

## The big list of phrasal verbs by preposition

### Phrasal verbs with 'on'

#### Meaning 1# of On: To attach

**To put on** = to attach clothes to your body.

*'She puts on a pair of socks in the morning.'*

**To try on** = to attach clothes to your body to try them.

*'Excuse me shop assistant, where can I try on this jacket?'*

**To take on** = to attach a new employee to a company, or, to attach more work or responsibility to an individual.

*'He is taking on more clients at the moment.'*

*'I can't take on any more work. I have too much already.'*

**To catch on** = a new idea or fashion attaches itself to a society.

*'The idea of legalising gay marriage is catching on around the western world.'*

**To cheat on someone with someone else** = to attach yourself romantically to someone when you are already in a relationship.

*'My colleague has been cheating on his wife for years.'*

**To get on with someone** = to attach yourself to a person for friendship (to like someone as friends).

*'I get on well with my neighbour.'*

**To get on + bus, plane, boat** = to attach yourself to a vehicle.

*'He got on the plane at 9am and it took off at 9.30am.'*

**To turn on/ to switch on** = to attach device to power/electricity.

*'How do I switch the computer on?'*

#### Meaning 2# of On: To continue

**To go on** = to continue speaking or continue moving.

*'Please go on and finish what you were saying.'*

*'Go on until the church and then turn left.'*

**To carry on** = to continue an activity.

*'She carried on working until she was 70.'*

*'Keep calm and carry on.'* (British phrase to mean 'continue with your life as normal until the difficult time passes').

**To keep on** = to continue with an action.

*'They kept on swimming until they reached land.'*

## Phrasal verbs with 'off'

### Meaning 1# of Off: To detach

**To take off** = to detach clothes.

*'Take off your shoes when you enter the house, please.'*

**To take off** = when a plane detaches itself from the ground.

*'The pilot took off into the blue sky.'*

**To call off** = to cancel a meeting or event (detach yourself from the meeting or event by calling people about it).

*'They called off the wedding at the last moment.'*

**To put off** = to detach yourself from something you previously loved.

*'I used to love football, but an injury put me off it.'*

**To put off** = to postpone (temporarily detach yourself from a responsibility you have to do.)

*'I have put off taking that exam until next year.'*

**To go off** = to explode. The trigger in a bomb detaches itself and the bomb explodes.

*'The bomb went off in the town square. It was a terrible tragedy.'*

**To go off** = food goes bad. Food detaches itself from being edible.

*'This milk has gone off!'*

**To drop off** = to fall asleep unexpectedly (to detach yourself from reality)

*'My grandfather dropped off on the sofa.'*

**To drop off** = take someone somewhere by car and leave them there (to detach them from your car).

*'Can you drop me off at the station?'*

**To turn off / to switch off** = to detach device from electricity.

*'Turn off the computer when you are finished.'*

**To get off + bus, plane, boat** = to detach yourself from a vehicle.

*'It is difficult to get off a boat when there are lots of waves.'*

### Meaning 2# of Off: To leave

**To set off** = to start a journey (to leave your place of origin to begin a journey).

*'They set off for the mountain early.'*

**To be off** = to tell someone you're leaving or to comment that someone else is leaving.

*'Are you off already? The party has only just started.'*

**To drive off** = to leave by driving.

*'The truck drove off into the night.'*

**To walk off** = to leave by walking or to abandon.

*'The man walked off and left his kids in the park.'*

**To run off** = to leave by running.

*'Don't run off and leave me here with all these bags.'*

**To head off** = to leave, going towards a new place.

*'Where is John?' 'I saw him earlier, heading off into town.'*

## Phrasal verbs with 'up'

### Meaning 1# of Up: To provide emphasis to the verb

If you say 'eat up your food!' what you're really saying is 'eat all of your food' or 'eat and eat your food until it is finished.'

**To look up** = to search in a dictionary or on the internet.

*'I will look up the word in the dictionary.'*

**To clean up** = to clean when something is very messy.

*'Clean up this mess!'*

**To save up for** = to save money for something in particular.

*'He's saving up for a new bike.'*

**To cut up** = to completely destroy something through cutting.

*'He cut up his t-shirt.'*

**To buy up** = to buy everything in a shop.

*'There was an offer for toilet paper and so Dad bought up all the toilet paper in the shop.'*

**To beat up** = to physically beat someone (punching).

*'The man got beaten up outside a pub.'*

**To dress up** = to dress in a costume or put your best clothes on.

*'I am going to dress up for the party.'*

*'It is customary to dress up in a scary costume for Halloween.'*

**To listen up** = to listen with attention.

*'Listen up people; we need to rebuild the library.'*

**To follow up** = to continue a meeting with another action.

*'I will follow this up with an email next week.'*

**To read up on** = to do a lot of reading about a subject.

*'We visited Egypt and so I did a lot of reading up on the ancient Egyptians before we left.'*

**To cheer up** = to animate someone.

*'We are taking him out to cheer him up after he didn't get the job.'*

**To use up** = to use completely.

*'We have to use up all the milk in the fridge before it goes off.'*

**To free up** = to liberate time or space.

*'Computers free up a lot of time.'*

**Meaning 2# of Up: To increase**

**To turn up** = to increase the volume of a speaker.

*'They turned up the music to maximum, until the neighbours complained.'*

**To speak up** = to speak louder.

*'Speak up please; my grandmother is a little deaf.'*

**Meaning 3# of Up: To make a distinction when one verb has two or more meanings**

**To break up** = to end a relationship.

*'My brother and his girlfriend broke up last spring.'*

**To do up** = to fasten a piece of clothing or a seat belt.

*'To do up your shoes.'*

**To mess up** = to make a mistake

*'I just messed up the project. Sorry!'*

**To end up** = to end in an unexpected way.

*'I made the cake for my colleagues, but I ended up eating it myself.'*

**To make up** = to invent a story.

*'Beatrix Potter made up a fantastic story about rabbits.'*

**Other uses of 'to make up':**

**To reconcile** = *'They made up after the argument.'*

**To compensate** = *'Let's take a taxi to make up some time.'*

**To consist of** = *'The soup is made up of carrots and potatoes.'*

## Phrasal verbs with 'down'

### Meaning 1# of Down: To reduce something

**To settle down** = to reduce your movement.

*'Settle down children and relax.'*

**To calm down** = reduce your stress.

*'You've had a stressful day. Have a cup of tea to calm down.'*

**To cut down on** = to reduce something you eat, drink or smoke.

*'I'm cutting down on sugar.'*

**To come down to** = to reduce an argument to its basic point (this is often money).

*'Well, it all comes down to whether they can afford to get divorced, or not.'*

**To cool down** = to reduce your heat.

*'After working out at the gym, it is important to take a moment to cool down.'*

**To turn down** = to reduce the volume of something.

*'Turn down that music!'*

**To turn down** = to reduce your options by rejecting something.

*'He turned down the job offer.'*

**To let down** = to disappoint (to reduce your expectations).

*'She felt let down when her parents didn't come to see her in the play.'*

**To slow down** = to reduce your speed

*'Slow down, we are coming to a traffic light.'*

### Meaning 2# of Down: To remove something that is higher or wider than you

**To cut down** = to cut something that is higher or wider than you (a tree or hedge).

*'We need to cut down the tree.'*

### Meaning 3# of Down: To temporarily break something

**To break down** = a large machine like a car, plane or boat temporarily breaks.

*'My car broke down on the motorway.'*

**Down = for temporarily breakage (not a phrasal verb).**

'The communications network is down.'

'The coverage is down at the moment, so I can't call you.'



## Phrasal verbs with 'out'

### Meaning 1# of Out: To exit

**To fall out** = to exit by falling.

*'Don't stand so close to the window, you may fall out.'*

**To get out** = to exit a small space that you can't move in, like a car, shower, elevator or bed.

*'I always get out of bed in the morning at 7am.'*

**To break out (of prison)** = to exit by breaking.

*'It took the main character in the Shawshank Redemption 25 years to break out of prison.'*

**To buy out** = to exit a business by allowing someone else to buy it completely.

*'My uncle owns a grocery store but he let a big supermarket buy out his business.'*

**To take out** = to take something outside/ to withdraw money/ to shoot someone in a video game (exiting them from a video game).

*'Can you take out the rubbish please?'*

*'How much money are you going to take out the bank to buy the car?'*

*'I just took out that guy in the rabbit costume Fortnite. Now there are only three of us left.'*

**To get out** = to leave something you're currently inside, or, a rude way to tell someone to leave.

*'Please get out of the car; we have arrived at our destination.'*

*'Get out of my office! You're fired!'*

**To sell out** = all the products exit the shop by being sold.

*'The shop has sold out of bread.'*

**To move out** = to move house or apartment (to exit the house or apartment by moving).

*'My flatmate is moving out next month and so we have to find someone else to replace her.'*

**To pop out** = to exit somewhere quickly and then return.

*'I am just popping out to buy some bread. Does anyone else want to come with me?'*

### Meaning 2# of Out: To complete/ solve

**To fill out a form.**

*'How many forms do I have to fill out to get my VISA?'*

**To sort out** = to organise, arrange or fix something.

*'We have to sort out a new router for the WIFI.'*

**To work out** = to solve a problem.

*'We'll work out how to fix the program later.'*

**To figure out** = to understand what something is and try to solve it (to decipher something).

*'Sherlock Holmes is good at figuring out who committed the crime.'*

### **Meaning 3# of Out: To find something because it is out of immediate experience**

Imagine that you are sitting in the middle of a circle. The circle represents your expertise or what you know on a particular day, or, how far you can see or hear something. The thing you are trying to find, see or hear is OUTSIDE of this circle and so you have to go out the circle to capture/discover it.

**To find out about** = to look for information outside of your immediate knowledge.

*'I don't know what time the train leaves but I will find out.'*

**To make out** = to capture sound or something visual which is out of your normal range for these senses.

*'I can't make out what she was saying, she was too far away.'*

**To set out** = to try to achieve something new (outside of your circle).

*'NASA set out to land on the moon by the end of the 60s.'*

*'She set out to reorder all the books in the national library – the job took her 6 months!'*

### **Meaning 4# of Out: To hide something, or to keep something from getting close to you**

**To cross out** = to hide a line of writing by drawing a line through it.

*'Cross that out, it was a mistake.'*

*'I have cross out many things on my to-do list today!'*

**To keep out** = to maintain something outside of a perimeter.

*'The sign says "keep out" so we shouldn't enter.'*

**To block out** = to keep an idea out of your mind.

*'She has blocked out the car accident. She doesn't remember anything.'*

### **Meaning 5# of Out: To extinguish, or, to lose enthusiasm for something**

**To put out a fire** = to extinguish a fire.

*'It took the firefighters a week to put out the forest fire.'*

**To fizzle out** = something that you started with lots of energy is now 'dying'.

*'The party was great until 11pm, and then it fizzled out.'*

**To die out** = to become extinct.

*'How did the dinosaurs die out?' 'I don't know – look it up on Google!'*

**To fall out of love** = when you start a romantic relationship well, but then the enthusiasm dies.

*'She fell out of love with her husband and eventually they got divorced.'*

**To run out of something** = to temporarily finish something and so you have to buy/obtain more.

*'My mobile battery is running out. I need to charge it.'*

*'We have run out of milk.'*

## Phrasal verbs with 'in'

### Meaning of **In**: 'To enter'

**To break in** = to enter by breaking something.

*'The thief broke into the museum.'*

**To move in** = to enter an apartment or house by moving into it.

*'They moved into a beautiful apartment by the river.'*

**To pop in** = to quickly go into a shop or house to buy or get something and then come out again.

*'I'm just popping into this shop to buy some milk. Do you want anything?'*

**To get in something** = to enter a small space where you can't move around like a car, shower, elevator or bed.

*'Get in the car please, it is about to rain.'*

**To get into something** = to start a passion or hobby (to enter a passion or hobby).

*'He got into jazz music in his 20s.'*

## Phrasal verbs with 'away'

### Meaning of **Away**: 'The method in which you leave'

Most of these examples are not phrasal verbs because the definition of a phrasal verb is that it has to have two meanings.

**To walk away** = to leave by walking (also figurative, 'he walked away from the marriage.')

*'The ex-boyfriend and girlfriend hugged each other and walked away.'*

**To drive away** = to leave by driving.

*'The taxi left her at the station and drove away into the night.'*

**To scare away** = something leaves because it is scared.

*'The dog scared the birds away.'*

**To sail away** = to leave by sailing on a boat.

*'All I want to do is sail away into the distance on a beautiful yacht.'*

**To run away** = to flee.

*'The people ran away from the earthquake.'*

**To sneak away** = to leave by stealth.

*'She sneaked away from the meeting.'*

**To back away** = to leave but backwards (facing the person you're leaving).

*'They backed away from the thief because he had a knife.'*

**To move away** = to leave by moving.

*'My best friend moved away to another province and now I barely see him.'*

### True phrasal verbs (with at least two meanings)

**To break away** = to leave by separating yourself from a bigger entity.

*'The politicians broke away from the main party and formed a new party.'*

**To break away** = small rocks break away from a larger rocks as a natural process of erosion.

**To throw away** = to throw rubbish into the bin. (Can also be used figuratively)

**To get away with something** = to leave with impunity.

*'My sister never does her homework, but our parents don't notice. She always gets away with it.'*

**To get away** = to go on holiday (to escape your normal life).

*'I'm so stressed, I need to get away.'*

Also, 'The get-away driver,' in a robbery.

**To give away** = to allow something to leave because you donate it for free.

*'They are giving away free tomatoes at the market because they have too many. Let's go and get some.'*

## Phrasal verbs with 'about' and 'around'

Meaning of **About** and **Around**: To do something with no particular purpose

**To hang about/around** = to pass time with your friends doing nothing.

*'There are those teenagers again, hanging about in the park.'*

**To run about/around** = to run from place to place.

*'I've been running about all day!'*

**To walk about/around** = to walk in a place with no purpose.

*'We walked around Paris all day. It was great!'*

**To mess about/ around** = to do silly things with no purpose.

*'Stop messing about and do some work!'*

**To go around** = to travel (walk, drive, or cycle) without a direction.

*'I've been going around the mall all morning.'*

**To wonder about/around** = to walk in a place with no direction, looking at the sights.

*'They spent all week wondering about London. They got lost, but it was lots of fun.'*

### Another 'around' verb with a different meaning

**To get round to + gerund** = to find enough time to do something.

*'I will get around to calling my mother later.'* (It's on the list but I have to postpone 'arriving at' that task until later.)

## Phrasal verbs with 'back'

### Meaning of **Back**: To return

**To give back** = to return something that was given.

*'She gave back the ring when they ended their engagement.'*

**To take back** = to return something that was bought (taken from a shop).

*'After trying it on at home and deciding he didn't like it, Peter took back the jacket to the shop.'*

**To put back** = to return something that was deliberately put in a certain position.

*'After washing up the dishes, we put them back on the shelves.'*

**To come back** = to return (from the perspective of the people you are returning to).

*'Simon called his wife and told her that he was coming back home at 5 pm.'*

**To go back** = to return (from the perspective of the people you are leaving).

*'Simon told his boss that he had finished his work and he was going back home.'*

**Move back** = to return to your place of origin by moving there.

*'After university, my sister moved back home to look for a job.'*

**To get back on track** = to return to the "path of success."

*'I took a break from my diet over Christmas but now it's the new year, I am getting myself back on track.'*



## Phrasal verbs with 'over'

### Meaning 1# of Over: To pass above, through or on something

**To run over** = to pass above something in a car, causing them terrible harm.

*'The car ran over the cat and killed it.'*

**To get over** = to recover (to pass through an illness or bad situation and come out the other side.)

*'It took me a long time to get over this cold.'*

**To stop over** (noun: 'A stopover') = when a plane stops in a city and then the passengers have to catch another plane to reach their destination. (To pass through another city in a plane, stop there and then leave).

**To take over** (noun: 'A takeover'). = An outside force takes control of something.'

### Meaning 2# of Over: To repeat

**To go over** = to rehearse, or, to look at a piece of information again.

*'OK actors; let's go over this one more time to make it perfect.'*

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## About your author

Hi, my name is Andromeda Jones and I am the author of three ESL teaching books. The first, **The Ultimate ESL Teaching Manual**, was published in 2016 and has become a bestseller online.

The 325 page manual is a complete English teaching system designed so that any native speaker (with TEFL experience or not) can pick up the book and start teaching.

It will show you **how to teach every grammar point in the English language** through a speaking practice called oral drills.

The second book, **The Ultimate ESL Book of Speaking Activities** provides even more speaking resources and finally **The Ultimate Teach English Online** draws on my many years of experience teaching online to show you **how to become successful** in the world of **online** ESL Teaching.

We hope you enjoy the download and find it useful.

Thanks for your support.

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