." (good practice for the third person!) or "Can you..." (to practice requests).

2 BALL GAME

1. Each student has a soft ball or paper ball and stands three to four metres from a chair.
2. The teacher gives instructions and the students must try to follow them. You can use the game with the pre-prepared cards or you can write different possible combinations on the board. Students receive 1 point for each instruction correctly followed. The first student to reach ten points wins the game. This student then gives instructions to the other students.

3 LOOK

Students are given a questionnaire with questions like “What can you see if you look up, down behind you?” etc. They must try to remember or imagine without actually looking and either write down or discuss with a partner.

Look!

CONVERSATION PRACTICE

Without looking try to answer these questions.

- 1 What can you see if you look up?
- 2 What can you see if you look down?
- 3 What can you see if you look behind you?
- 4 What can you see if you look out of the window?
- 5 What can you see if you look under your chair?
- 6 What can you see if you look in your pockets?
- 7 What can you see if you look on the table?
- 8 What can you see if you look around the classroom?

4 MIME

Split the class into two or three teams. The students take turns in trying to mime phrasal verbs to their team. Each team gets one point for each phrasal verb correctly guessed. Students mime and guess as many as they can in thirty seconds. You can use pre-prepared cards. The cards will provide literal combinations. or get students to prepare them (obviously more risky).

5 OBSTACLE COURSE

This activity takes some preparation. The class is split into two teams and tables and chairs are arranged to create two identical obstacle courses. Students are given a set of instructions they must memorize and later follow. E.g. “Walk around the first chair. Crawl under the table. Jump on the second chair. Climb over the second table.” The two teams then compete in a relay race following the instructions. The teacher acts as referee to check each student follows the instructions correctly. The teams can remind competitors if they forget the instructions.

6 SONGS

Many different songs with actions can be used to practice phrasal verbs. e.g. “She’ll be coming round the mountain.” Or “The Grand Old Duke of York.”

She’ll Be Coming Round the Mountain – Adapted Version

We are going to the mountain, yes we are!

We are going to the mountain, yes we are!

We are going to the mountain, going to the mountain,

Going to the mountain, yes we are!

We are climbing up the mountain, yes we are!

We are singing on the mountain, yes we are!

We are skiing down the mountain, yes we are!

We are jumping off the mountain, yes we are!

We are going through the tunnel, yes we are!

The Grand Old Duke of York

The Grand Old Duke of York,
He had ten thousand men.
He marched them up to the top of the hill
And he marched them down again.
And when they were up they were up,
And when they were down they were down,
And when they were only half way up,
They were neither up nor down.

7 DRAW A PHRASAL VERB

Split the class into two or more teams. The students take turns in trying to draw phrasal verbs to their team. Each team gets one point for each phrasal verb correctly guessed. Students draw and guess as many as they can in thirty seconds. You can use the cards from page 142. (these cards will provide literal combinations) or you can get students to prepare them (although this is obviously more risky as their suggestions are less predictable).

8 GRAB A CHAIR

Preparation

Before doing this activity students should be familiar with phrasal verbs and have studied section one of this book. Some quick revision will be useful, you could do the exercises related to the text A Day in Bob's Life (page 116) or, if you have already done this, elicit particles and revise the Basic Verb List. This activity is basically an adaptation of the game musical chairs.

1. Students make a circle of chairing, one chair for each student, facing outwards and then sit on them. This activity can get quite lively so make sure any sharp edges are moved out of the playing area.
2. Each student is given a card with a particle on it (you can use the cards on page)
3. The teacher then tells a story (what you did yesterday or at the weekend etc.) whilst walking around the circle of chairs. In the story you should use different the different particles in combinations. When a student hears the particle on his or her card they must stand up and follow the teacher walking around the circle.
4. At some point clap your hands. All the students and the teacher must try to sit on a chair. However one person will be left standing. This person must tell a new story. Before beginning they must give their card to the teacher and then everyone passes their card to the person on their left. Then repeat Step 3, with the student left standing telling the story.