



University Center
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E- Learning Center



English - level 2

-Lesson 5-

Phrasal verbs and modal verbs

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I- Phrasal Verbs

A phrasal verb is a special kind of verb that consists of two (or three) parts. The first part is always a verb. The next part is a word such as across, after, away, back, down, in, into, off, on, out, over, or up. In a phrasal verb, this second part is called a particle.

Examples	meaning
When I clean my sofa cushions, I sometimes come across lost coins.	find
Before an important exam, you should look over your notes.	review
Due to the bad weather, the coach called off the game.	canceled

Rule 1. A phrasal verb must have at least two parts: VERB + particle.

Rule 2. Phrasal verbs present a huge vocabulary challenge because most phrasal verbs are idioms. As such, the meaning of a phrasal verb as a unit is usually very different from the meanings of the individual verb and the particle: the meaning of come across is not equal to the meaning of come and across.

Rule 3. Like other common words, a phrasal verb can have more than one meaning: The airplane took off (to fly) is not the same as their business took off (to flourish) or I took off my shoes (to remove).

Types of phrasal verbs

Intransitive phrasal verbs

intransitive phrasal verbs have **no object**, and this means the verb and the particle are always together; they cannot be separated. For this reason, intransitive phrasal verbs are **inseparable**.

Example: I like to **get up** late.

Transitive phrasal verbs

Transitive phrasal verbs need **an object**, and they can be **separable** or **inseparable**.

Example: Can you **fill in** the required details so that we can move forward with the screening process.

Separable Phrasal Verbs

Separable phrasal verbs can be broken up (separated) by other words. You can insert other words into the middle of a separable phrasal verb.

Consider the following example, using the phrasal verb *take back*:

I need to take back the shirt I lent you. Correct

Where's that shirt I lent you? I need to take it back. Correct

Inseparable phrasal verbs

Inseparable phrasal verbs cannot be separated by other words.

Inseparable phrasal verbs can be transitive (i.e., they can take a direct object), but you can't insert that direct object into the middle of the phrasal verb. In other words, they can't be separated. Consider the following examples:

If you focus your education solely on one area, you'll have nothing to **fall back on** if you change your mind.

Each child should have at least one older child to **look up to**.

List of some phrasal verbs

1. **Ask for** – To request. Example: He asked for a cup of coffee.
2. **Back up** – To support. Example: She backed up her friend during the argument.
3. **Bring in** – To introduce. Example: They brought in a new manager to improve the team.
4. **Call back** – To return a call. Example: I'll call you back later.
5. **Call up** – To call someone. Example: I'll call him up to confirm the meeting.
6. **Carry on** – To continue. Example: Despite the challenges, he carried on with his project.
7. **Catch up** – To reach someone's level. Example: She worked hard to catch up with the rest of the team.
8. **Come up with** – To suggest, propose. Example: We need to come up with a new plan.
9. **Take after** – To resemble someone, usually a family member.
 1. She takes after her mother.
10. **Run into** – To meet someone unexpectedly.
 1. I ran into an old friend at the store.
11. **Look forward to** – To feel excited about something happening in the future.
 1. I'm really looking forward to the weekend.
12. **Get across** – To successfully communicate an idea or message.
 1. He had trouble getting his point across in the meeting.
13. **Call off** – To cancel something.
 1. The event was called off because of the rain.
14. **Bring up** – To mention or introduce a topic.
 1. She brought up an interesting point during the discussion.
15. **Come up with** – To think of or create something, like an idea or solution.
 1. He came up with a great plan for the project.
16. **Turn down** – To refuse or reject something.
 1. She turned down the job offer.
17. **Put off** – To delay or postpone something.
 1. We had to put off the meeting until next week.
18. **Pick up** – To gather or collect something, or to improve.
 1. I need to pick up my dry cleaning.
 2. His English has really picked up.

19. Look up to – To admire or respect someone.
 1. He has always looked up to his older brother.
20. **Set up** – To arrange or organize something.
 1. She set up the meeting for tomorrow.
21. **Give up** – To quit or stop doing something.
 1. Don't give up on your dreams.
22. **Hang out** – To spend time relaxing or socializing.
 1. I love hanging out with my friends on weekends.

II-Modal verbs

Modal verbs show possibility, intent, ability, or necessity. Common examples of modal verbs include can, should, and must. Because they're a type of auxiliary verb (helper verb), they're used alongside the infinitive form of the main verb of a sentence.

Consider the difference between these two examples:

- I swim every Tuesday.
- I can swim every Tuesday.

The first example is a simple factual statement. The speaker participates in a swimming activity every week on Tuesdays.

The second example uses the modal verb can. Notice how the meaning changes slightly. The speaker does not necessarily swim every Tuesday; they're saying that they are capable of swimming every Tuesday or that the possibility exists for them to swim every Tuesday. It's hypothetical.

Because modal verbs are auxiliary, they can't generally be used on their own. A modal verb can appear alone in a sentence only if the main verb is implied because it has previously been established.

- Can you swim every Tuesday?
- Yes, I can.

Modal verbs are quite common in English; you've seen them in action hundreds of times, even if you didn't know what they were called. Here are the most frequently used ones:

- Can/ may /might /could/ should /would/ will/ must

There are other, less common modal verbs. Some—like shall and ought—are rarely used . There are also verbs that can function either as main verbs or as modal auxiliaries depending on the

context: got, need, and have all behave like modal verbs in the common colloquial expressions got to, need to, and have to.

Some modal verbs express specific conditions that don't come up often like dare in its modal form in "Dare I ask?" The word used in the idiomatic phrase used to, as in "I used to be an English student too," behaves like a modal verb with only a past tense form.

When are English modal verbs used?

Modal verbs are used to show the following conditions: likelihood, possibility, ability, permission, request, suggestion/advice, command, obligation/necessity, and habit.

Likelihood

Some things seem likely to be true but can't be stated as definite facts. In these cases, you can use the modal verbs should and must to show probability without certainty.

- Her parents must be so proud.

Possibility

In a situation when something is possible but not certain, use the modal verb could, may, or might. This plan could work if everyone cooperates.

- She may become the youngest pro soccer player ever.

Ability

The modal verb can expresses whether the subject of a sentence is able to do something. Likewise, the negative form, cannot or can't, shows that the subject is unable to do something. She can speak three languages, but none of them well.

- You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink.

Permission

If you want to ask permission to do something, start your question with can, may, or could.

Traditionally, may is considered a more formal and polite usage for permission; if you ask, "Can I go to the bathroom?" it could be misinterpreted as "Do I have the ability to go to the bathroom?" However, in modern informal usage, may and can are both perfectly acceptable options for describing possibility or permission.

- Students, you may leave early today.

- Could I play too?

Request

Similarly, if you want to ask someone else to do something, start your question with will, would, can, or could.

- Would you get that box off the top shelf?
- Will you turn that music down?

Suggestion or advice

You can use the modal verb should if you're giving suggestions or advice without ordering someone around.

- You should try the lasagna.
- That guy should wear less cologne.
- **Command**

On the other hand, if you want to command someone, use the modal verbs must, have, or need. With the latter two, the main verb does not drop the word to from its infinitive form.

- You must wash your hands before cooking.
- You need to be here before 8:00.

Obligation or necessity

Modal verbs can express a necessary action, such as an obligation, duty, or requirement. Likewise, the negative forms express that an action is not necessary. Use the same modal verbs as with commands: must, have, and need.

- We have to wait for our boss to arrive before we open.
- You don't need to come if you don't want to.