

**Phrasal verbs:
making do with a problematic area or
coming up with practical solutions?**

Malcolm Mann
13th November



Macmillan Online Conference 2013

credits

- *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*
- *Collins Cobuild Dictionary of Phrasal Verbs*
- *Macmillan English Dictionary*
- *Destination* (B1 / B2 / C1C2)
- *Laser* (A1+ / A2 / B1 / B1+ / B2)



Question 1

- How do your students generally cope with learning and using phrasal verbs?

a They fall behind.

b They get by.

c They storm ahead.



Question 2

- How do you personally cope with learning and using phrasal verbs?

a I fall behind. 😞

b I get by.

c I storm ahead! 😊



In this session...

- why phrasal verbs are particularly troublesome
- how we can start to understand the fundamental logic and patterns behind phrasal verbs
- some key dos and don'ts in the teaching and learning of phrasal verbs



Definition (multi-word verb)

- = main verb + particle(s)* where it's often difficult or impossible to work out the meaning by looking at the individual words
- *particle = adverb or preposition or verb

e.g. *Andy and I don't really **get on**.*

compare:

*She **came down** the stairs.*

(free combination)

*She **came down with** flu.*

(multi-word verb)



multi-word verbs

- Phrasal verbs
- Prepositional verbs
- Phrasal prepositional verbs
- Verb + noun (+ preposition)
- Verb + prepositional phrase
- Verb + verb



Phrasal verbs

verb + adverbial particle

- transitive (takes an object):

✓ I'll *turn* the TV *on*.

✓ I'll *turn on* the TV.

✓ I'll *turn* it *on*.

✗ I'll *turn on* it.

- intransitive (doesn't take an object):

Winter is setting in.



Prepositional verbs

verb + preposition

*She **looked at** the book.*

*The wild dog almost **went for** me.*

*I **came across** a really interesting article.*

No particle movement



Phrasal prepositional verbs

phrasal verb + prepositional phrase

Get away ?

Get away with ?

He got away. = escaped

He got away with the diamonds. = escaped

He got away on a motorbike. = escaped

He got away with murder. = escaped punishment for



Other multi-word verbs

- verb + noun (+ preposition)

take a look (at)

take place

take part

- verb + prepositional phrase

take into account

- verb + verb

make do

let go



Numbers...

- 3000 multi-word verbs approx?
- 5000-6000 meanings approx?
- approx. 45 main particles

aback • about • above • across • after • against • ahead
along • among • apart • around • aside • away • back
before • behind • below • beneath • between • beyond
by • down • for • forth • forward • from • in • into • off
on • onto • out • over • past • round • through • to
together • towards • under • up • upon • with • without



Many coursebooks...

...present phrasal verbs by main verb:

Write a phrasal verb in the correct form in each gap to complete the sentences.

take for

take in

take off

take over

take up



How should we present and teach phrasal verbs?

... (1) present/teach phrasal verbs just as we do one-word lexis:

within a topic context

- travel - destination / pack / suitcase / land / take off / check in / etc
- daily activities – wake up / get up / brush teeth / hair / get dressed / etc
- communication – call / phone back / get through / email / etc



Encountering new phrasal verbs while reading

- work out whether it's a phrasal verb or not
- work out from the context what it means
- understand the grammar
- understand usage/register/formality



How should we present and teach phrasal verbs?

... (2) present/teach them by particle

- Particles seem random but they're not.
- The more that students can understand the logic and meaning behind the choice of particle, the easier they'll find it to learn and use phrasal verbs.



This won't help:

Write a phrasal verb in the correct form in each gap to complete the sentences.

put up (prices)

look up (in a dictionary)

take up (a hobby)

make up (after a fight or argument)



because there's no connection between them in terms of topic/meaning

This WILL help:

put up (prices)

speak up

whip up (support)

brighten up

jazz up

speed up

do up (a house)

hurry up

wake up

warm up

dress up

fix up

buck up (ideas, etc)

beef up



metaphor

a few words that are fundamental concepts of location, movement and time (**on, off, back, ahead**, etc) are used metaphorically

e.g. height = power/prestige

lack of height = loss of power/prestige

**look up to someone / look down on someone /
royal highness / fall in love / be down and out /
etc etc etc**



metaphor – word play jokes

A hole has appeared in the middle of the M1.
Police are looking into it.



metaphor – word play jokes

Wherever my aunt is now, I'm sure she's looking down on me. She isn't dead – just very con**descending**.



metaphor – word play jokes

What training do you need to become a rubbish collector?

None. You pick it up as you go along.



metaphor – word play jokes

Why can't ghosts tell lies?

Because you can always see through them.

Put 'phrasal verb jokes' into a search engine like Google

some of the previous jokes can be found here:

<http://www.lingolex.com/itp/phrasalverbs.htm>



metaphor – word play jokes

1. Why can't ghosts tell lies?
 - a) She isn't dead – just very condescending.
2. What training do you need to become a rubbish collector?
 - b) Because you can always see through them.
 - c) etc
3. My aunt...



up – increase/improve

put up (prices)

speak up

whip up (support)

brighten up

jazz up

speed up

do up (a house)

hurry up

wake up

warm up

dress up

fix up

buck up (ideas, etc)

beef up



match

increase/improve

start/prepare

approach

separate

collect/come together

happen/create

finish/complete

damage/fail

join/fasten

discover/reveal

surrender

mess up

speak up

give up

do up

make up

draw up

sweep up

catch up

split up

use up

look up



match

increase/improve	mess up / play up
start/prepare	speak up / brighten up
approach	give up / pay up
separate	do up / zip up
collect/come together	make up / dream up
happen/create	draw up / set up
finish/complete	sweep up / fold up
damage/fail	catch up / creep up
join/fasten	split up / break up
discover/reveal	use up / wind up
surrender	look up / dig up



What are the metaphorical meanings of these particles?

across:

come across

stumble across

find, discover



What are the metaphorical meanings of these particles?

on:

turn on

switch on

bring on

log on

get on

catch on

start (to work,
operate)



What are the metaphorical meanings of these particles?

out:

pick out

find out

work out

make out

look out

worm out

search, find



What are the metaphorical meanings of these particles?

about:

mess about

fool about

lounge about

hang about

have a lack of purpose /
be inactive



What are the metaphorical meanings of these particles?

down:

burn down

chop down

tear down

smash down

destroy



What are the metaphorical meanings of these particles?

off:

brick off

close off

fence off

rope off

cordon off

block off

separate



What are the metaphorical meanings of these particles?

out:

print out

carry out

fill out

set out

thrash out

turn out

complete, end up



Any examples?

out: help / support

hand out

help out

bail out

straighten out



Any examples?

up: fasten / tighten / restrict

close up

sew up

belt up

brick up

tape up

scrunch up



Any examples?

along: make (good/bad) progress

get along

come along

drag along

move along



Any examples?

back: return / repeat

bounce back

fall back on

come back to

go back over

phone/call/ring someone back

read back

play back





Rebus

BRIGHTEN

Rebus

THE
T
E
G
MORNING



Rebus

TURN
THE COMPUTER



Rebus

TURN
THE PAGE



Rebus

TAKE
A COMPANY



Rebus

RISE
ADVERSITY



Rebus

THE KIDS LOOK



Rebus

TONLET'SSTAYIGHT



Rebus

TON LET'S STAY IGH



Rebus

FALL

DON'T



Rebus

SHY

RISK



Rebus

A BOMBLE
STUNK



Rebus

8 A HOUSE



Rebus

KNOCK

A WALL



Rebus

DON'T REWSNA



Rebus

2 B

SNOWED



Rebus

S I N V
D
N I
E T
I E
R F



Have a look at...

- phrasal verb games on Macmillan Dictionary website –

[http://www.macmillandictionary.com/
phrasalVerbsOne/](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/phrasalVerbsOne/)

- <http://www.phrasalverbdemon.com/>

