

Common English Phrasal Verbs PDF



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Phrasal verbs fall into two grammatical categories: separable and inseparable. With separable phrasal verbs, the object can go between the verb and the particle, or after it. With inseparable phrasal verbs, the object must always come after the full phrasal verb — you cannot split them. Three-word phrasal verbs are always inseparable.

Separable Phrasal Verbs	Rule	Example
turn off	Object can go between verb and particle OR after	Turn off the light. / Turn the light off.
fill in	When object is a pronoun, it MUST go in the middle	Fill in the form. / Fill it in. (NOT: Fill in it.)
call off	Works both ways with noun objects	Call off the meeting. / Call the meeting off.
hand in	Both positions acceptable with nouns	Hand in your homework. / Hand your homework in.
take on	Both positions acceptable with nouns	Take on new staff. / Take new staff on.
put off	Both positions acceptable with nouns	Put off the meeting. / Put the meeting off.

Inseparable Phrasal Verbs	Rule	Example
look after	Object MUST follow the full phrasal verb	Look after the children. (NOT: Look the children after.)
get over	Object must always come after	Get over the illness. (NOT: Get the illness over.)
run into	Object must always come after	I ran into an old friend. (NOT: I ran an old friend into.)
come across	Object must always come after	She came across some old photos. (NOT: She came some photos across.)
deal with	Object must always come after	Deal with the problem. (NOT: Deal the problem with.)
look into	Object must always come after	We will look into the issue. (NOT: We will look the issue into.)

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Three-Word Phrasal Verbs (always inseparable)	Meaning	Example
look forward to	to anticipate something with pleasure	I look forward to meeting you.
put up with	to tolerate something unpleasant	I can't put up with the noise.
come up with	to think of an idea or solution	She came up with a great plan.
get away with	to avoid punishment for something wrong	He got away with the mistake.
cut down on	to reduce the amount of something	I need to cut down on sugar.
keep up with	to maintain the same pace or level	It's hard to keep up with the changes.

Common Mistakes	Correct	Incorrect
Pronoun with separable verb	Turn it off.	Turn off it.
Pronoun with separable verb	Hand it in.	Hand in it.
Inseparable verb split	Look after the dog.	Look the dog after.
Three-word verb split	I look forward to it.	I look it forward to.

– **SEPARABLE:** Can you turn off the lights? / Can you turn them off? (pronoun must go in the middle)

– **INSEPARABLE:** She looks after her elderly parents. (object always follows the full verb)

– **THREE-WORD:** We're looking forward to the trip. (never split — object always comes last)

– **QUICK TEST:** If you can put "it" or "them" in the middle, the verb is separable.

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Phrasal verbs combine a verb with a preposition or adverb to create a new meaning that is often completely different from the original verb. These are essential for natural, fluent English — native speakers use them constantly in conversation, emails, and meetings.

ENGLISH

MEANING / NOTES

carry on	to continue doing something
hand in	to submit or give something to someone
take on	to accept new work or responsibility
put off	to postpone or delay something
call off	to cancel something
deal with	to handle or manage a situation
follow up	to check on progress after an initial action
look into	to investigate or research something
take over	to assume control of something
burn out	to become exhausted from overwork
catch up	to reach the same level as others
draw up	to prepare a formal document or plan
bring up	to introduce a topic in conversation

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ENGLISH	MEANING / NOTES
point out	to direct attention to something
get back to	to respond to someone later
speak up	to talk more loudly or express an opinion
talk over	to discuss something with someone
come across	to be perceived in a certain way
get across	to communicate an idea successfully
cut off	to interrupt someone while speaking
open up	to start talking about personal feelings
wrap up	to bring something to a conclusion
wake up	to stop sleeping
tidy up	to clean and organize a space
throw away	to discard something in the bin
eat out	to have a meal at a restaurant
stay in	to remain at home
pick up	to collect someone or something
drop off	to deliver someone or something
run out	to have no more of something left
look after	to take care of someone or something
set off	to begin a journey

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ENGLISH

MEANING / NOTES

check in

to register at a hotel or airport

get over

to recover from an illness or difficulty