**Phrasal verbs**

Do you know how to use verbs in phrases like *pick the kids up*, *turn the music down* and *look after my cat*?

Look at these examples to see how phrasal verbs are used.

*This is the form. Please can you* ***fill*** *it* ***in****?*  
*Why are you* ***bringing*** *that argument* ***up*** *now?*  
*Police are* ***looking into*** *connections between the two crimes.*  
*We need to* ***come up with*** *a solution.*

**Grammar explanation**

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.

Phrasal verbs are very common in English, especially in more informal contexts. They are made up of a verb and a particle or, sometimes, two particles. The particle often changes the meaning of the verb.

*I called Jen to see how she was.* (*call* = to telephone)  
*They've called off the meeting.* (*call off* = to cancel)

In terms of word order, there are two main types of phrasal verb: separable and inseparable.

**Separable**

With separable phrasal verbs, the verb and particle can be apart or together.

*They've* ***called*** *the meeting* ***off****.*  
OR  
*They've* ***called off*** *the meeting.*

However, separable phrasal verbs must be separated when you use a pronoun.

*The meeting? They've* ***called*** *it* ***off****.*

Here are some common separable phrasal verbs:

*I didn't want to* ***bring*** *the situation* ***up*** *at the meeting.*  
(*bring up* = start talking about a particular subject)

*Please can you* ***fill*** *this form* ***in****?*  
(*fill in* = write information in a form or document)

*I'll* ***pick*** *you* ***up*** *from the station at 8 p.m.*  
(*pick up* = collect someone in a car or other vehicle to take them somewhere)

*She* ***turned*** *the job* ***down*** *because she didn't want to move to Glasgow.*  
(*turn down* = to not accept an offer)

**Non-separable**

Some phrasal verbs cannot be separated.

*Who* ***looks after*** *the baby when you're at work?*

Even when there is a pronoun, the verb and particle remain together.

*Who* ***looks after*** *her when you're at work?*

Here are some common non-separable phrasal verbs:

*I* ***came across*** *your email when I was clearing my inbox.*   
(*come across* = to find something by chance)

*The caterpillar* ***turned into*** *a beautiful butterfly.*   
(*turn into* = become)

*It was quite a major operation. It took months to* ***get over*** *it and feel normal again.*   
(*get over* = recover from something)

*We are aware of the problem and we are* ***looking into*** *it.*   
(*look into* = investigate)

Some multi-word verbs are inseparable simply because they don't take an object.

*I* ***get up*** *at 7 a.m.*

**With two particles**

Phrasal verbs with two particles are also inseparable. Even if you use a pronoun, you put it after the particles.

*Who* ***came up with*** *that idea?*   
(*come up with* = think of an idea or plan)

*Let's* ***get rid of*** *these old magazines to make more space.*   
(*get rid of* = remove or become free of something that you don't want)

*I didn't really* ***get on with*** *my stepbrother when I was a teenager.*  
(*get on with* = like and be friendly towards someone)

*Can you hear that noise all the time? I don't know how you* ***put up with*** *it.*   
(*put up with* = tolerate something difficult or annoying)

*The concert's on Friday. I'm really* ***looking forward to*** *it.*   
(*look forward to* = be happy and excited about something that is going to happen)