

What are phrasal verbs?

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You have recently joined an advertising agency where everything is cool, right from your work environment to the clothes you wear. However, when it comes to language, they strictly [communicate in English](#), rather informal English. The kind of English they speak is less formal in nature. In your daily conversations with them, you must have heard words like look up, carry on, get across etc. These words are informal in nature, but can be heard more in daily conversations. They are called phrasal verbs and their literal meaning is different from the actual phrase. Let's take a look to understand them better.



A phrasal verb is a combination of a verb and a preposition, a verb and an adverb, or a combination of both. These combined verbs generally make a new meaning, which is different from the original verb. It's here when the confusion starts, like for example, 'He is falling for you'. Fall for in literal sentence has different meaning, but in phrasal meaning it means to be in love with. Phrasal verbs are confusing as well as funny at times.

There are two types of phrasal verbs:

1) Transitive and intransitive phrasal verbs:

Transitive phrasal verbs have an object.

Example:

- a) Reema has put off the shopping plan for a week.
- b) Pravin gave up smoking three years ago.

In the above examples, put off and gave up are phrasal verbs whereas the shopping and smoking are the objects.

Intransitive phrasal verb does not have an object.

Example:

- a) I am looking for my mobile. Have you seen it?
- b) Watch out! There's a car coming.

These examples do not have an object.

2. Separable and inseparable phrasal verbs:

In separable phrasal verbs, object may come after the following phrasal verbs or it may separate it in two parts.

Examples:

- a) She pointed out at him when asked about the accused.
- b) There is an error in the sentence please look it up in the dictionary.

In the first sentence, the object is separated from the phrasal verb whereas in the second sentence the object has come after the phrasal verb.

Inseparable phrasal verbs on other side refer to the verb that is directly followed by its preposition or adverb.

Example:

- a) Do drop in to my place if you get free time.
- b) Why don't you take up an English course?



Phrasal verbs are very important for English learners because they are frequently used in everyday spoken English communication. These things can be understood only when you think and understand them with different meaning. However, a [spoken English](#) course will help you clear the basic concept of English and grammar.

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-By Shailja Varma

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