

Phrasal verbs 1 Introduction

We often use verbs with the following words:

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

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

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

- | | | |
|------------|--------------------------|--|
| get on | <input type="checkbox"/> | The bus was full. We couldn't get on. |
| drive off | <input type="checkbox"/> | A woman got into the car and drove off. |
| come back | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sally is leaving tomorrow and coming back on Saturday. |
| turn round | <input type="checkbox"/> | When I touched him on the shoulder, he turned round. |

But often the second word (on/off/out etc.) gives a special meaning to the verb. For example:

- | | | |
|------------|--------------------------|--|
| break down | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sorry I'm late. The car broke down. (= the engine stopped working) |
| look out | <input type="checkbox"/> | Look out! There's a car coming. (= be careful) |
| take off | <input type="checkbox"/> | It was my first flight. I was nervous as the plane took off. (= went into the air) |
| get on | <input type="checkbox"/> | How was the exam? How did you get on? (= How did you do?) |
| get by | <input type="checkbox"/> | My French isn't very good, but it's enough to get by. (= manage) |

For more phrasal verbs, see Units 138-145.

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

phrasal verb	preposition	
run away	from	<input type="checkbox"/> Why did you run away from me?
keep up	with	<input type="checkbox"/> You're walking too fast. I can't keep up with you.
look up	at	<input type="checkbox"/> We looked up at the plane as it flew above us.
look forward to		<input type="checkbox"/> Are you looking forward to your holiday?

Sometimes a phrasal verb has an *object*. Usually there are two possible positions for the object.

So you can say:

I turned on the light. *object* or I turned the light on. *object*

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

I turned it on. (not I turned on it)

Some more examples:

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--|---|---------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Could you | { | fill in this form? |
| | | | fill this form in? |
| but | They gave me a form and told me to fill it in. (not fill in it) | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Don't | { | throw away this postcard. |
| | | | throw this postcard away. |
| but | I want to keep this postcard, so don't throw it away. (not throw away it) | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I'm going to | { | take off my shoes. |
| | | | take my shoes off. |
| but | These shoes are uncomfortable. I'm going to take them off. (not take off them) | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Don't | { | wake up the baby. |
| | | | wake the baby up. |
| but | The baby is asleep. Don't wake her up. (not wake up her) | | |

137.1 Complete each sentence using a verb from A (in the correct form) + a word from B. You can use a word more than once.

A fly get go look sit speak

B away by down on out round up

- The bus was full. We couldn't get on.
- I've been standing for the last two hours. I'm going to for a bit.
- A cat tried to catch the bird, but it just in time.
- We were trapped in the building. We couldn't
- I can't hear you very well. Can you a little?
- 'Do you speak German?' 'Not very well, but I can
- House prices are very high. They've a lot in the last few years.
- I thought there was somebody behind me, but when I, there was nobody there.

137.2 Complete the sentences using a word from A and a word from B. You can use a word more than once.

A away back forward in up

B at through to with

- You're walking too fast. I can't keep up with you.
- My holidays are nearly over. Next week I'll be work.
- We went the top floor of the building to admire the view.
- Are you looking the party next week?
- There was a bank robbery last week. The robbers got £50,000.
- I love to look the stars in the sky at night.
- I was sitting in the kitchen when suddenly a bird flew the open window.

137.3 Complete the sentences using the following verbs + it/them/me:

fill in get out give back switch on take off wake up

- They gave me a form and told me to fill it in.
- I'm going to bed now. Can you at 6.30?
- I've got something in my eye and I can't
- I don't like it when people borrow things and don't
- I want to use the kettle. How do I ?
- My shoes are dirty. I'd better before going into the house.

137.4 Use your own ideas to complete the sentences. Use a noun (this newspaper etc.) or a pronoun (it/them etc.) + the word in brackets (away/up etc.).

- Don't throw away this newspaper. I want to keep it. (away)
- 'Do you want this postcard?' 'No, you can throw it away.' (away)
- I borrowed these books from the library. I have to take tomorrow. (back)
- We can turn Nobody is watching it. (off)
- A: How did the vase get broken?
B: I'm afraid I knocked while I was cleaning. (over)
- Shh! My mother is asleep. I don't want to wake (up)
- It's quite cold. You should put if you're going out. (on)
- It was only a small fire. I was able to put quite easily. (out)
- A: Is this hotel more expensive than when we stayed here last year?
B: Yes, they've put (up)
- It's a bit dark in this room. Shall I turn ? (on)