

# Phrasal verbs

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- Phrasal verbs are basic verbs which can combine with different prepositions to make verbs with completely new – and often unguessable – meanings.
- Phrasal verbs are used more in speaking than in writing.
- There is always a more formal way of conveying the same idea.

## 1) Get:

Get seems to be used all the time in spoken English.

Get has the following basic meanings:

1. Receive, obtain or buy something, e.g. I got a letter from John today, Please get me a newspaper when you're in town, she got top marks in her exam.
2. Show a change in position, move or be moved, e.g. How are you getting home tonight?
3. Show a change in state, become or make, e.g. We are all getting older if not wiser.

Specific meanings of 'get':

- It's my turn to get dinner tonight. (prepare a meal)
- I don't get it. Why did he speak like that? (understand)
- His behaviour really gets me at times. (annoy)

### Phrasal verbs with 'get':

1. **Get at:** reach, find; e.g. I hope the enquiry will get at the truth.
2. **Get away with:** do something wrong without being caught; e.g. The robbers got away with several thousand pounds.
3. **Get behind:** fail to produce something at the right time. e.g. I got terribly behind with my work.
4. **Get by:** manage (financially); e.g. We could never get by on my salary alone.
5. **Get down:** depress; e.g. This weather is really getting me down.
6. **Get down to:** begin to give serious attention to; e.g. It's time you get down to some work.
7. **Get on:** manage; e.g. Will we get on without you?
8. **Get on:** advance, develop; e.g. Jo is getting on very well at school now.
9. **Get out of:** avoid a responsibility; e.g. I'll try and get out of my lesson tomorrow.
10. **Get over:** recover from; e.g. She's getting over a bad attack of flu.
11. **Get round:** spread; e.g. The rumour soon got round the whole village.
12. **Get through:** come to a successful end; e.g. What a relief that she got through all her exams.
13. **Get through:** use up all of; e.g. He got through his month's salary in just one weekend.

14. **Get up to:** to do (especially something bad); e.g. They're very quiet. I wonder what they're getting up to.

**Other expressions of 'get':**

- When their relationship ended, he **got rid** of everything that reminded him of her. (threw away/ destroy)
- I'm organising a little **get-together**. I hope you can come. (informal meeting/ party)
- I'm going to **get my own back** on her somehow. (take my revenge)

**Exercise 1:** match the situations in list A with the appropriate expressions in list B.

List A	List B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Someone has been very impolite to one of your friends.</li> <li>• Someone is about to through something away.</li> <li>• Someone is being very bad-tempered.</li> <li>• Someone has done something very unkind to you.</li> <li>• A good friend is leaving.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I don't know how we'll get by without you!</li> <li>• You wait! I'll get my own back on you one day!</li> <li>• Don't get rid of that yet!</li> <li>• You got out of bed on the wrong side this morning!</li> <li>• Your rudeness really gets me.</li> </ul>

**Exercise 2:**

Replace 'get' in the text with another way of conveying the same idea. Notice that by doing this you are changing the text from something very informal to something slightly more formal.

I don't often **get** interesting advertising circulars these days. However, quite an unusual one came this morning. It was headed 'Are you worried about **getting out of touch?**' and it went on 'If so, **get** some of our special tablets today. Taking just one in the morning will help you **get on well** at work and at home. It will stop little problems from **getting you down** and will ensure that you **get** rich and successful with the minimum of effort on your behalf. Send just \$25 today and you will **get** your tablets and your key to success within ten days'.

I don't often **receive** interesting advertising circulars these days. However, quite an unusual one came this morning. It was headed 'Are you worried about **losing touch?**' and it went on 'If so, **buy/ purchase** some of our special tablets today. Taking just one in the morning will help you **succeed** at work and at home. It will stop little problems from **depressing you** and will ensure that you **become** rich and successful with the minimum of effort on your behalf. Send just \$25 today and you will **receive** your tablets and your key to success within ten days'.

## 2) Phrasal verbs with 'bring':

- I was brought up in the country. (raise)
- Don't give up. I'm sure you'll bring it off. (succeed)
- Cold winds always bring on her cough. (cause to start)
- The strike brought about a change of government. (cause to happen)
- I hope they don't bring back capital punishment. (reintroduce)
- They promised to bring down taxes but have they? (lower)
- Inflation will bring down the government. (destroy, remove from power)
- Ford are bringing out an interesting new model in the spring. (introduce)
- Keep at it and you'll bring him round to your point of view. (persuade)

## 3) Phrasal verbs with 'take':

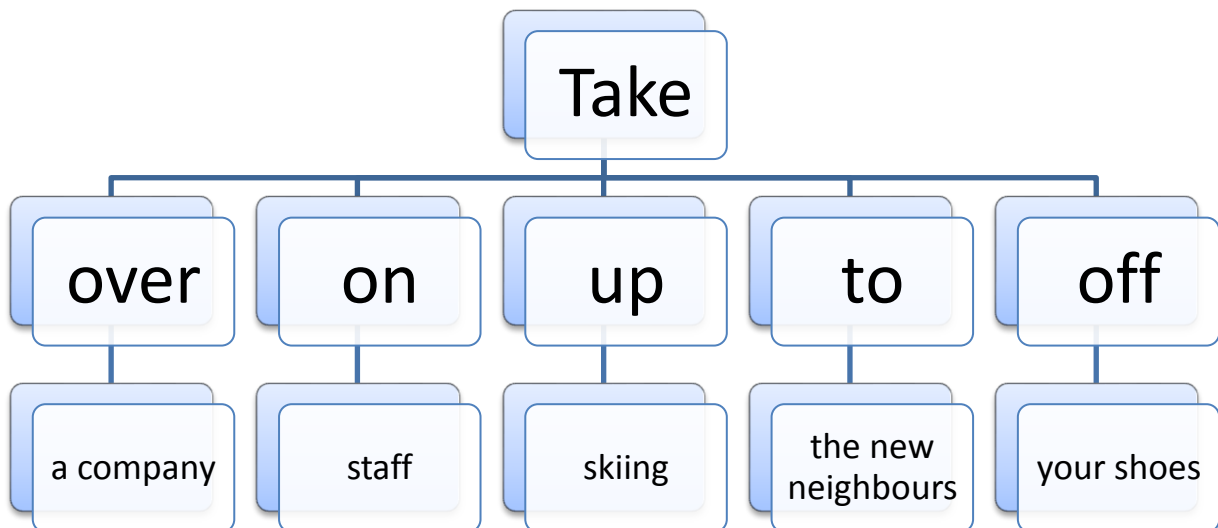
- Doesn't he take after his father? (resemble)
- I wish I could take back what I said to her. (withdraw)
- I find it very hard to take in his lectures. (absorb/understand)
- She was completely taken in by him. (deceive)
- Sales have really taken off now. (start to improve)
- The plane took off two hours late. (left the ground)
- She's very good at taking off her teacher. (imitate)
- We'll have to take on more staff if we're to take on more work. (employ/ undertake)
- She took to him at once. (form an immediate liking for)
- When did you take up golf? (start 'a hobby')

### Exercise 3:

Complete the sentences with the appropriate preposition.

1. The new school reforms which plan to bring ... regular exams for young children are generally unpopular.
2. The long journey brought ... labour and the baby was born on the bus.
3. I think the strikes will bring ... some changes in management.
4. If anyone can bring it ..., he can.
5. He won't agree to it for me but she can always bring him ... .
6. She brought ... six children on her own.

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1. The new school reforms which plan to bring back/ about regular exams for young children are generally unpopular.
  2. The long journey brought on labour and the baby was born on the bus.
  3. I think the strikes will bring about some changes in management.
  4. If anyone can bring it off, he can.
  5. He won't agree to it for me but she can always bring him round.
  6. She brought up six children on her own.

**Exercise 4:** complete.**4) Phrasal verbs with 'come'**

- Did the meeting you were planning ever come off? (take place)
- I don't think his jokes ever quite come off. (succeed)
- When do the exam results come out? (be published/ made public)
- The mark on the carpet won't come out. (be removed)
- An important point came up at the meeting. (was raised)
- Please come round and see me some time. (pay an informal visit)
- Nothing can come between him and football. (separate/ be a barrier between)
- I came across a lovely old vase in that junk shop. (found by chance)
- How did you come by that bruise/ that scar? (receive/ obtain)

**5) Phrasal verbs with 'go'****Go on:**

- What is going on next door? (happening)
- They went on working despite the noise. (continued)
- As the weeks went on, things improved. (passed)
- You go on, we'll catch you up later. (go in advance)
- The oven should go on at six. (start operating)
- He's always going on at me about my hair. (complaining)

**Go through:**

- I wouldn't like to go through that again. (experience/ endure)
- Let's go through the plans once more. (check)

- Unfortunately the business deal we were hoping for did not go through in the end. (was not completed or approved).
- He went through a fortune in one weekend. (spent/ used)

**Go for:**

- He really went for her when she dared to criticise him. (attack)
  - He goes for older women. (is attracted by)
  - Which course have you decided to go for? (choose)
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- Those shoes don't go with that dress. (suit/ match)
- The alarm went off when the burglars tried to open the door. (rang)
- He would never go back on his word. (break a promise)
- I'm sure she'll go far. (be very successful)
- Let me have a go! (Let me have a turn or a try!)
- He's been on the go all day and he's exhausted. (very busy/ on the move)

**Exercise 5:**

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|---|-----------------------------|
| • Why is she looking so miserable?                | • Any time after eight.     |
| • Did anything new come up at the meeting?        | • The firm went bankrupt.   |
| • When does your alarm clock usually go off?      | • A bit of a fight I think. |
| • What's the worst pain you've ever gone through? | • From a doting aunt.       |
| • How did he come by so much money?               | • Seven thirty normally.    |
| • When should I come round to your place?         | • Only Jack's proposal.     |
| • What's going on over there?                     | • When I pulled a ligament. |