

Phrasal Verbs Theory

A phrasal verb is a verb and a particle. The particle changes the meaning of the core verb. There are two important types of phrasal verbs in English.

INTRANSITIVE

These phrasal verbs do not need an object. They can be used in the imperative form as commands without any other words in the sentence.

I woke up at 10am
My car broke down.
Do you want to join in?

TRANSITIVE

These phrasal verbs need an object. Somebody must receive the phrasal verb action.

I count on my mum
I have brought up my children
I'll take off my shoes

There are two types of transitive verbs

SEPARABLE

If a transitive phrasal verb is separable, this means the object can separate the verb from the particle. These verbs are flexible and can be used in both ways.

Call off the picnic!
Call the picnic off!

I'll take off my shoes
I'll take my shoes off

INSEPARABLE

Sometimes, verbs and particles are inseparable, this means the object goes after the particle. These are actually called **prepositional verbs** instead of phrasal verbs.

I always count on my mum
Let's go over the exam together
I like listening to music

The sentence structure of separable phrasal verbs is very important when there is an object pronoun (me, you, him, her, it, us, them). If the object is a pronoun, you must separate the phrasal verb. I can say "**turn the TV off**" and "**turn off the TV**", but if I replace "TV" with a pronoun (it), the only correct sentence is "**turn it off**".