

B1.9 Phrasal Verbs in Conversation - Handout

1 Phrasal verbs are verbs with two, or sometimes three parts. They are made up of a verb and a preposition or adverb (the term 'particle' is also used, to include both prepositions and adverbs). Some examples are: *pass away*, *break down*, *look after* and *come round*. They can cause a lot of problems for learners of English for three main reasons. Firstly, there are so many of them – about 5,000 in English. Secondly, many of them have meanings that are very idiomatic, that is, it is difficult to guess their meaning from the individual words e.g. *come round* = regain consciousness. Thirdly, it can be difficult to remember the correct particle for the learner (get + up? in? for? to?). Most phrasal verbs usually have a more formal Latin based equivalent, but learners still need to understand them as they are a distinct feature of colloquial, spoken English.

The learner should be able to find these phrasal verbs in a good monolingual dictionary. But your oral explanation and examples should serve to clarify and consolidate these explanations. Many of the following definitions come from: <http://www.macmillandictionary.com/>

To pay off = to give someone all the money that you have borrowed from them; *to build up* = to increase; *to find out* = to discover; *to settle down* = to begin to live a quieter life by getting married or staying permanently in a place; *to turn down* = to refuse; *to look forward to* = to feel happy and excited about something that is going to happen; *to give up* = to stop doing something that you do regularly; *to run out of* = to use all of something and not have any more left; *to make up for* = to compensate for, to take the place of something that has been lost or damaged ; *to cheer up* = to make somebody happy.

2 These questions are designed to assist with memorising these phrasal verbs by personalising them.

3 The answers are: Across: 1: "carry on", Across: 3: "drop off", Across: 6: "fall out"; Down: 2: "read out", Down: 4: "put off", Down: 5: "eat out". Obviously, do not just tell your partner the answers, but instead offer clues to guide them to the correct answers.

4 If you can brainstorm possible contexts and think of more example sentences for these various phrasal verbs, then this should greatly assist your partner when they come to do this writing task.