



42 Advanced Phrasal Verbs

(That You Need to Know!)

Phrasal verbs are very common in English conversation. Learning phrasal verbs is a great way to make your English sound more natural.

Some phrasal verbs are literal, which means the meaning is exactly what the words say. Some phrasal verbs are metaphorical, meaning they have a completely different meaning than you would associate with the verb.

42 Advanced Phrasal Verbs

1. [Be up for Something](#) - To want or be willing to do something.
 - We're going to go hiking this weekend, you can join us if **you're up for it**.
 - I'll ask Kevin if he wants to come to the pub with us tonight but he had a long day, so I'm not sure he'll **be up for it**.
 2. [Be up to Something](#) - To be doing something.
 - Hey Jeff, what **are you up to** today?
- *This can also mean to be doing something secretly
- Todd has been sneaking around the office all morning, I think he's **up to something**.
 3. [Bounce back](#) - To return to health or return to a good condition after an illness, injury, or difficulty.
 - Lucas injured his shoulder in the rugby match last weekend but I'm sure he can **bounce back** in no time. He's a tough guy.
- *We can **bounce back** *from* something.
- Travel companies are starting to **bounce back** *from* the loss of business during the pandemic.
 4. [Bounce something off someone](#) - To share an idea or plans with someone so they can tell you what they think about it.
 - I've been thinking about ways to increase company profits next year. I'd like to **bounce some ideas off you** if that's okay. I would love to know what you think.
 5. [Block off phrasal verb](#) - to close a road or an opening by placing a barrier at one end or in front of it.
 - The news just said that a water pipe burst downtown today. Emergency crews are trying to fix the damage and the police have **blocked off** Main Street. It must be a traffic nightmare.
- *This is separable is a verb so we can put an object in between the verb and the preposition - block *something* off.
- The police have **blocked** *Main Street* **off**.

6. [Build up](#) -
- 1) To become greater, stronger, or to increase in number.
- The movie had a nice steady **build up** until the big finale. It was fun.
 - 2) **Build somebody/something up** - to give a very positive and enthusiastic description of somebody/something, often making them seem better than they really are.
 - Really? I didn't like the movie at all. It was **built up** to be the most exciting movie of the year but I was disappointed.
 - 3) **Build somebody/yourself up** - To make somebody/yourself healthier or stronger.
 - Did you see Anthony today? He has so much muscle! He really **built himself up** over the summer. She must have joined a gym.
7. [Bump into](#) - To meet someone by chance.
- I **bumped into** Shannon this morning at the train station. She looked great, I think she lost weight.
8. [Call off phrasal verb](#) - To cancel something.
- The boss **called off** the meeting today so we can all go home early. That's great.
- *This is separable is a verb so we can put an object in between the verb and the preposition - **Call something off**
- The boss **called 5:00 meeting off** today.
9. [Catch up](#) (with) - To reach somebody who is further ahead of you.
- You guys head to the restaurant now and I'll **catch up with** you later. I've got a bit more work to do before I can leave.

*We can also **catch someone up** - Give someone information that was shared earlier that they didn't receive.
 - Smith was late today due to the heavy traffic on Main Street. Can you guys **catch him up** on this morning's meeting?
10. [Clamp down on](#) - To take strict action in order to prevent something, especially crime.
- The city has installed new traffic cameras to **clamp down on** people running red lights.
11. [Come across](#) -
- 1) To be understood.
- After I did a practice presentation, I felt the message didn't really **come across** in my speech. I need to rewrite it to make it clear.
 - 2) To find or discover something by accident.
 - I came across an old photo album in my grandmother's attic. It was fun to see photos of my parents when they were small children.
12. [Come up with](#) - To find or make an answer, an amount of money, etc.
- I need to **come up with** another \$200 I want to buy that new moped.
 - If we work together I'm sure we can **come up with** a solution that works for everyone.
13. [Crack down on](#) - To make more effort to prevent illegal activities and give stronger penalties to the people who do them.

- The police have set up a new task force to **crack down on** car theft in the city.
 14. [Crank something out](#) - To produce a lot of something quickly.
- The writer locked himself in a hotel room so he would have no distractions. His goal was to **crank out** 300 pages of his book over the weekend.

Do you want to learn even more phrasal verbs? You'll find a list of common Phrasal Verbs at my post here> [Learn 50 Phrasal Verbs \(List, Examples, Video, 42-page PDF\)](#)

15. [Crop up](#) - To appear or happen unexpectedly.
 - Who is Jonathan? I here is named **crop up** in a lot of conversations around the office. Is he the new city manager?
16. [Face up to](#) - To accept or deal with something that is difficult.
 - Rayleen had to **face up to** the fact that the relationship was over.
 - *The phrasal verb **face up to** is often paired with **the fact**.
17. [Fall out with](#) - To end of friendly relationship with someone due to a disagreement or improper behavior.
 - I **fell out with** Rory 6 months ago. We haven't talked since.
 - *You're coming for me to here and use **falling out** as a noun phrase with the verb **had**.
 - Rory and I **had a falling out** 6 months ago.
18. [Figure something out](#) -
 19. 1) To think about somebody/something until you understand them/it.
 - Sean is an odd guy, I could never **figure him out**.
 - This is a small problem, and I'm sure we can **figure it out** together.
 - 2) To calculate an amount or the cost of something
 - My wife wants to go to Hawaii, I need to **figure out** how much it will cost.
 20. [Freak out](#) - To become or cause someone else to become very uncomfortable or excited.
 - Try not to **freak out** but I might be able to sell my company 4.8 million dollars. Isn't that amazing?
 - *This is separable is a verb so we can put an object in between the verb and the preposition - *freak someone out*
 - My aunt has a creepy doll in her living room that looks like his eyes follow you wherever you go. That thing **freaks me out** every time I visit.
 21. [Hash out](#) - (informal, especially North American English) To discuss something carefully and completely in order to reach an agreement or decide something.
 - The contract is almost ready, we just need to **hash out** some details, and then I can sign it.
 22. [Iron out](#) - To sort out any problems or difficulties.
 - I like your business plan but before I invest any money I need to **iron out** a few details.

The phrasal verbs **hash out** and **iron out** are often used with the noun details.

 23. [Jot down](#) - To write something down quickly.
 - I usually carry a small notepad with me so I can **jot down** any ideas that come to me.
 24. [Lay off](#) -
 - 1) (informal) To stop pressuring or bothering someone.
 - I think David is having a hard time at work, maybe we should **lay off** him for a while.

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- 2) (informal) To stop using something.
- Holy cow, I've gained 6 kg in 4 months. I need to **lay off** the fast food and start eating healthy.
- 3) To stop employing somebody because there is not enough work for them to do.
- The company was losing money so they had to **lay off** 50 workers from their factory.
- *This is separable is a verb so we can put an object in between the verb and the preposition - lay *someone* off
- The company will **lay 50 workers off** at the end of the summer.
25. [Look down on](#) - If you look down on someone you think that you are better than them.
- I don't like the way Melanie **looks down on** everyone. She thinks she's so special but really she's not.
26. [Look something over](#) - To carefully look at something to check its condition and quality.
- My friend Martin is a licensed mechanic so I asked him to **look the car over** before I bought it.
27. [Mull something over](#) - To carefully consider something.
- I understand your proposal, let me **mull it over** tonight and I'll give you my answer tomorrow morning.
28. [Pass away](#) - To die. This is used as a gentler way to talk about someone who is no longer with us.
- My high school Spanish teacher **passed away** last month, he was a great teacher. Adios my friend, you will be missed.
29. [Plod along](#) - To make very slow progress, especially with difficult or boring work.
- Filling out this paperwork is the most boring part of my job. I just have to **plod along** until it's finished. (A man filling out lots of boring paperwork.)
30. [Put up with](#) - To tolerate something.
- Marcos is rude to all the girls in the office, we're not going to **put up with** this any longer.
31. [Ramp up](#) - To make something increase in amount.
- The whole team needs to **ramp up** our efforts to get this product launched on schedule.
 - The factory has **ramped up** production to meet the surge in demand/
32. [Run something by](#) - This phrasal verb's meaning is similar to **bounce off someone**. You want to share a plan or an idea with another person to get their feedback.
- It's a good idea, let's **run it by** the manager to get his reaction. If she likes it, we can go ahead and start.
- *We can also say **run something past** someone.
- Let me **run this idea past** Jonah first, he has experience in this area.
33. [See off](#) - To take someone to the airport, bus/train station, etc., and say goodbye before they leave
- Tomorrow I'll drive my son to the airport and see him off.

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- 34. [Sign up](#) - to sign or add your name to a document, form, or contract that says you agree to do a job or to participate in something.
- Randall just walked into the Army Recruiting office and **signed up** for five years. He has always wanted to be a soldier.
 - *We can also say **sign on** to do something.
- Randall **signed on** for five years.
 - Sign up for** - To arrange to do a course of study by adding your name to the list of people doing it
- My local library offers free Japanese lessons for foreign people living in the area. I'm going to **sign up for** classes tomorrow.

If new circumstances or a new situation happens that we are not happy with, prepared for, or enjoying we often use the expression - **I didn't sign up for this.**

- This is my third straight Saturday working overtime. At first, I was excited to work for this company but **I didn't sign up for all this overtime!**
 - 35. [Stem from](#) - To be the result of something
- Bullying often **stems from** a difficult home life for the child. Unfortunately, it's a cycle.
 - 36. [Stick Up for](#) - To support or defend yourself or someone else.
- I was big for my age in elementary school so I often **stuck up for** the smaller kids who were being bullied.
 - 37. [Stock up on](#) - To buy or prepare many things for later use.
- The weather says a big typhoon is coming in 2 days so we better **stock up on** food and water now. It will be tough to go shopping when the storm hits.
 - 38. [Muster up](#) - The group muster is often used with the prepositions up to mean to find as much support, courage, etc. as you can
- I **mustered up** the courage, walked to my boss's office, and demanded a raise.
 - 39. [Turn down](#) - To reject or refuse an offer, a proposal, etc. or the person who makes it
- I **turned down** the promotion because I didn't want to move to the other side of the country.

2) **Turn something down/Turn down something** - To reduce the noise, heat, etc. produced by a piece of equipment by moving its controls

- Can you **turn the TV down**? It's too loud.
- I'm getting warm, does anyone mind if I **turn down** the heat?

The opposite of Turn Down is Turn Up.

- I'm getting chilly, does anyone mind if I **turn up** the heat?
 - 40. [Turn out](#) - To be discovered to be; to prove to be
- I was worried about running a half marathon but it **turned out** to be easier than I thought.
- The antique watch that I bought at the market **turned out** to be very valuable.

- 41. [Weed out](#) - To remove or get rid of people or things from a group because they are not wanted or are not as good as the rest
- We look at the applications and **weed out** the candidates who are not suitable before we start the interviews.

*This is separable is a verb so we can put an object in between the verb and the preposition - weed *something/someone* out.

- Gangs and troublemakers had taken over the school. The new principal wanted to **weed the bad students out** so he could turn the school into a place of learning.

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42. [Weigh in](#) - (informal) to join in a discussion, an argument, an activity, etc. by saying something important.
- It was a big decision so all the staff were asked to **weigh in** and share their opinions.
*The Phrasal Verb **weigh in** is sometimes followed by another preposition, **on**.
 - Walter, you've been awfully quiet over there. Would you like to **weigh in on** the topic?
43. [Wind up](#) -
- 1) (informal) (of a person) to find yourself in a particular place or situation.
- When I was younger I never thought I would **wind up** working for my Dad's company. My life was completely different than I imagined it, but I was happy.
- 2) **wind up something/wind something up** - To end something that has been happening, like a speech or a meeting.
- Okay everyone, let's **wind up** this meeting and head home.
 - Okay everyone, let's **wind this meeting up** and head home.
- 3) **wind up somebody/wind somebody up** - (British English, informal) to deliberately say or do something in order to annoy somebody.
- Don't listen to Alexander, he likes to **wind up** the staff on Monday morning with his stupid comments. Just ignore him.
 - He likes to **wind the staff up** on Monday morning, just ignore him.

*DID YOU NOTICE? The title of my blog post is **42 Advanced Phrasal Verbs** but the last verb on this list is numbered 43.

There was an error when my word processing software numbered the **Phrasal Verbs** because I had to change the formatting. Some phrasal verbs have several meanings.

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