

Phrasal Verbs

Separable and Non-Separable Phrasal Verbs

In English, there are lots of actions that we can only express using phrasal verbs. A phrasal verb has a meaning, which is different from the original verb.

A phrasal verb has two parts:

1. A verb (get, come, take).
2. One or two words that could be adverbs or prepositions (in, on, out, off)

Phrasal verbs are usually formed by a **verb** + **a preposition**.

Study the examples below (use a dictionary if necessary):

- *call back*
- *pick up*
- *fill out*
- *give up*
- *hang up*
- *get in*
- *get along*

The first important thing to remember is that:

- Some phrasal verbs are **separable** (the verb and the preposition can be separated, putting the object in the middle),
- While others are **inseparable** (the object must come at the end because the verb and the preposition must stay together).

"Run into" is an example for an inseparable verb.

"Run into": means to meet someone by chance when you were not expecting it to occur.

Phrasal Verbs

- Correct: I always run into Molly at the mall.
- Incorrect: I always run Molly into at the mall.
- Incorrect: I always run Molly at the mall into.

As you see, we cannot separate the words in this phrasal verb. This is why we call it an inseparable phrasal verb.

Some phrasal verbs can be separated when we use them with objects. This means that we have a choice. We can put the object between the verb and the preposition, or we can put the object at the end, just like we do for inseparable phrasal verbs.

"Write down" is an example for a separable verb.

"Write down": means to make a note some information on paper.

We can separate this phrasal verb if we want! Look at the examples below to see how this construction works.

- Correct: His students write down everything he says.
- Correct: His students write everything he says down.

As you see, we can separate the words in this phrasal verb. This is why we call it a separable phrasal verb.

Phrasal Verbs

Phrasal verbs classify into two groups:

1. Separable Phrasal Verbs

(which are separated by a Direct Object)

For example:

- *pick up*

He will pick her up at 9:00.

- *turn off*

Please turn it off now.

2. Inseparable Phrasal Verbs

(which are not separated by a Direct Object)

For example:

- *get in*

Please, get in the tent now.

- *get along*

Cynthia gets along with her mother in-law.