
50 COMMON ENGLISH PHRASAL VERBS

Introduction

This free PDF has fifty frequently used English phrasal verbs, with definitions and over 300 example sentences showing how these phrasal verbs are used in everyday conversation.

Some phrasal verbs have the opportunity for you to practise using them in your own sentences, and at the end of the PDF are twenty gap-fill exercises for more practice.

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BELIEVE IN

1. When you **believe in** something or somebody you are sure that something or somebody exists.

Examples of use:

- a) Do you **believe in** God?
- b) I didn't **believe in** ghosts until I stayed in an old castle in Romania: now I'm certain they exist.
- c) My children still **believe in** fairies.

2. To **believe in** something is to have a strong belief that something is good or right.

Examples of use:

- a) My grandparents **believed in** working hard and helping others.
- b) They do not **believe in** the death penalty.
- c) We **believe in** discipline for our children, but we don't **believe in** hitting them.
- d) We don't **believe in** living together before marriage.

3. When you **believe in** somebody, you have confidence that they are a good trustworthy person, or that they can do something well.

Examples of use:

- a) We still **believe in** you.
- b) I want to **believe in** you, but you lied to me about everything.
- c) Don't worry about your exams. We **believe in** you and we know you will do well.
- d) You can get through these problems. I **believe in** you.

infinitive	believe in
present simple	believe in and believes in
-ing form	believing in
past simple	believed in
past participle	believed in

BLOW UP

1. To blow up something (or **blow** something **up**) means to fill it with air; for example, a balloon, or a car or bicycle tyre.

Example of use:

Can you **blow these balloons up** for the party, please?

2. Blow up also means to suddenly lose your temper (get very angry).

Informal English.

Example of use:

a) I broke her iPad and she **blew up** at me.

b) We were having a discussion about the accounts and he suddenly **blew up** and stormed out.

3. When something blows up (or when somebody **blows** something **up**) it explodes.

Examples of use:

a) The family were injured when their house **blew up** because of a gas leak.

b) Fortunately the plane was empty when the hijackers **blew it up**.

infinitive	blow up
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present simple	blow up and blows up
-ing form	blowing up
past simple	blew up
past participle	blown up

BREAK DOWN

1. If a vehicle or machine **breaks down** it stops working.

Examples of use:

- a) Our car **broke down** on the way to the airport and we missed our flight.
- b) My washing machine has **broken down**.
- c) Sorry I'm late. The train **broke down**.

2. If you **break down** you are unable to control your feelings and you start to cry.

Examples of use:

- a) She **broke down** when she heard the sad news.
- b) He misses his mother very much, and he often **breaks down** when he talks about her.

3. To **break down** is also to become mentally or physically ill because of difficult or traumatic experiences.

breakdown (noun) – a physical or mental collapse.

Examples of use:

- a) Not long after her husband died she **broke down** and had to take some time off work.
- b) She had a nervous **breakdown** after her son was kidnapped.
- c) He had a **breakdown** last year but he's much better now.

4. If a meeting, discussion or an agreement (including a relationship or marriage) **breaks down** it fails or stops working properly.

Examples of use:

a) The talks between the political parties have **broken down**.

b) Our marriage has **broken down** and we are getting a divorce.

infinitive	break down
present simple	break down and breaks down
-ing form	breaking down
past simple	broke down
past participle	broken down

Practise your English and write a sentence using this phrasal verb. Think of a suitable response to this question using the phrasal verb **break down**.

See page 50 for a suggested answers to these exercises.

1. You were late for work this morning. What happened?

CALL BACK

1. If you **call back** somebody (or **call** somebody **back**) you telephone someone who rang you earlier, or you telephone someone for a second time.

Examples of use:

a) Mr Evans telephoned while you were out: he wants you to **call** him **back**.

b) He forgot to book a double room, so he had to **call** the hotel **back**.

2. To **call back** is to return to a place to see somebody again.

Examples of use:

a) Mrs Bottone is in a meeting. Can you **call back** this afternoon, please?

infinitive	call back
present simple	call back and calls back
-ing form	calling back
past simple	called back
past participle	called back

Practise your English and write a sentence using this phrasal verb. Think of a suitable response to this question using the phrasal verb **call back**.

2. Mr Evans is on the phone. Can you speak to him now?

No, tell him _____

CALL OFF

1. To **call off** something (or **call** something **off**) is to cancel a planned event, or an event that has already started.

Examples of use:

a) They are **calling off** the tennis match because of the rain.

b) They **called** off their wedding.

c) Mike is ill so we will have to **call** the party **off**.

d) News headline: Spain airport strike **called off**.

e) The police **called off** their search for the burglar after they found him hiding in a shed.

f) The Bahrain Grand Prix has been **called off**.

2. To **call off** somebody or something (or **call** somebody or something **off**) is to give a command to somebody or something (e.g. a dog) to leave someone alone, or to stop attacking someone.

Examples of use:

- a) **Call off** your dog!
- b) The General **called off** his troops.
- c) OK, I agree to your demands. You can **call** your lawyers **off** now.

infinitive	call off
present simple	call off and calls off
-ing form	calling off
past simple	called off
past participle	called off

CALL ROUND

To **call round** is to visit someone, usually for a short period of time.

British and Australian English.

Examples of use:

- a) I think I'll **call round** and see if my grandmother needs anything.
- b) We **called round** yesterday, but you were out.
- c) Mrs Green's son **calls round** after work every day. She looks forward to his visits.
- d) Why don't you **call round** tomorrow? We can have a cup of tea and a chat.

infinitive	call round
present simple	call round and calls round
-ing form	calling round
past simple	called round
past participle	called round

CHECK IN

1. To **check in** is to show your ticket at an airport so that the airline knows you have arrived, and they can put your bags on the aircraft.

Examples of use:

- a) We have to **check in** at 8 o'clock.
- b) Please **check in** at least one hour before your flight leaves.

The **check-in** (noun) is the place at the airport where you show your ticket and let the airline know that you have arrived.

2. To **check in** (or **check into** something) is to arrive at a hotel reception desk and tell the hotel staff who you are, and collect your room key.

Examples of use:

- a) We need to **check into** our hotel before 10pm.
- b) I'll meet you in the hotel restaurant in 10 minutes. I'll just **check in** and put my suitcase in my room.
- c) Where's dad?

He's **checking in** and collecting our room keys.

infinitive	check in
present simple	check in and checks in
-ing form	checking in
past simple	checked in
past participle	checked in

CHEER UP

1. To **cheer up** is to start to feel happier.

Examples of use:

- a) I wish he would **cheer up**.
- b) She was very unhappy last week, but she has **cheered up** now.
- c) He **cheers up** when he sees his girlfriend.

2. To **cheer up** somebody (or **cheer** somebody up) is to make them feel happier.

Examples of use:

- a) Harriet has had a very bad week. Let's buy her some flowers to **cheer** her **up**.
- b) You look sad. What can I do to **cheer** you **up**?

infinitive	cheer up
present simple	cheer up and cheers up
-ing form	cheering up
past simple	cheered up
past participle	cheered up

EAT OUT

To **eat out** is to eat away from home, at a cafe or restaurant.

Examples of use:

- a) I don't feel like cooking tonight so let's **eat out**.
- b) We have **eaten out** every night this week!
- c) I don't like **eating out**. I prefer to eat at home.
- d) I enjoy **eating out** with friends and family.

infinitive	eat out
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present simple	eat out and eats out
-ing form	eating out
past simple	ate out
past participle	eaten out

FALL OUT

1. To fall out with someone is to become upset or angry with them, and stop being friendly with them.

Examples of use:

- a) We **fell out** over something very small.
- b) I **fell out** with my sister because she broke my necklace.
- c) Ingrid and Beatrice **fell out** when Ingrid crashed Beatrice's car.
- d) Marcus and Akos have **fallen out**.

A **falling-out** (noun) is an argument or disagreement.

Example of use:

Jerry hasn't spoken to his brother for years. They had a falling-out over money.

2. If your hair falls out it becomes loose and unattached.

Examples of use:

- a) My hair **fell out** when I was ill.
- b) My father's hair started to **fall out** when he was only 30, and now he is completely bald.

infinitive	fall out
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present simple	fall out and falls out
-ing form	falling out
past simple	fell out
past participle	fallen out

Practise your English and write a sentence using this phrasal verb. Think of a suitable response to this question using the phrasal verb **fall out**.

3. Why aren't you speaking to your brother?

FALL OVER

1. To **fall over** is to fall to the ground from an upright position.

Examples of use:

- a) The marathon runner **fell over**.
- b) He stood up quickly and his chair **fell over**.
- c) My son is learning to walk and he keeps **falling over**.
- d) Their grandmother has **fallen over** and broken her hip.

2. If you **fall over yourself** (or **fall all over yourself**) to do something, you are very keen to do it.

Examples of use:

- a) Chris **fell over himself** trying to impress his new wife.
- b) The supermarkets are **falling over themselves** to attract customers to their shops.

infinitive	fall over
present simple	fall over and falls over
-ing form	falling over
past simple	fell over
past participle	fallen over

Practise your English and write a sentence using this phrasal verb. Think of a suitable response to this question using the phrasal verb **fall over**.

4. How did you break your leg?

GET UP

1. To **get up** is to wake up and get out of bed.

Examples of use:

- a) It's 8 o'clock: time to **get up**.
- b) I want to **get up** early tomorrow.
- c) We had a day off work yesterday so we **got up** very late.
- d) He's been **getting up** at 5am every day for years.
- e) She **gets up** early and goes for a run every morning.
- f) I **get up** at 7.30 every day.

2. To **get up** is also to stand up.

Examples of use:

- a) **Get up** off the floor. Your clothes will get dirty.
- b) He fell over when he was playing football, but quickly **got up** again.

infinitive	get up
present simple	get up and gets up
-ing form	getting up
past simple	got up
past participle	got up (American English also gotten)

GIVE UP

1. If you **give up** something (or **give** something **up**) that is bad for you (for example alcohol, smoking, and eating fatty foods) you stop doing it or having it.

Examples of use:

- a) Eric **gave up** smoking two years ago.
- b) We're trying to lose weight so we've **given up** eating cakes.
- c) He had to **give up** drinking alcohol because it made him ill.

2. To **give up** something (or give something up) is to stop doing a job, or something else you do regularly.

Example of use:

He **gave up** work to look after his children.

3. To **give up** something (or **give** something **up**) is also to stop doing something because it is too difficult for you to continue.

Examples of use:

- a) I **gave up** learning English because I was too busy with work and my family.
- b) He wanted to finish the marathon but he had to **give up** after ten miles.

c) She had to **give** her job **up** because her elderly mother was ill.

4. To give up is to stop trying to think of the answer to a question or problem, or a joke.

Examples of use:

a) I **give up**. I don't know the answer. Tell me what it is.

b) I **gave up** trying to remember the date of my friend's birthday, and asked her mother instead.

infinitive	give up
present simple	give up and gives up
-ing form	giving up
past simple	gave up
participle	given up

GROW UP

1. To grow up is to become older or to become an adult.

Examples of use:

a) When I **grow up** I want to be a doctor.

b) He **grew up** in Thailand.

c) She's **growing up** fast.

2. Grow up is something you say to someone who is behaving in a childish or immature way.

Examples of use:

a) You're being stupid. Why don't you just **grow up**?

b) Oh **grow up**! I've heard enough of your silly jokes.

3. grown-up (adjective) – When children look or behave in a mature way they are grown-up.

Example of use:

She looked very **grown-up** in her new dress.

4. grown-up (noun) – a grown-up is an adult. Informal English – usually used by children.

Example of use:

He wanted to sit with the **grown-ups** but he had to look after his brother and sister.

infinitive	grow up
present simple	grow up and grows up
-ing form	growing up
past simple	grew up
past participle	grown up

HANG AROUND

1. To hang around somewhere is to spend time there doing very little.

Informal English.

This phrasal verb can also be **hang round** and **hang about**.

Examples of use:

- a) Will you stop **hanging around** the kitchen and go and do something useful!
- b) You go on ahead. I'll **hang around** here and wait for William to arrive.
- c) I've been **hanging round** all day waiting for the plumber to arrive.

2. To **hang around** with someone is to spend time with them

Informal English.

This phrasal verb can also be **hang round** and **hang about** with somebody.

Examples of use:

a) We used to **hang around** together when we were children.

b) She **hangs around** with Alice and Jenny.

infinitive	hang around
present simple	hang around and hangs around
-ing form	hanging around
past simple	hung around
past participle	hung around

HANG UP

1. To **hang up** something (or **hang something up**) means to hang something, especially clothes, on a hanger or hook.

Examples of use:

a) Your grandmother is coming to visit today, so don't forget to **hang up** your clothes when you tidy your room.

b) Could you **hang** my coat **up**, please?

c) I'll **hang** your coat **up** in the study.

2. To **hang up** also means to end a telephone conversation, especially suddenly or unexpectedly.

If you **hang up** you replace the part of the telephone you speak into back onto its normal place on the telephone – however, we also use this expression when referring to ending conversations on mobile phones.

Examples of use:

- a) Don't **hang up on** me.
- b) Don't buy anything from that company: the lady from their customer service department **hung up on** me last week.
- c) How dare you **hang up** on me!
- d) My girlfriend is angry with me and she keeps **hanging up** on me.

3. To be hung up is to be very anxious about something and to spend a lot of time thinking about it.

Informal English.

Examples of use:

- a) Many women are **hung up** about their weight.
- b) There's no point getting **hung up** about it; there's nothing you can do.

4. A hang-up (noun, informal) is something that a person worries about a lot, or is afraid of.

Examples of use:

- a) She has a real **hang-up** about being seen without her make-up on.
- b) He doesn't have any **hang-ups**.

infinitive	hang up
present simple	hang up and hangs up
-ing form	hanging up
past simple	hung up
past participle	hung up

HURRY UP

When you **hurry up** you do something more quickly.

Examples of use:

- a) Can you **hurry up** and put your coat on, please?
- b) It's nearly time for bed so **hurry up** and finish your homework.
- c) **Hurry up**. Our taxi is here.
- d) If you don't **hurry up** we'll miss the train.

infinitive	hurry up
present simple	hurry up and hurries up
-ing form	hurrying up
past simple	hurried up
past participle	hurried up

JOIN IN

To **join in** something is to become involved in an activity with other people.

Examples of use:

- a) Your brother is playing football. Why don't you go and **join in**?
- b) We're playing cards tomorrow night. Come and **join in**. Everyone is welcome.
- c) Amelia is very shy. She never **joins in** with the other children's games.

infinitive	join in
present simple	join in and joins in
-ing form	joining in
past simple	joined in
past participle	joined in

LIVE UP TO

To **live up to** is to be as good as someone hopes or expects.

If someone or something **lives up to** people's expectations, they are as good as they are expected to be.

Examples of use:

a) Our hotel was amazing and **lived up to** all our expectations.

b) Last night's concert was good, but I don't think he **lived up to** his reputation as a world-class entertainer.

c) Did the Harry Potter movie **live up to** your expectations?

Yes! It was fantastic!

d) I'm not **living up to** my parents' dreams: they want me to be a doctor like my father, but I want to be an actor.

e) News headline: Barack Obama's speech failed to **live up to** his own high standards.

f) Will the new McLaren Formula 1 car **live up to** expectations?

g) Will the iPad **live up to** the hype?

h) You're not **living up to** your potential - you should get a job, earn some money and do something with your life.

infinitive	live up to
present simple	live up to and lives up to
-ing form	living up to
past simple	lived up to
past participle	lived up to

LOOK AFTER

If you **look after** somebody or something, you do whatever is needed to keep them healthy and well, or in good condition.

Examples of use:

- a) Eric **looks after** his family very well.
- b) **Look after** your new shoes.
- c) Can you **look after** your sister while I'm busy with the housework, please?
- d) **Look after** yourself while I'm away.

Take care of has the same meaning.

infinitive	look after
present simple	look after and looks after
-ing form	looking after
past simple	looked after
past participle	looked after

LOOK UP (SOMEBODY)

To **look somebody up** (or **look up somebody**) is to locate and visit someone you have not seen for a long time.

Examples of use:

- a) **Look me up** if you are ever in England.
- b) I went to Newcastle on business last week and I **looked up** an old friend.
- c) My friends were on holiday in my city, so they **looked me up** and we all went to a restaurant for a meal.

infinitive	look up
present simple	look up and looks up
-ing form	looking up
past simple	looked up
past participle	looked up

LOOK UP (SOMETHING)

To **look up something** (or **look something up**) is to try and find a piece of information in a book (such as a dictionary, directory, thesaurus or encyclopaedia), or by using a computer.

Examples of use:

- a) I'm **looking up** information about phrasal verbs.
- b) **Look up** the meaning of new English words in your dictionary.
- c) I **looked up** her telephone number in the telephone directory.
- d) Q. What are you doing ?
A. I'm **looking up** the population of Brazil for my geography project.

infinitive	look up
present simple	look up and looks up
-ing form	looking up
past simple	looked up
past participle	looked up

MAKE (SOMETHING) UP

To **make up something** (or **make something up**) is to invent a story or excuse. This can be something written or said in order to deceive (a lie), or a story or game to entertain.

Examples of use:

- a) He **made up** lies about me.
- b) The politician said that the newspaper reporter **made up** the information about her expenses claim.
- b) The children **made up** a wonderful game about dragons and kings and queens.
- e) It's wrong to **make up** stories about people.

infinitive	make up
present simple	make up and makes up
-ing form	making up
past simple	made up
past participle	made up

MEET UP

To **meet up** is to meet someone, or a group of people, in order to do something together.

Examples of use:

- a) Can we meet **meet up** for lunch next week to discuss your plans for the business?
- b) The accountant and I are **meeting up** at 2pm tomorrow to check the business accounts.
- c) I'm **meeting up** with my friends on Saturday.
- d) Are you free on Monday? It would be lovely to **meet up** for coffee.

infinitive	meet up
present simple	meet up and meets up
-ing form	meeting up
past simple	met up
past participle	met up

MOVE IN

1. To move in is to start living in a new place, and to put all your furniture and personal possessions into your new home.

Examples of use:

a) Question. When are you moving house?

Answer. I **moved in** last week. Here's my new address.

b) Louise and Simon have bought a new house and they are **moving in** today.

c) Question: How long have you lived here?

Answer: We **moved in** in 1996.

2. To move in together is to start living with someone else – usually someone you are having a romantic relationship with.

Example of use:

Peter and Carol got engaged yesterday, and they plan to **move in together** next month.

infinitive	move in
present simple	move in and moves in
-ing form	moving in
past simple	moved in
past participle	moved in

Practise your English and write a sentence using this phrasal verb. Think of a suitable response to this question using the phrasal verb **move in**.

5. How long have you lived in this house?

MOVE OUT

To **move out** is to leave a place and take all your furniture and other possessions with you.

Examples of use:

- a) We're **moving out** on Sunday.
- b) The lease on my flat expires at the end of the month and I have to **move out**.
- c) Sarah has bought a new house and she is **moving out** of her old place today.

infinitive	move out
present simple	move out and moves out
-ing form	moving out
past simple	moved out
past participle	moved out

PHONE UP (AND RING UP)

To **phone up** somebody (or **phone** somebody **up**) is to telephone them.

Examples of use:

- a) **Phone up** Mr Hargreaves and arrange a meeting, please.
- b) Max is late. Can you **phone** him **up** and ask him where he is?

To **ring up** somebody (or **ring** somebody **up**) means the same as phone up.

infinitive	phone up
present simple	phone up and phones up
-ing form	phoning up
past simple	phoned up
past participle	phoned up

PICK UP

To **pick up** something or somebody (or **pick** something or somebody **up**) is to lift something or somebody by using your hands.

Examples of use:

- a) She **picked** the children's clothes **up** off the floor.
- b) He **picked up** his suitcase and put it in the boot of the car.
- c) The baby was crying so she **picked** her **up**.

infinitive	pick up
present simple	pick up and picks up
-ing form	picking up
past simple	picked up
past participle	picked up

Note: this phrasal verb has many [additional meanings](#)

PUT OFF

1. To **put off** something (or **put** something **off**) is to decide to do something at a later time or date (to postpone it).

Examples of use:

a) We were going to get married in March, but we **put it off** until June because my grandmother was ill.

b) Can we **put off** the meeting until tomorrow, please? I am very busy today.

2. To **put off** someone (or **put** someone **off**) is to delay seeing them or doing something for them.

Examples of use:

a) I don't want to see the salesman today. Can you **put him off** until next week?

b) My parents were coming to visit this week, but we had to **put them off** because our heating is broken.

This phrasal verb has [other meanings](#)

infinitive	put off
present simple	put off and puts off
-ing	putting off
past simple	put off
past participle	put off

QUEUE UP

1. To **queue up** for something is to wait in a line (a queue) in order to get something, do something, or go somewhere.

British and Australian English.

Examples of use:

- a) They **queued up** to get their new work contracts.
- b) We had to **queue up** for more than an hour to get a taxi home.
- c) Fans **queued up** for hours to see the final Harry Potter film.
- d) Traffic is **queueing up** on the motorway.
- e) News headline: Hundreds **queue up** for Apple iPhone4.

2. To be **queueing up** to do something is to want to do it very much.

If people are **queueing up** for something or to do something, a lot of them want to do it or have it.

British and Australian English.

Examples of use:

- a) Journalists are **queueing up** to interview Camden residents and business owners about the London riots.
- b) Model agencies are **queueing up** to sign up the French model.
- c) He's a fantastic singer. The recording companies will be **queueing up** to give him a contract.

infinitive	queue up
present simple	queue up and queues up
-ing form	queueing up (or queuing up)
past simple	queued up
past participle	queued up

READ OUT

To **read out** something (or read something out) is to read the words and say them so that people can hear you.

Examples of use:

- a) Simon, can you **read** the instructions **out** for me, please?
- b) She **read out** the names of the winners.

infinitive	read out
present simple	read out and reads out
-ing form	reading out
past simple	read out
past participle	read out

RELY ON / UPON

1. To **rely on** (or **rely upon**) somebody or something is to trust someone or something to do what you need or expect them to do.

Often + to do something.

Examples of use:

- a) I'm **relying on** you not to drop me!
- b) Can I **rely on** you to keep my secret?
- c) We need someone we can **rely on** to manage the business for us.
- d) I wish I could **rely on** my train arriving on time.
- e) I'm **relying on** my students to finish their English homework this week.
- f) We're **relying on** our old car to get us to the airport on time
- g) You can **rely on** Jasmine.

2. To rely on (or rely upon) somebody or something is to need or depend on someone or something in order to work correctly, to succeed, or to survive.

Examples of use:

- a) We **rely on** our son to do our food shopping for us.
- b) He **relies on** the income from his writing for paying his bills.
- c) Our elderly neighbour **relies on** her children for help.
- d) I'm **relying on** all of you to work hard and make this team a success.
- e) The English students **relied on** their teachers to help them pass their English exams.
- f) Our business **relies on** government contracts.

Rely upon is a little more formal than rely on.

infinitive	rely on / upon
present simple	rely on / upon and relies on / upon
-ing form	relying on / upon
past simple	relied on / upon
past participle	relied on / upon

RUB OUT

To **rub out** something (or **rub** something **out**) is to remove writing from a surface by rubbing or wiping it with an eraser or a piece of cloth.

Examples of use:

- a) I made a mistake so I **rubbed** it **out**.
- b) You've made a spelling mistake here. **Rub** it **out** and correct it, please.
- c) Can you **rub out** the writing on the board, please?

infinitive	rub out
present simple	rub out and rubs out
-ing form	rubbing off
past simple	rubbed off
past participle	rubbed off

RUN OUT (OF)

1. To **run out of** something is to use all of it so that there is nothing left.

Examples of use:

- a) I've **run out of** bread.
- b) We can't have coffee this morning because we've **run out of** milk.
- c) I **ran out of** petrol on my way to work this morning.
- d) News headline: [Fresh water supplies are going to run out](#)
- e) We're **running out of** orange juice. I'll buy some more today.

Run out has [other meanings](#).

infinitive	run out of
present simple	run out of and runs out of
-ing form	running out of
past simple	ran out of
past participle	run out of

SAVE UP

To **save up** something (or **save something up**) is to keep money so that you have enough to buy something in the future.

Examples of use:

- a) We are **saving up** for a house.
- b) You will have to **save up** if you want to buy that expensive car.
- c) He **saved up** for a year for a new motorbike.
- d) She **saved** her allowance **up** to buy a ticket to see her favourite band.

infinitive	save up
present simple	save up and saves up
-ing form	saving up
past simple	saved up
past participle	saved up

Practise your English and write a sentence using this phrasal verb. Think of a suitable response to this statement using the phrasal verb **save up**.

6. I would love to buy a new car but I can't afford it.

SELL OUT

To **sell out** of something is to sell all of it and have no more left for people to buy.

Examples of use:

- a) Their designer shoes are beautiful, but they have **sold out** in my size.
- b) We're **selling out** of iPhones very fast. We must order some more.
- c) I'm sorry. We have **sold out** of tickets for the show.
- d) He **sells out** of his homemade cakes every day.

When all the tickets to a play, film, concert, or other public performance have been sold the event is **sold-out** (adjective)

Example of use: We tried to buy tickets for their concert but it's **sold-out**.

sell-out (noun) - when all the tickets to an event have been sold it is a sell-out.

Example of use: Take That start their **sell-out** tour on Monday.

When all the items for sale in a shop have been sold they are **sold-out** (adjective)

Example of use:

Q. Could I buy one of your chocolate cakes, please?

A. I'm sorry. They are all **sold-out**.

infinitive	sell out
present simple	sell out and sells out
-ing form	selling out
past simple	sold out
past participle	sold out

Practise your English and write a sentence using this phrasal verb. Think of a suitable response to this question using the phrasal verb **sell out**.

7. Do you have these shoes in size 8?

I'm sorry;_____

SET OFF

1. To **set off** is to start a journey.

Examples of use:

- a) What time are we **setting off**?
- b) They **set off** for home.
- c) There are roadworks on the motorway so you'd better **set off** early.
- d) He **set off** from Paris last Sunday.
- e) We **set off** for London with only £20 in our pockets.
- f) I'm looking forward to **setting off** on my summer holiday.

2. To **set off** something (or **set something off**) is to cause something to start or happen.

Examples of use:

- a) The loud music **set off** the baby's crying.
- b) The proposed wage cuts **set off** a work-to-rule.
- c) He came home with lipstick on his collar and this **set off** a huge argument.
- d) News headline: Nick Clegg is about to **set off** an almighty row over universities.

3. To **set off** something (or **set something off**) is to cause something to explode or start to ring loudly.

Examples of use:

- a) The smoke from the fire **set off** the smoke alarm.
- b) They **set** a bomb **off** outside the building.
- c) A spark **set off** the fireworks.

infinitive	set off
present simple	set off and sets off
-ing form	setting off
past simple	set off
past participle	set off

SETTLE DOWN

1. To **settle down** is to start living in a place where you plan stay for a long time, especially after living in many different places or travelling a lot.

Example of use:

I worked in many different countries when I was younger, but I came back to the UK in 2005 and **settled down** and got married.

2. When two people **settle down** together they set up a life together and perhaps get married, buy a house and start a family.

Example of use:

- a) Alice and Peter are **settling down** and buying a house together. They are getting married in June.
- b) They make a lovely couple. I hope they **settle down** together.

3. To **settle down** is also to become calm and quiet.

Examples of use:

- a) I wish the children would **settle down** and go to sleep- I'm exhausted!
- b) **Settle down** class, and get your books out. Today we're going to learn about phrasal verbs.
- c) There was a fight between the rival football fans but the situation has **settled down** now.

infinitive	settle down
present simple	settle down and settles down
-ing form	settling down
past simple	settled down
past participle	settled down

SHOW OFF

1. To **show off** is to try and make people notice and admire you in a way which is annoying.

Examples of use:

- a) Stop **showing off**!
- b) He's always **showing off** in the classroom and getting into trouble.

2. To **show off** somebody or something (or **show** somebody or something **off**) is to display it proudly.

Examples of use:

- a) John **showed off** his new toy to his grandparents.
- b) We were invited to their house so they could **show off** their valuable paintings.
- c) She **showed off** her new pearl necklace to her work colleagues.

d) Oh no! Here comes our neighbour **showing off** his new car.

show-off (noun) - somebody who shows off

infinitive	show off
present simple	show off and shows off
-ing form	showing off
past simple	showed off
past participle	shown off

SORT OUT

1. To sort out something (or **sort** something **out**) is to organize or arrange things which are untidy.

Examples of use:

- a) My bookcase is in a mess. I need to **sort out** my books.
- b) Your room is very untidy. **Sort out** your clothes and put them in your cupboard, please.

2. To sort out something (or **sort** something **out**) is also to resolve a problem or misunderstanding.

Examples of use:

- a) I had a problem with my car brakes but my brother **sorted** them **out**.
- b) If my parents have any trouble with their computer their neighbour always **sorts** it **out** for them.
- c) Will you two stop arguing and **sort out** your disagreements?!

3. To **sort out** something (or **sort something out**) is to discuss it with someone and make a decision about what to do.

a) We need to **sort out** the arrangements for our holiday.

b) Let's sit down and **sort out** the guest list for the wedding.

infinitive	sort out
present simple	sort out and sorts out
-ing form	sorting out
past simple	sorted out
past participle	sorted out

TAKE UP

1. To **take up** something (or **take something up**) is to start doing a particular, activity, job or hobby etc.

Examples of use:

a) My grandmother has **taken up** knitting.

b) I've recently **taken up** photography.

c) You're good at writing stories. Why don't you **take it up** as a career?

d) He **took up** stamp collecting when he was a boy.

2. To **take up** something (or **take something up**) is to shorten a piece of clothing, such as a dress or trousers.

Examples of use:

a) My new trousers are too long - I need to **take them up**.

b) My wedding dress had to be **taken up** 10cm.

c) Your skirt is a bit long. Shall I **take it up** for you?

This phrasal verb has additional meanings – you can find some of them [here](#).

infinitive	take up
present simple	take up and takes up
-ing form	taking up
past simple	took up
past participle	taken up

Practise your English and write a sentence using this phrasal verb. Think of a suitable response to this question using the phrasal verb **take up**.

8. Do you have any hobbies?

I've recently _____

TELL OFF

To **tell off** somebody (or **tell** somebody **off**) is to speak angrily to someone because they have done something wrong.

Informal English.

tick off has a very similar meaning.

Examples of use:

- a) Mum will **tell** you **off** for breaking that window.
- b) Our English teacher **told** us **off** for throwing paper aeroplanes in class.
- c) He **tells** us **off** for the smallest things.

d) Twitter update from the [Mayor of London](#): Just been **told off** for cycling inside city hall. Sorry security!

e) News headline: [Woman told off for giving ducks wrong kind of bread](#).

infinitive	tell off
present simple	tell off and tells off
-ing form	telling off
past simple	told off
past participle	told off

THROW AWAY

1. To throw away something (or **throw** something **away**) is to dispose of something you don't want by putting in a rubbish bin, waste-paper basket, waste-disposal unit etc.

Examples of use:

- a) I **threw** my old coat **away**.
- b) Why don't you **throw away** those smelly old shoes?
- c) He has **thrown away** all of his rusty tools, and bought new ones.
- d) She doesn't like **throwing** things **away**.
- e) My mum **threw** my English essay **away** by mistake.

2. To throw away something (or **throw** something **away**) also means to ruin or lose something valuable or important, by doing something reckless or foolish.

Examples of use:

- a) She went out with her friends every night instead of studying, and **threw away** her chance of a place at university.

b) Don't **throw away** your marriage. You need to spend more time with your wife.

c) William had a good career and a lovely home, but he **threw** it all **away** with his gambling and drinking.

infinitive	throw away
present simple	throw away and throws away
-ing form	throwing away
past simple	threw away
past participle	thrown away

Practise your English and write a sentence using this phrasal verb. Think of a suitable response to this question using the phrasal verb **throw away**.

9. I can't find my old boots. Do you know where they are?

TRY ON

To **try on** something (or **try** something **on**) is to put an item of clothing on to find out whether it fits you or whether you like it, especially before buying it.

Examples of use:

a) I like these shoes. I think I'll **try** them **on**.

b) I hate **trying on** new clothes.

c) This shirt is too small: I should have **tried** it **on** before I bought it.

d) School starts again next week so you must **try on** your new school uniform.

e) She's **tried on** more than thirty wedding dresses, but she can't find one she likes.

infinitive	try on
present simple	try on and tries on
-ing form	trying on
past simple	tried on
past participle	tried on

TURN OFF

1. To turn off something (or **turn** something **off**) is to stop it from working or flowing with a switch or a tap.

Turn off is the opposite of **turn on**.

Examples of use:

- a) Don't forget to **turn** the tap **off** when you've finished washing your hands.
- b) I've **turned off** all the lights and locked the door.
- c) This switch **turns off** the kitchen light.
- d) **Turn** the TV **off** now – it's time for bed.

2. To turn off a road is to leave it and travel along a different road.

Example of use:

- a) **Turn off** here, please. My house is the last one on the right.
- b) If we **turn off** at the next junction I'm sure we'll get there sooner.

infinitive	turn off
present simple	turn off and turns off
-ing form	turning off
past simple	turned off
past participle	turned off

TURN UP

1. Turn up something or **turn** something **up**. When you **turn up** a machine or electrical device you change the controls so that it is producing more of something, for example sound or heat.

Examples of use:

- a) Can you **turn** the television **up**, please? I can't hear it.
- b) The oven isn't hot enough. You need to **turn it up**.
- c) It's freezing in here. I'll **turn** the heating **up**.

2. When somebody, or something, **turns up** at a place they arrive there.

Examples of use:

- a) I've invited twenty people to my party I wonder if they will all **turn up**.
- b) I hope the taxi **turns up** soon.

3. When something, or someone, **turns up** they appear unexpectedly, especially if they were lost.

Example of use:

- a) My neighbour's dog ran away last week, and this morning it **turned up** on her doorstep.
- b) I thought I'd lost my English dictionary at college but it **turned up** at the Reception Desk.

4. To **turn up** something (or **turn** something **up**) also means to discover something, especially information, by investigating or by a lot of searching.

Examples of use:

- a) The police have been looking for clues all day. What have they **turned up**?
- b) Did your research into climate change **turn up** anything interesting?

infinitive	turn up
present simple	turn up and turns up
-ing form	turning up
past simple	turned up
past participle	turned up

WAIT UP

1. To wait up is to stay awake and not go to bed because you are waiting for someone.

Examples of use:

- a) I'll be home late tonight. Don't **wait up** for me.
- b) What time did you get home last night? Your mother and I **waited up** for you until 2am.

2. Wait up! is something you say to someone if you want them to stop and wait for you.

Mainly American English

Examples of use:

- a) **Wait up!** I'll get my coat and come with you.
- b) **Wait up!** I need to talk to you before you go.
- c) **Wait up!** You've forgotten your briefcase.

infinitive	wait up
present simple	wait up and waits up
-ing form	waiting up
past simple	waited up
past participle	waited up

WAKE UP

1. To **wake up** is to stop sleeping.

Examples of use:

- a) I **woke up** at 6am this morning.
- b) I will **wake up** early tomorrow and practise my English.
- c) It's 11am and I've only just **woken up**.
- d) I keep **waking up** in the middle of the night.

2. To **wake up** somebody (or **wake** somebody **up**) is to stop them sleeping.

Examples of use:

- a) Go and **wake** your brother **up**, please.
- b) Can you **wake** me **up** before you go to work?
- c) Your snoring **woke** me **up** last night.

3. To **wake up to something** is to become aware of a problem, or understand the truth about it.

Examples of use:

- a) Why don't you **wake up**! He's been lying to you for years.
- b) Some scientists think we need to **wake up to** climate change.

infinitive	wake up
present simple	wake up and wakes up
-ing form	waking up
past simple	woke up (American English also waked up)
past participle	woken up (American English also waked up)

WASH UP

1. To **wash up** something (or **wash** something **up**) is to clean the dishes, saucepans and cutlery that you have used for cooking and eating a meal.

British and Australian English.

Examples of use:

- a) Can you help me **wash up** these dishes, please?
- b) I love cooking, but I hate **washing up** all the saucepans afterwards.

2. To **wash up** is to clean your hands with soap and water.

American English.

Examples of use:

- a) Dinner is ready – go and **wash up**, please.
- b) Make sure you **wash up** before you eat your take-out.

3. **Wash up** something or **wash** something **up**. When something washes up it is carried to land by the sea or a river, and left there.

International English.

Examples of use:

- a) The old boat **washed up** on the beach in the storm.
- b) The sea **washes up** old fishing nets in the winter.
- c) A whale carcass **washed up** on the beach last week.

infinitive	wash up
present simple	wash up and washes up
-ing form	washing up
past simple	washed up
past participle	washed up

WRITE DOWN

To **write down** something (or **write** something **down**) is to write something on a piece of paper so that you do not forget it.

Examples of use:

- a) They **wrote down** everything their teacher said about learning phrasal verbs.
- b) I **wrote** his telephone number **down**.
- c) Can you **write down** a list of things we need to take on holiday?
- d) Can you **write** that **down**, please? I don't want to forget it.
- e) I'll read it out, and you **write** it **down**.

infinitive	write down
present simple	write down and writes down
-ing form	writing down
past simple	wrote down
past participle	written down

Practise your English and write a sentence using this phrasal verb. Think of a suitable response to this question using the phrasal verb **write down**.

10. Can you remember Mrs Green's address and telephone number?

Yes, I _____

SUGGESTED ANSWERS

1. My car **broke down** and I had to walk.
2. No, tell him I'll **call back** later.
3. We **fell out** last week because he crashed my car.
4. I **fell over** at work.
5. I **moved in** about six months ago.
6. Why don't you start **saving up** for one?
7. I've recently **taken up** photography.
8. I'm sorry; we've **sold out** in size 8.
9. I **threw** them **away** this morning.
10. Yes, I **wrote** it **down** in the address book.

WORKSHEET

1) We _____ at 7am this morning.

- a) got in b) got out c) got up

2) I don't want to cook tonight – let's _____.

- a) eat out b) eat in c) eat up

3) The taxi _____ on the way to the airport and we missed our flight.

- a) broke off b) broke up c) broke down

4) I'm going to _____ for a new computer.

- a) save up b) look up c) wait up

5) Do you _____ ghosts? (you are sure they exist)

- a) make up b) believe in c) tell off

6) I was very unhappy yesterday but I've _____ today.

- a) looked up b) cheered up c) cheered on

7) I've _____ smoking. (stopped)

- a) given back b) given away c) given up

8) We _____ from Rome at 7am. (We started our journey at 7am)

- a) set in b) set up c) set off

9) The horse race has been _____. (The horse race has been cancelled)

- a) called off b) called out c) called on

10) We _____ in a small flat in London.

- a) grew up b) grew into c) grew on

11) They've decided to _____ their wedding until John has recovered from his accident. (They have postponed their wedding)

- a) put on b) put out c) put off

12) He _____ petrol on his way to work.

- a) ran off with b) ran out of c) ran over

13) Don't drop your coat on the floor - _____ .

- a) hang up! b) hang it up! c) hang on!

14) We've bought a new house and we're _____ next week.

- a) moving in b) moving along c) moving on

15) She's recently _____ photography. (she recently started doing something)

- a) taken up b) taken out c) taken over

16) She read out the names of the winners. (read aloud)

- a) read back b) read out c) read up on

17) My friend and I _____ over money. (we stopped being friendly)

- a) fell over b) fell in c) fell out

18) Dinner is ready – go and _____ please. (American English - clean your hands)

- a) wash down b) wash up c) wash out

19) _____ and get dressed – you're late for school.

- a) Hurry up b) Hurry on c) Hang on

20) I'm in London on Wednesday - let's _____ for lunch.

- a) meet with b) meet up c) hang around

See Page 54 for the answers.

ANSWERS

1) **c** 2) **a** 3) **c** 4) **a** 5) **b** 6) **b** 7) **c** 8) **c** 9) **a**

10) **a** 11) **c** 12) **b** 13) **b** 14) **a** 15) **a** 16) **b** 17) **c**

18) **b** 19) **a** 20) **b**

I hope this guide has been useful. If you have any questions, please contact me [angela @ studyingonline.co.uk](mailto:angela@studyingonline.co.uk)

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