

PHRASAL VERBS 1

A Understanding phrasal verbs

Verbs are often followed by particles like *back*, *off*, *through*, *up*, etc. The word 'particle' means adverb or preposition.

Sometimes both verb and particle have their normal meanings. Other times there is a new meaning when the verb and particle are put together. Compare:

*It took 20 minutes to **go through** passport control.*
(normal meaning)

*Can we **go through** your proposal again?*
(new meaning = 'look at something carefully')

A phrasal verb is where there is a special meaning of verb + particle together. These verbs are common in informal English.

Often one phrasal verb can have several different meanings, and the correct one is only clear from the context.

- 1 Don't worry, I'll **deal with** it.
(= take action)
- 2 We **deal mainly with** German companies.
(= do business with)
- 3 The report **deals with** our future strategy.
(= be about)

B Separable phrasal verbs

With some phrasal verbs we can separate the two parts.

If the object is a noun, we can put it before or after the particle.

*Could you **fill this form in**, please?*

OR *Could you **fill in this form**, please?*

If the object is a pronoun (*me*, *you*, *it*, etc.) it must come before the particle.

*Could you **fill it in**, please?*
(NOT ~~fill in it~~)

Here is a list of separable phrasal verbs commonly used in business, and their approximate meanings:

back up (give support to, provide evidence for)
bring in (use the skills of a person or group)
bring out (start to sell a new product)
call off (decide an event will not happen, cancel)
check out (look at something to see if you like it)
draw up (think about and then write)
drop off (take to a place in a car and leave)
figure out (be able to understand; solve)
fill in/out (complete by writing information)
find out (discover a fact)
give up (stop doing, quit)
hand in (give something to a person in authority)
head up (be in charge of a group, team, etc.)

hold up (cause a delay)
keep down (prevent from increasing)
lay off (dismiss, stop employing)
look up (find information in a book or list)
pick up (collect in a car)
point out (tell, indicate something important)
roll out (introduce a new product)
set up (start, establish)
shut down (close, stop operating)
sort out (organize, put right, find a solution)
take on (accept work/responsibility; employ)
take over (take control of)
throw away (get rid of, waste an opportunity)
turn down (refuse, say 'no' to)
turn on/off (start/stop a piece of equipment)

*Will you **back me up** in the meeting?*

*Hey! **Check out** this cool new design.*

*Our lawyers will **draw up** a new contract.*

*We **turned down** their offer. It was too low.*

C Inseparable phrasal verbs

With some phrasal verbs we cannot separate the two parts. See the list below. Those marked with an asterisk* do not have objects.

*break down** (stop working)
call on (visit for a short time)
*check in** (register, report your arrival)
come across (find by chance)
*come in** (interrupt a discussion)
do without (manage without)
*end up** (be somewhere after doing something)
enter into (start a formal discussion or activity)
*fall through** (fail to happen)
file for (officially ask a court for something)
get into (start enjoying, start discussing)
go into (start a type of job, talk about in detail)
*hold on** (wait a moment)
look after (take care of)
look into (investigate, examine the facts)
look through (search among a lot of things)
*pay off** (bring some benefit, repay in full)
take up (use an amount of time or space)
*take off** (suddenly become successful)
*turn out** (how something develops or ends)
*turn up** (arrive)

*I couldn't **do without** my secretary.*

*Both sides must **enter into** serious negotiations.*

*They are going to **file for** bankruptcy.*

*I'm sorry to **take up** so much of your time.*

Exercises

22.1 Choose the best verb from A, B, C or D below.

- 1 She left the company to C up her own business.
A create B put C set D take
- 2 Here are some figures that _____ up what I've been saying.
A put B back C support D turn
- 3 This is a great opportunity. We can't just _____ it all away.
A remove B get C take D throw
- 4 I might need some help. I've never _____ across a situation like this before.
A come B been C found D looked
- 5 Their long-term strategy is in crisis. The merger has _____ through.
A gone B fallen C ended D passed
- 6 We won the contract. Congratulations! All your hard work really _____ off.
A went B brought C took D paid
- 7 He started as a salesman and _____ up as the CEO of the same company.
A went B got C ended D picked
- 8 After a relatively slow start in May, sales really _____ off in June.
A took B went C rolled D launched

22.2 Complete the sentences with a phrasal verb that means the same as the words in brackets. The particle has been given to help you.

- 1 Did you find out why they haven't paid their invoice? (discover)
- 2 Can you _____ on here until I get back? (wait a moment)
- 3 There's another way to finance the deal. I'm going to _____ into it. (investigate)
- 4 You need to _____ out this customs declaration. (complete by writing)
- 5 Rita is in reception. Can you _____ with it? I'm really busy. (take action)
- 6 You need determination to succeed. Don't _____ up now! (quit)
- 7 When he retires his son will _____ over the business. (take control of)
- 8 I'd like you to _____ up the design team for the new model. (be in charge of)
- 9 If Bob Pinker arrives, could you _____ after him until I return? (take care of)
- 10 This job is going to _____ up most of the morning. (use an amount of time)

22.3 Underline all the possible word orders from the four alternatives. Sometimes two are possible, sometimes three are possible.

- 1 I'm too busy to *deal with this/deal this with/deal with it/deal it with* right now.
- 2 I'm going to *look up the information/look the information up/look up it/look it up* on the Internet.
- 3 In the current economic climate we're trying to *keep down our costs/keep our costs down/keep down them/keep them down* as much as possible.
- 4 I couldn't *do without my BlackBerry/do my BlackBerry without/do without it/do it without*.

Exercises

22.4 Complete the memo with phrasal verbs from the box that mean the same as the words in brackets. Two verbs need an **-ing** form.

bring out call off call on check in draw up drop off
get into hold up look through ~~pick up~~ sort out turn up

Memo

Simon - I'm leaving for Benelux tonight. There are a few things I need you to do while I'm away:

1 Mr Yamanaka

Mr Yamanaka will be arriving at the airport at 10.55 on Thursday morning. Can you ¹ pick him up (collect by car) from there and ² _____ him _____ (take in a car and leave) at his hotel? He's staying at the Marriott. Perhaps you could also be with him just to make sure there are no problems ³ _____ (registering), etc. After that he can just go to his room and freshen up. I'll probably ⁴ _____ (arrive) there around 1.00 pm and will call his room from reception.

2 Spain trip

I'm trying to ⁵ _____ (organize) the itinerary for my trip to Spain next month. Can you ⁶ _____ (think about then write) a list of all our Spanish customers by ⁷ _____ (searching) our customer accounts database? I'd like to know exactly who I need to ⁸ _____ (visit) while I'm there.

3 Product launch

As you know, we were going to ⁹ _____ (start to sell) our Xd6 model next month - it's the replacement to the Xd5. Unfortunately production issues are going to ¹⁰ _____ (delay) the launch by at least six weeks. Unfortunately this means that we will have to ¹¹ _____ (cancel) the launch event. When I'm back in the office we need to ¹² _____ (start discussing) details re who to contact about this. Can you give it some thought?

Thanks, Grace

22.5 Complete this extract from a newspaper article by choosing the correct particle from those in the brackets.

New crisis at eTravel

Online travel site eTravel announced yesterday that revenues were down 15% on the same period last year. Earlier in the year eTravel laid ¹ _____ (off/up/out) a quarter of its staff in a bid to keep costs ² _____ (off/down/out), but these measures were

not enough to make the company profitable. Now they are going to bring ³ _____ (up/through/in) an outside consultancy firm who will take ⁴ _____ (through/up/on) the task of finding areas for further cost savings while creating a viable long-term strategy.