

400 Phrasal Verbs

Introduction to 400 Phrasal Verbs

400 phrasal verbs form a vital part of English language mastery, especially for learners aiming to enhance their conversational skills, writing precision, and overall fluency.

Phrasal verbs, which combine a verb with one or more particles (such as prepositions or adverbs), often carry idiomatic meanings that are not always obvious from the individual words. Mastering a broad spectrum of these expressions can significantly improve comprehension and communication in both casual and formal contexts. This comprehensive guide explores 400 common phrasal verbs, their meanings, usage, and tips for effective learning.

Understanding Phrasal Verbs

What Are Phrasal Verbs?

Phrasal verbs are combinations of verbs with particles that create new meanings. For example:

1. **Break down** – to stop functioning or to lose control emotionally.
2. **Look after** – to take care of someone or something.
3. **Run out of** – to deplete the supply of something.

Types of Phrasal Verbs

1. **Separable Phrasal Verbs:** The object can come between the verb and the particle (e.g., *turn off the lights / turn the lights off*).
2. **Inseparable Phrasal Verbs:** The object must follow the entire phrasal verb (e.g., *look after the children*, not *look the children after*).

Categories of 400 Phrasal Verbs

Common Phrasal Verbs for Everyday Use

These verbs are frequently used in daily conversations, making them essential for learners:

1. Get up
2. Go out

3. Come in
4. Take off
5. Pick up
6. Drop off
7. Turn on / Turn off
8. Look for
9. Come back
10. Go ahead

Business and Formal Phrasal Verbs

These are useful in professional contexts:

1. Carry out
2. Follow up
3. Set up
4. Take over
5. Bring up
6. Look into
7. Work out
8. Fill in
9. Point out
10. Lay off

Phasal Verbs for Travel and Leisure

1. Check in
2. Check out
3. Get away
4. Set off
5. Drop by
6. Take off
7. Come across
8. See off
9. Look around
10. Hang out

Strategies for Learning 400 Phrasal Verbs

1. Categorize and Group

Group phrasal verbs by themes or usage scenarios to facilitate memorization. For instance, create lists for travel, business, emotions, or daily routines.

2. Use in Context

Practice by constructing sentences, engaging in conversations, or writing stories incorporating these verbs. Contextual learning cements understanding.

3. Create Flashcards

Use physical or digital flashcards to quiz yourself on meanings and usage. Include example sentences for better retention.

4. Regular Practice and Review

Consistently review your list of phrasal verbs. Schedule weekly revision sessions to reinforce memory.

5. Engage with Media

Consume English media such as movies, podcasts, and books to hear and see these verbs in natural settings.

Sample of 50 Essential Phrasal Verbs

Here are 50 vital phrasal verbs, their meanings, and example sentences to get started:

1. **Break down:** to stop working (e.g., The car broke down on the highway.)
2. **Bring up:** to mention a topic (e.g., She brought up the issue during the meeting.)
3. **Call off:** to cancel (e.g., They called off the event due to rain.)
4. **Look after:** to take care of (e.g., Can you look after my dog this weekend?)
5. **Turn on:** to activate (e.g., Please turn on the lights.)
6. **Turn off:** to deactivate (e.g., Remember to turn off the oven.)
7. **Pick up:** to collect or learn (e.g., I will pick up the package tomorrow.)
8. **Run out of:** to have no more of something (e.g., We've run out of milk.)
9. **Get along:** to have a good relationship (e.g., They get along well with each other.)
10. **Look for:** to search (e.g., I'm looking for my keys.)
11. **Break up:** to end a relationship (e.g., They broke up last month.)
12. **Go on:** to continue (e.g., Please go on with your story.)
13. **Carry on:** to persist (e.g., Carry on, you're doing great.)

14. **Give up:** to quit (e.g., He gave up smoking.)
15. **Put off:** to postpone (e.g., They put off the meeting.)
16. **Take up:** to start a new activity (e.g., She took up painting.)
17. **Show up:** to arrive (e.g., He showed up late.)
18. **Make up:** to invent or reconcile (e.g., They made up after the fight.)
19. **Turn around:** to change direction or situation (e.g., The company turned around after the crisis.)
20. **Set up:** to establish or arrange (e.g., They set up a new office.)
21. **Take out:** to remove or extract (e.g., I took out the trash.)
22. **Check out:** to investigate or leave a hotel (e.g., Check out before noon.)
23. **Give away:** to donate or reveal (e.g., She gave away her old clothes.)
24. **Run into:** to encounter unexpectedly (e.g., I ran into an old friend yesterday.)
25. **Bring back:** to return or recall (e.g., That song brings back memories.)
26. **Hold on:** to wait (e.g., Hold on a moment, please.)
27. **Keep up:** to maintain (e.g., Keep up the good work.)
28. **Lay off:** to dismiss from work (e.g., The company laid off workers.)
29. **Pick out:** to select (e.g., She picked out a dress.)
30. **Break into:** to enter forcibly or start suddenly (e.g., They broke into the house.)
31. **Get over:** to recover from (e.g., It took him a long time to get over the flu.)
32. **Go through:** to experience (e.g., She's going through a tough time.)
33. **Look out:** to be careful (e.g., Look out for cars!)
34. **Settle down:** to establish stability (e.g., They decided to settle down in the countryside.)
35. **Turn up:** to arrive

400 Phrasal Verbs: The Ultimate Guide to Mastering Everyday English In the vast landscape of the English language, phrasal verbs stand as one of its most dynamic and expressive features. They are the secret sauce that adds nuance, clarity, and naturalness to spoken and written communication. For learners, mastering these multi-word verbs can be a game-changer, transforming stiff sentences into fluid, idiomatic expressions. In this comprehensive review, we explore 400 phrasal verbs, offering an in-depth understanding, practical applications, and expert insights into their use.

Understanding Phrasal Verbs: The Building Blocks of Natural English

What Are Phrasal Verbs?

Phrasal verbs are combinations of a main verb and one or more particles—prepositions or adverbs—that together create a meaning different from the individual words. For example, "give up" means "to stop trying," which is distinct from the literal meanings of "give" and "up." Key Characteristics: - Multi-word expressions: Typically consist of two or three words. - Idiomatic meanings: Often have meanings that cannot be deduced from the individual parts. - Versatility: Used across all registers—from formal writing to casual conversations. - Transitivity: Some are transitive (take an object), like "pick up," while others are intransitive, like "break down." Why Are They Important? - They make language more expressive and idiomatic. - They are frequently used in everyday speech and writing. - Understanding them enhances comprehension of native speakers and media.

Classification of Phrasal Verbs

To navigate the extensive list of 400 phrasal verbs, it's helpful to categorize them based on their function and usage.

1. Transitive and Intransitive Phrasal Verbs

- Transitive: Require a direct object. Examples: "give up," "pick out," "turn on" -
Intransitive: Do not take a direct object. Examples: "break down," "come in," "run away"

2. Separable and Non-separable Phrasal Verbs

- Separable: The object can be placed between the verb and particle. Example: "turn on the light" / "turn the light on" - Non-separable: The object must follow the entire verb-particle phrase. Example: "look after children" (can't say "look children after")

3. Formal and Informal Phrasal Verbs

- Formal: Often found in business or academic contexts. Examples: "carry out," "bring about" - Informal: Common in casual speech. Examples: "hang out," "give up," "go on"

4. Phasal Verbs with Multiple Meanings

Many phrasal verbs have more than one meaning depending on context. Example: "break up" can mean to end a relationship or to disintegrate.

Top 50 Phrasal Verbs: A Starting Point

To illustrate the richness of phrasal verbs, here are 50 essential ones, categorized for clarity:

Common Transitive Phrasal Verbs - Bring up: mention or introduce a topic - Call off: cancel - Find out: discover information - Get over: recover from an illness or difficulty - Look after: take care of - Make up: invent; reconcile - Put off: delay - Take up: begin a new activity or hobby - Turn down: refuse or reject - Work out: exercise or find a solution

Common Intransitive Phrasal Verbs - Break down: stop functioning or become emotional - Come in: enter - Drop in: visit unexpectedly - Go out: leave home for entertainment - Run away: escape - Show up: arrive - Wake up: stop sleeping - Come across: find unexpectedly - Carry on: continue - Pull over: stop at the side of the road

Separable Phrasal Verbs - Pick up: collect or learn - Turn on: activate, as in turning on a device - Give back: return something - Set up: establish or arrange - Take out: remove or invite someone for a date

Non-separable Phrasal Verbs - Look after: care for - Run into: encounter unexpectedly - Bring about: cause to happen - Check out: examine or investigate - Come up with: think of an idea

Deep Dive: Explanations and Usage of Select Phrasal Verbs

To truly master these verbs, understanding their nuances and contexts is essential.

1. "Bring up" - To Mention or Introduce

Definition: To mention a topic during conversation. **Example:** She brought up the issue during the meeting. **Usage Tips:** Often used in formal and informal contexts; can be used when initiating sensitive topics.

2. "Carry out" - To Perform or Execute

Definition: To conduct or perform a task or experiment. **Example:** The scientists carried out the experiment successfully. **Usage Tips:** Frequently used in professional or academic settings.

3. "Look after" - To Care For

Definition: To take care of someone or something. **Example:** Can you look after my dog while I'm away? **Usage Tips:** Common in caregiving contexts; also used when supervising or managing.

4. "Put off" - To Delay

Definition: To postpone or delay an event or action. Example: They put off their wedding until next year. Usage Tips: Often associated with procrastination or scheduling.

5. "Break down" - To Fail or Collapse

Definition: To cease functioning or to become emotionally overwhelmed. Example: My car broke down on the highway. / She broke down in tears. Usage Tips: Context determines whether physical or emotional.

Strategies for Learning and Using Phrasal Verbs Effectively

Mastering 400 phrasal verbs is a formidable task, but with strategic approaches, it becomes manageable.

1. Group Learning

Group phrasal verbs by themes or functions: - Travel: "check in," "get off," "pick up," "drop off" - Communication: "bring up," "call back," "point out," "talk over" - Relationships: "break up," "get along," "fall out," "make up" This approach helps retention by associating verbs with contexts.

2. Use Visual Aids and Contextual Sentences

Create flashcards with definitions, example sentences, and images. Seeing phrasal verbs in context enhances understanding.

3. Practice in Real-Life Situations

Engage in conversations, write journal entries, or participate in language exchanges incorporating new phrasal verbs.

4. Recognize Phrasal Verbs in Media

Watch movies, listen to podcasts, or read articles, noting how native speakers use these expressions naturally.

5. Regular Review and Reinforcement

Spaced repetition ensures long-term retention. Revisit lists periodically and incorporate them into daily language use.

Advanced Tips for Mastery

- Understand separability: Practice both forms of separable phrasal verbs to gain flexibility.
- Learn multiple meanings: For polysemous phrasal verbs like "set up" or "run into," understand different contexts.
- Identify formal vs. informal: Use formal phrasal verbs in professional settings, reserving colloquial ones for casual speech.
- Use phrasal verbs in writing: Incorporate them into essays, emails, and reports to sound more natural.

Practical Applications of 400 Phrasal Verbs

The ultimate goal of mastering these verbs is to enhance communication skills across various domains.

Business and Professional Communication - "Carry out" tasks efficiently - "Follow up" on meetings or leads - "Bring about" change or innovation - "Set up" meetings or systems

Academic and Formal Writing - "Bring up" relevant research - "Point out" critical issues - "Carry out" experiments or studies - "Check out" sources or references

Everyday Conversations - "Hang out" with friends - "Drop in" unexpectedly - "Put off" plans due to unforeseen circumstances - "Wake up" early for work or exercise

Conclusion: Unlocking the Power of Phrasal Verbs

Mastering 400 phrasal verbs is not merely an exercise in memorization but a journey into the soul of natural English communication. These multi-word verbs imbue speech

Questions & Answers About 400 phrasal verbs

No	Question	Answer
1	What are phrasal verbs and why are they important to learn?	Phrasal verbs are combinations of a verb and one or more particles (prepositions or adverbs) that together create a new meaning. They are important because they are commonly used in everyday English, making your speech and writing more natural and fluent.

2	How can I effectively learn and memorize 400 phrasal verbs?	You can effectively learn them by grouping related phrasal verbs, practicing with real-life sentences, using flashcards, and engaging in regular conversation practice. Consistent exposure and contextual usage help in retaining them better.
3	What are some common categories of phrasal verbs I should focus on?	Common categories include phrasal verbs of movement (e.g., 'break down'), daily routines (e.g., 'get up'), communication (e.g., 'call off'), and idiomatic expressions (e.g., 'give up'). Focusing on these helps in understanding their usage in context.
4	Are there any online resources or apps to help me learn 400 phrasal verbs?	Yes, numerous websites and apps like Quizlet, Memrise, and FluentU offer dedicated courses, flashcards, and exercises to help you learn and practice large sets of phrasal verbs effectively.
5	How do I distinguish between separable and inseparable phrasal verbs?	Separable phrasal verbs allow the object to come between the verb and particle (e.g., 'turn off the lights' vs. 'turn the lights off'), while inseparable ones do not (e.g., 'look after the kids'). Recognizing this helps in correct sentence formation.
6	Can mastering 400 phrasal verbs improve my overall English fluency?	Absolutely. Phrasal verbs are integral to natural communication, especially in informal contexts. Mastering them enhances your understanding, expression, and overall fluency in English.
7	What are some effective strategies to practice using 400 phrasal verbs regularly?	Practice by writing sentences, participating in conversations, watching movies or shows in English, and using language exchange platforms. Regular usage in speaking and writing helps solidify your knowledge of these verbs.

phrasal verbs list, English phrasal verbs, common phrasal verbs, verb phrases, idiomatic expressions, daily English phrases, ESL phrasal verbs, verb combinations, English grammar, conversational English