

How to use phrasal verbs

In this lesson you will learn how to use phrasal verbs effectively.

Starter

- Find a verb and a particle from the group below to make a phrasal verb with the same meaning as the verbs (1-7).
 - delay put off
 - make contact with
 - refuse
 - tolerate
 - do a task
 - end a relationship or discussion
 - wait
- How many other phrasal verbs can you find from the group?

away break carry down
 get give hold look
 make off on put
 out over up work
 through turn with

Challenge

- José Alvaro is looking for UK outlets to distribute ceramic tiles from Mexico. He recently had a meeting with Garth Chance, the sales director, and his assistant of Brick Buyer International. Read his email below. What are the conditions? What action does he want?

Subject: Mexican wall tiles – distribution

Dear Mr Chance,
 Further to our meeting yesterday, I would like to sum in detail up some of the things we discussed. I have up drawn a list below.

- We can usually ship from Mexico within five working days from when any standard order is received. Please count a delivery time on of six weeks.
- Tiles cost \$31 per m² (90 tiles), and we charge \$26 per case (90 pieces) for shipping and handling.
- If there are any additional requests, we will be happy to set special arrangements on an individual basis up.

I would be grateful if you could get me back to as soon as possible. This would enable me to ensure that we do not run time out of regarding summer stock.

Best regards,
 José Alvaro

Practice

- In each group, underline one noun which the phrasal verb does not collocate with.
 - back out of
 a plan / a rejection / an arrangement
 - break off
 a plan / negotiations / an engagement
 - come up against
 a problem / an obstacle / an opportunity
 - carry out
 a promise / a mistake / an order
 - come up with
 an idea / a proposal / a chat
 - take someone up on
 a refusal / an offer / a new job

Language box

There are four categories of phrasal verbs. Note that the preposition / adverb in a phrasal verb is called the particle (e.g. *off* in *take off*).

Verb + particle. These are intransitive, i.e. they have no object:

I popped in to see how they're getting on at the printers.

Verb + particle + object. If the object is a pronoun, it must go between the verb and the particle. If it is a noun, it can go in either position:

We'll put off the meeting till Thursday.

We'll put it off till Thursday.

Not They're going to put off it till Thursday.

Hint

Stress can shift in phrasal verbs. When the object is a noun, the verb and object are stressed:

Unfortunately we didn't manage to pull the contract off.

When the object is a pronoun, or there is no object, the stress falls on the particle:

We didn't manage to pull it off.

Could you hold on, please?

- 2 Find all the phrasal verbs in José's email and correct them.
- 3 Now match each phrasal verb in 2 with one of the verbs below.
- 1 arrange _____
 - 2 be short of _____
 - 3 expect _____
 - 4 prepare _____
 - 5 reply _____
 - 6 summarize _____
- 4 Look at the message Garth wrote below. What does he want his assistant to do?

Blake - pls reply to José. I hope we can pull this off - but not at this price and delivery time. With floor and wall tiles, sales could really take off. I don't want to back out now, and I wouldn't like to let him down, but we can't put off the decision-making much longer, or we'll lose out to a competitor. See what you can fix up. Thx, G.G.

- 5 Blake, the assistant director, replies to José. What is he concerned about? What does he want José to do?

Subject: Re: Mexican wall tiles - distribution

Dear Mr Alvaro,

In the past, our customers have been put off by high individual prices for tiles. At your current price, we'd have to cut back on orders drastically, and I don't think it would be worthwhile.

Delivery time is also an issue. Is there any way this can be speeded up?

We are also interested in the floor tiles you mentioned - our customers tend to buy both together. Please send us an offer for those too.

If we are subsequently to take you up on your offer, we should at this point bring up the issue of exclusivity, i.e. we would not want to come up against any competition here in the UK. Can you confirm this is possible?

After discussion, we have come up with an alternate suggestion based on quantities of floor and wall tiles (see attached).

We look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes,
Blake Thomas

- 6 Find phrasal verbs in the message in 4 and the email in 5 with the same particle. What meaning does it carry?

Example back out / lose out = 'fail'

Verb + particle + object. The verb and particle can't be separated:

Can you look after the project tomorrow?

Not Can you look the project after tomorrow?

Verb + particle + particle + object. The verb and particles can't be separated:

I can't put up with it any more.

Not I can't put it up with any more.

Look

Look again at the texts in Challenge.

Categorize each phrasal verb according to the groups in the Language box.

Lesson record

3 new words from this lesson

3 useful phrases from this lesson

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| 1 | 1 |
| 2 | 2 |
| 3 | 3 |

Things to remember

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