

This In-depth English Phrasal Verbs List Will Instantly Boost Your Vocabulary

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Yuliya Geikhman

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Sometimes English phrasal verbs make sense...

And sometimes they seem totally random.

Look at the cute kitten at the top of this page, for example. It looks like she's going to hit those paper birds until they **fall down**.

It's pretty easy to guess that this means she's going to make the birds *fall* or *drop*.

But what if I shouted to her, **“Cut it out!”**

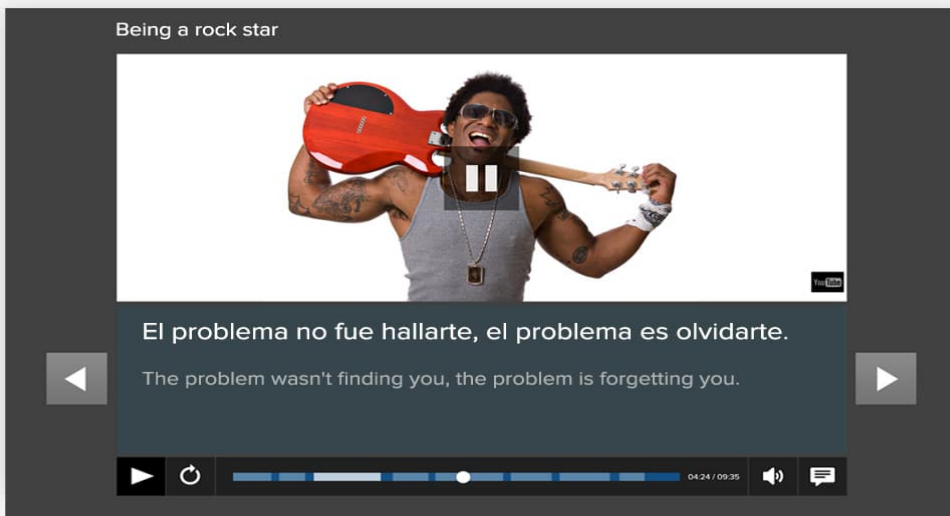
It sounds like I'm asking her to grab a pair of scissors, right? But I'm just telling her to stop what she's doing.

Phrasal verbs open up a whole new world of possibilities for speaking English. **They are phrases that give verbs completely different meanings.** They are also used incredibly often in everyday conversation, which makes them important to know.

The good news is that a lot of English phrasal verbs share the same base verb (**cut it out, cut off, cut in** — more on all of those below). If you learn the phrasal verbs associated with one verb, you'll give your vocabulary an instant boost!

In this English phrasal verbs list, **we'll show you 56 of the most common phrasal verbs**—conveniently organized by type.

So come on, let's learn some phrasal verbs.



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What Is a Phrasal Verb?

A phrasal verb is a phrase that's made up of a *verb* and another word or two, usually a *preposition* but sometimes an *adverb*.

So before we can talk about English phrasal verbs, it's important to understand what verbs, prepositions and adverbs are.

A **verb** is an action word. It describes something happening (e.g. hearing, seeing), a state of being (e.g. to live, to sleep), or an action being done (e.g. to read, to sing).

A **preposition** is a word that describes the relationship between two words. For example, the bees are *above* the table or *under* the table, but not *inside* the table (hopefully). Prepositions mainly deal with location or direction (e.g. on, through, around) and time (e.g. "by" or "around" a certain time).

An **adverb** is a word that describes a verb. For example, you can run *quickly* or *slowly* and arrive to class *early* or *late*.

Now that you know what verbs and prepositions are, you're ready to start putting them together into phrasal verbs.

Phrasal verbs work by changing the verb's meaning based on the preposition that follows them.

It's easier than you think—you probably already know a number of phrasal verbs. For example, read the last sentence before this section: “So *come on*, let's learn some phrasal verbs.” The words “come on” in that sentence are a phrasal verb!

The word “come,” on its own, means to move towards something. Together with the preposition “on,” though, the phrase “come on” becomes a phrase of encouragement.

There are many other phrasal verbs out there!

How to Learn English Phrasal Verbs

English phrasal verbs are everywhere, so one of the best ways to learn them is to try to listen for them. These phrases are commonly used, and would not be unusual to hear in a conversation. Do you hear a verb used together with another word very often? It might be a phrasal verb.

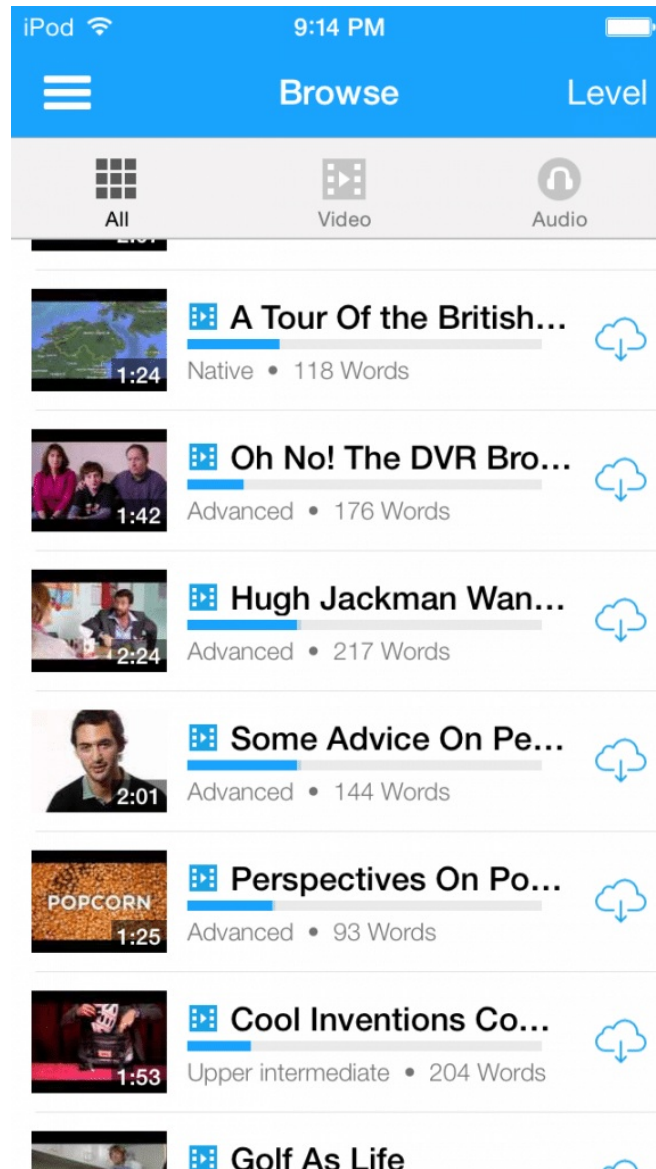
If you're not sure whether a phrase is a phrasal verb or just a verb that happened to be spoken with a preposition, try looking it up. Most dictionaries have entries for phrasal verbs, so look the phrase up to be sure. You can also look up the phrase in the [online Oxford Phrasal Verbs Dictionary](#), which is an excellent resource, so save that link!

Some phrasal verb meanings are obvious—like “fall down”—but some are almost like idioms since they can't be literally translated. To make them easier to learn, you can **try grouping the phrasal verbs into categories**, like we've done with our phrasal verbs list below.

Don't be afraid to create your own categories from different types of phrasal verbs. For example, you could group phrasal verbs that are focused on time of day (e.g. wake up, lie down) or positive vs. negative (e.g. cheer up/give up). That's why we've organized our phrasal verbs list below into groups.

There are so many phrasal verbs that it might seem difficult to learn them all. But many of these phrases become natural after a while—all it takes is some repetition and practice.

One of the fastest ways to understand phrasal verbs and use them correctly is watching videos on FluentU. FluentU provides authentic English videos—like movie trailers, TV commercials, inspiring speeches and more—where you will hear tons of **phrasal verbs used naturally by native speakers**. And you never have to worry about misunderstanding them.



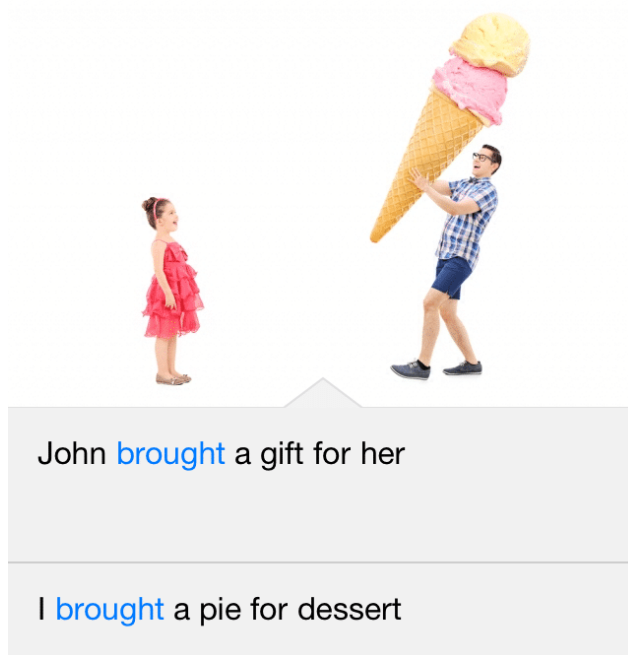
FluentU App Browse Screen

That's because FluentU has English learning tools built into every video, including **interactive subtitles**. Just tap on any phrasal verb (or any word at all) and FluentU will give you an instant definition, grammar information and examples.

As an example, if you tap on the word "brought," then you see this:

brought

v. to take something or
someone to another place

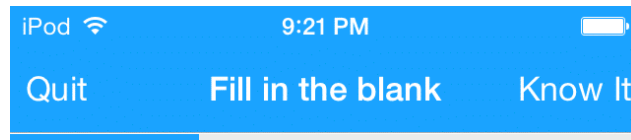


John brought a gift for her

I brought a pie for dessert

FluentU lets you tap to look up any word.

There are also flashcards and fun quizzes for every video to help you remember what you've learned.



Buildings can after a fire .



Hint: to fall down or inward; to come apart

collapse



decoded

step

fusing

Next

FluentU helps you learn fast with useful questions and multiple examples.

For instance, watch [this video of José Gonzales performing the song “Heartbeats,”](#) which has several English phrasal verbs. If you [sign up for a FluentU trial](#), you can watch with all the learning features and explore the full video library. There are thousands of videos for beginners through advanced learners.

How to Use English Phrasal Verbs

Phrasal verbs are used just like verbs—you can use them anywhere they make sense!

Usually, the verb and preposition in a phrasal verb need to be said together, like in the phrase “fall down.” In some cases, though, you can separate the verb and the preposition by putting other words in between them.

For example: the phrase “turn off” can be used just like that, or it can be interrupted by stating what you’re turning off.

In other words, you can say “**turn off** the TV,” but you can also say “**turn** the TV **off**.” Both are correct!

Another thing to keep in mind about phrasal verbs is that they are still verbs. That means the verb part of the phrase can be changed depending on the tense and subject of the sentence. So “turn off” can transform like this:

*I **turned off** the TV this morning.*

*She **turns off** the TV every time I enter the room!*

It will take you a while to get used to which phrasal verbs can be separated and which can't, so hang in there!

Below are some of the most common English phrasal verbs. We organized them alphabetically so they're easy to find—like an English phrasal verb dictionary—but you can group them however you want when you're learning them!

Phrasal Verbs with “Bring”

Bring up

To mention something.

Note: The two parts of this phrasal verb *can* be separated in a sentence.

*“Mark was sick and had to miss the party, so please don’t **bring it up**, I don’t want him to feel bad for missing it.”*

Bring on

To cause something to happen, usually something negative.

The two parts of this phrasal verb can be separated by what's happening.

*“His lung cancer was **brought on** by years of smoking.”*

Bring it on!

To accept a challenge with confidence.

*“You want to have a race? **Bring it on!** I can beat you!”*

Phrasal Verbs with “Call”

Call on

This can mean either to visit someone, or to use someone's or something's knowledge.

To visit someone: *"I'll **call on** you this evening to see how you're feeling."*

To use someone's knowledge: *"I may need to **call on** the university's excellent professors in order to answer your question."*

Call off

To cancel something.

*"The picnic was **called off** because of the rain."*

Phrasal Verbs with "Cheer"

Cheer on

To support someone by giving them words of encouragement. This phrasal verb can be separated by the name or pronoun of the person/people being cheered on).

*"Even though Samantha was in the last place, her brother **cheered** her **on** through the entire race."*

Cheer up

This phrase can either be used as a phrase of encouragement said to someone who seems sad (just saying "cheer up!" to them), or it can mean to try to make someone happier.

*"Andrew was having a bad day, so his girlfriend **cheered** him **up** by taking him out for ice cream."*

Phrasal Verbs with "Come"

Come up (with something)

To think of an idea.

*"I **came up** with this idea for a TV show about a woman living with her best friend and daughter. I call it 'Two and a Half Women.'"*

Come up

To bring up a topic, or when something happens unexpectedly.

To bring up a topic: *“I wanted to tell her that I got a new job but the chance never **came up**.”*

Unexpected occurrence: *“I was going to meet my friends for dinner, but something **came up** so I had to cancel.”*

Come in

To enter.

*“**Come in**, the door is open!” said the grandmother to the wolf.*

Come across

To meet or find by chance.

*“I was cleaning the attic and I **came across** my high school uniform. Can you believe it still fits?”*

Come forward

To volunteer information about something, like a crime.

*“The police are encouraging people to **come forward** with any information about the kidnapped girl.”*

Phrasal Verbs with “Cut”

Cut off

This phrase can be used in several ways, but its general meaning is “to interrupt or stop something.” (Can be separated.)

While driving, to get in front of another car suddenly: *“That red car just **cut me off** and I almost crashed into it.”*

To stop supplying things to or communicating with someone: *“His father is rich but he **cut him off** without any money of his own.”*

Cut (it) out

This phrase has the same meaning as saying “Stop it.”

*“Hey, **cut it out!** I was watching that movie, so stop changing the channel!”*

Cut in

To interrupt someone when they are speaking.

*“I was about to ask that girl on a date, but her friend **cut in** and I lost the chance.”*

Phrasal Verbs with “Drop”

Drop by/in

To stop by for a visit, for a short time.

*“Andrew is such a great boyfriend, when he heard that his girlfriend had a cold he **dropped by** to bring her some soup.”*

Drop off

To leave something or someone in their destination.

It can be separated by the object being dropped off.

*“I can give you a ride and **drop you off** at work.”*

Phrasal Verbs with “Fall”

Fall apart

This phrase means “to break into pieces,” but it can be used to talk about things that are not physical, like a marriage or a person.

*“They tried to save their marriage by going to therapy but in the end it **fell apart** anyway.”*

Fall down

To drop to the ground, usually by accident.

*“My friend slipped on a banana peel and **fell down**. I thought that only happened in cartoons!”*

Phrasal Verbs with “Fill”

Fill (someone) in

To give someone the details about something.

This English phrasal verb is usually separated by the person getting filled in.

*“Quickly, let’s go! There’s no time to explain, I’ll **fill** you **in** on the way.”*

Fill up

To become completely full.

*“The little girl **filled up** on candy before dinner, and didn’t want to eat any of the chicken.”*

Phrasal Verbs with “Get”

Get away

To escape.

You may have heard the phrase “getaway car,” which can help you remember this phrasal verb. That’s the car used by criminals to run away from a crime scene, like a bank robbery.

*“Carmen’s neighbor tried to show her pictures of all her cats, but Carmen managed to **get away**.”*

Get around

To solve a problem by avoiding the main issue. This phrase can also be used very informally to refer to someone who has many sexual partners. As you can imagine, it’s not very nice to say that someone “gets around”!

*“Some people know all the different ways to **get around** tax laws.”*

Get along (with)

To have a friendly relationship with someone.

*“Some people are surprised that I **get along with** my mother-in-law really well!”*

Get up

To stand up, or to wake up.

*“I have so much trouble **getting up** in the morning that I have to set three alarms.”*

Get back to

To return to someone or something. This phrase is often used to say that you will return with an answer to a question or a request at a later time.

*“Derek’s coworker wasn’t sure what time the meeting was, so he said he’d **get back to** him with the time.”*

Get back at

To get revenge on someone.

*“Her ex-husband took her house so she **got back at** him by taking his dogs.”*

Phrasal Verbs with “Give”

Give out

This phrase can mean to break down or stop working, or to hand out or distribute something.

To stop working: *“The city had to rebuild the bridge completely, because it was about to **give out** and fall down.”*

To distribute: *“He has a lot of contacts because he **gives out** his business card to everyone he meets.”*

Give in

To surrender, especially in a fight or argument.

*“Ben’s mother **gave in** and let him stay out late with his friends.”*

Give away

To hand things out for free.

This phrasal verb can be separated by the item being given away.

*“When Linda’s cat had kittens, she **gave** them all **away** to good homes.”*

Give up

To stop trying, surrender.

*“After two weeks of trying to build my own table, I **gave up** and just bought one.”*

Phrasal Verbs with “Go”

Go out (with)

To go on a date with someone.

*“Sarah was so happy when Peter finally asked her to **go out with** him!”*

Go ahead

To go in front of someone, or to give permission to do or say something.

*“**Go ahead**, explain to me why there is a car on my roof.”*

Phrasal Verbs with “Grow”

Grow up

To grow up, sometimes used to tell someone to stop acting childish.

*“Some people tell Steve he needs to **grow up**, but he loves acting like a child.”*

Grow apart

To get distant from someone, like a friend.

*“When my friend moved to a different country I tried to stay close with her, but we slowly **grew apart**.”*

Phrasal Verbs with “Hang”

Hang on

To keep something.

*“When everyone else was getting fired, Paul managed to **hang on** to his job.”*

Hang out

To spend time with someone, casually.

*“My friends and I used to **hang out** in the park after school.”*

Hang up

To end a call on the phone, especially if it's before the other person is ready.

*“I was in the middle of a sentence, and he **hung up** on me! How rude.”*

Phrasal Verbs with “Hold”

Hold on

To hold something tightly. This phrase can also be a way of asking someone to wait for a moment.

*“You’d better **hold on** to your hat, it’s windy out there!”*

Hold back

To stop yourself from doing or saying something.

*“Amy has a great voice but whenever she’s singing in public she feels shy and **holds back**.”*

Phrasal Verbs with “Log”

Log in (to)

Used with computers, this phrase means to sign into your account on a website or computer.

*“Don’t forget to **log in** to your FluentU account to learn English better and faster.”*

Log out/off

Also used with computers, this phrase means to sign out of your account.

*“You should always **log out** of your accounts when you use a public computer.”*

Phrasal Verbs with “Look”

Look up

To check the meaning of something—can be separated by the item being looked up.

*“If you don’t know the meaning of a word, you should **look it up** in the dictionary.”*

Look out

To watch out for something.

*“**Look out**, there’s a baseball coming your way!”*

Phrasal Verbs with “Pay”

Pay back

To give someone back money that you owe them—can be separated by the person getting paid back.

When it’s written as one word, “payback” means revenge.

*“Thanks for getting me lunch when I forgot my wallet at home! I’ll **pay** you **back** tomorrow.”*

Pay for

This phrase can either mean to give someone money for a particular purpose (like paying for a new car), or to suffer because of something you did.

*“He’ll **pay for** all the problems he caused me by being late today!”*

Phrasal Verbs with “Put”

Put out

This phrase can mean to extinguish a fire, or to irritate someone by asking them for a favor. (In the case of annoying someone, can be separated by the person getting annoyed.) Be aware that in very informal slang, this phrase has a more offensive meaning.

To extinguish a fire: *“The firefighters managed to **put out** the fire before it spread to other houses.”*

To irritate someone: *“I’d ask you to make me dinner but I don’t want to **put you out**.”*

Put on

To get your clothes or makeup on.

*“Every morning she **puts on** her dress, lipstick, shoes and hat—in that order.”*

Phrasal Verbs with “Take”

Take off

This phrase can mean to remove clothing, or to leave for a journey (e.g. planes *take off* when they begin their flights).

*“She was very happy when she finally got home and **took off** her shoes. They had been hurting her feet all day!”*

Take out

To remove something, like from a pocket or a bag. This phrase can also mean to take someone on a date. It can be separated by the item or person being taken out.

The phrase can also mean to remove someone, as in by killing them—but this is probably not something you would need to use in everyday conversation!

To remove something: *“The children sat at their desks and **took out** their pens and paper.”*

To take someone on a date: *“He **took her out** to the most expensive restaurant in the city.”*

Phrasal Verbs with “Turn”

Turn on/off

To switch a machine or light on or off.

*“**Turn off** the light, I’m trying to sleep!”*

Turn around

To move so that you’re facing the opposite direction.

*“Sally was about to get on the plane, but she **turned around** when someone called her name.”*

Turn up

When something that was lost is found unexpectedly.

*“Anything I lose usually **turns up** under the couch. It’s my cat’s favorite hiding place.”*

Phrasal Verbs with “Warm”

Warm up (to)

To start liking someone or something more as you spend more time with them, especially if you didn't really like them in the beginning.

*"The new puppy was scared of my husband when we first got him, but he **warmed up to** him pretty quickly."*

Phrasal Verbs with "Work"

Work out

To exercise.

*"I try to **work out** every morning, by repeatedly lifting a heavy donut to my mouth."*

Work (something) out

To come up with a solution or a compromise with someone.

*"Don't worry, I'm sure we can **work something out** so that everyone is happy."*

How many of these English phrasal verbs did you already know? Phrasal verbs are everywhere! Don't be afraid of how many there are—just start with a few at a time and soon you'll be an expert.

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