

SOME COMMON PHRASAL VERBS AND THEIR MOST COMMON MEANINGS

Here is a list of very common phrasal verbs. They are not the only phrasal verbs in English and you should use a good dictionary to learn others.

break down (type 1) stop working: *The bus had broken down.*

lose control of one's emotions: *He broke down and cried when he heard the news.*

break into (type 3) enter illegally: *They broke into the house while everyone was sleeping*

bring up (type 2) raise/educate: *His grandparents brought him up when his parents divorced.*

mention/raise a topic: *Someone brought up the subject of parking at the end of the meeting.*

call back (type 2) return a phone call: *Mrs Brown will call you back as soon as she is free.*

call off (type 2) cancel: *The match was called off because of the dreadful weather.*

carry on (type 3) continue: *When I leave just carry on with your work*

come across (type 3) find by chance: *They came across their father's medals in an old suitcase.*

come into (type 3) inherit: *When his grandmother died he came into a fortune.*

count on (type 3) rely upon: *You can always count on Pauline in a crisis.*

cut down (type 2) reduce: *She cut down the number of cigarettes she smoked.*

She cut the number of cigarettes she smoked down to ten a day.

cut off (type 2) to end/disconnect a service (often used in the passive): *The telephone was cut off because they hadn't paid the bill.*

face up to (type 4) accept/face a situation, usually unpleasant: *You have just got to face up to the fact that she doesn't love you any more.*

fall through (type 1) when something that has been organised fails to happen: *The peace negotiations fell through over a minor point.*

fill in (type 2) complete: *Do you think you could fill in your date of birth on the form, please?*

fill up (type 2) make full: *They filled up the car the night before the journey.*

find out (type 2) discover facts or information: *They phoned the station to find out the times of the trains to Cambridge.*

get across (type 2) communicate: *However hard he tried he couldn't get what he meant across.*

get away with (type 4) escape without punishment: *You let that child get away with everything; he is going to be a problem when he grows up.*

get by (type 1) survive: *Even though they don't have much money they manage to get by.*

get down (type 2) (no passive) depress: *This weather at this time of the year really gets me down.*

get on (type 1) have a (good) relationship: *Since their discussion they have got on a lot better.*

get over (type 3) recover: *Since I got over my cold I have got lots more energy.*

get through (type 3) make contact by phone: *I've tried ringing them all evening but I just haven't been able to get through.*

give away (type 2) distribute: *She gave away all her money to the dogs' home.*

reveal/betray: *He was shot for giving away his country's military secrets.*

give in (type 1) surrender: *Her father finally gave in and allowed her to go to the disco.*

give out (type 2) distribute: *They gave out thousands of leaflets at the demonstration.*

give up (type 2) stop doing: *He gave up skiing after he broke his leg.*

go off (type 1) explode: *The bomb went off outside the restaurant.*

go on (type 1) happen: *There's a terrible noise outside, what is going on?*

go out (type 1/4) have a romantic relationship: *He asked her if she would like to go out. She refused to go out with him.*

go up (type 1) increase: *School fees are going up next term.*

grow up (type 1) to become an adult: *While I was growing up we used to live in that house over there.*

hold on (type 1) wait: *Is Julie there? Hold on, I'll go and look for her.*

keep on (type 1) continue/persist: *Why do you keep on bothering me? Can't you see I'm trying to work?*

keep up (type 1) maintain the same level: *Can you walk more slowly please? I just can't keep up.*

let down (type 2) disappoint: *He promised to take me to the airport but at the last minute he let me down.*

let off (type 2) not punish: *The judge let him off with a warning because of his age.*

live up to (type 4) meet expectations: *He spent his whole life failing to live up to his father's expectations.*

look after (type 3) take care of: *Do you think you could look after the children while I go shopping?*

look down on (type 4) to consider someone else as inferior: *People looked down on him because he had once been to prison.*

look for (type 3) search: *Have you seen my keys? I've been looking for them everywhere.*

look into (type 3) investigate: *The police are looking into the painting's disappearance.*

look up (type 2) consult a reference book: *I couldn't find her number so I looked it up in the telephone book.*

look up to (type 4) admire/respect: *She always looked up to her grandmother because of her kindness and wisdom.*

make out (type 2) see with difficulty: *What does this word say? I can't make it out.*

make up (type 2) invent: *When he was a little boy he used to listen to the wonderful stories made up by his uncle.*

pick up (type 2) learn (informally): *She picked the language up by working as an au pair in a family.*

collect: *Don't bother to take a taxi, I'll come and pick you up.*

put down (type 2) to make someone feel inferior through criticism: *Why do you always put him down? He'll never have any self-confidence.*
to kill an animal to end its suffering: *The racehorse broke its leg so the vet had no choice but to put the animal down.*

put off (type 2) postpone: *I am afraid my mother is coming this weekend so we'll have to put off our game of tennis.*

put through (type 2) connect on the phone: *If you'd like to wait a moment I'll put you through to her extension.*

put up (type 2) give (temporary) accommodation: *I'm flying to London on Friday morning, do you think you could put me up for the night on Thursday? I don't mind sleeping on the sofa.*

put up with (type 4) endure/tolerate: *I can't put up with your complaints any more, I'm leaving.*

run out (type 1) finish/consume: *Oh no, we've run out of coffee, I'll go to the shop and get some.*

run over (type 2) hit with a car/vehicle: *Drive slowly along here, you don't want to run anyone over.*

set off (type 1) start on a journey: *We loaded the car, got in and set off.*

sort out (type 2) organise, find a solution: *When the computer broke down it took an engineer ages to sort out the problem.*

speak up (type 1) speak louder: *Do you think you could speak up, the line is very bad.*

split up (type 1) separate when a relationship ends: *Have you heard? Gemma and Lionel have split up.*

take after (type 3) inherit a characteristic: *He is so stubborn, he really takes after his father.*

take in (type 2) to deceive: *Don't be taken in by her lies, she just wants to cheat you.*
to give shelter to: *The farmer took the travellers in during the snowy weather.*

take off (type 1) (of a plane, rocket, helicopter) leave the ground: *The plane took off on time.*

(type 2) to imitate: *When he was at school he was good at taking off his teachers.*

take over (type 2) gain control: *They took the company over by buying over half the shares.*

take up (type 2) begin a new activity: *We're thinking of taking up German in the autumn.*

tell off (type 2) criticise/scold: *His mother told him off for being cruel to the cat.*

talk over (type 2) discuss: *He felt better for talking his problems over with his mother.*

turn down (type 2) refuse: *She eventually decided to turn the job offer down because the salary was too low.*

work out (type 2) calculate/arrive at a decision: *After a couple of hours they worked out that there was something wrong with the printer.*

WORD-FORMATION

Prefixes and suffixes

- 1 forming nouns
 - people and professions
 - ant (assistant); -ee (employee), -ess (waitress), -er (builder), -ian (mathematician), -ist (novelist), -or (visitor)
- 2 other nouns
 - al (dismissal), -ance (abundance), -cy (consistency), -ence (confidence), -ful (handful), -hood (childhood), -ing (playing), -ion (addiction), -ism (symbolism), -ity (sensitivity), -ment (contentment, -ness (tiredness) -ship (directorship).
- 3 forming verbs
 - en (strengthen), -ise (privatise), -ify (modify)
- 4 forming adjectives
 - able (suitable), -al (logical), -ary (preliminary), -ful (shameful), -ed (painted), -ful (helpful), -ible (sensible), -ic (sarcastic), -ish (foolish), -ive (decisive), -ing (boring), -less (hopeless), -like (childlike), -ly (friendly), -ous (dangerous), -y (sunny)