

3 Change in meaning

A phrasal verb usually has a different meaning from the verb on its own:

*While he was exercising, the gymnast **fell** and broke his leg.* (= dropped to the ground)

*The Canadians are **falling behind** now.* (= going more slowly than the others)

A lot of phrasal verbs combine with different adverbs/prepositions and have different meanings:

PHRASAL VERB		MEANING	EXAMPLE
give	in up	deliver stop	<i>You were supposed to give this essay in yesterday. Why don't you give up eating chocolate?</i>
make	out up up for	understand invent make better	<i>I couldn't make out what I had done to annoy her. When you're the boss you can make up your own rules. You'd better make up for forgetting my birthday!</i>
turn	down round up	reject change arrive	<i>They offered her the job but she turned it down. Can they turn the race round and win the gold medal? Steve turned up late as usual.</i>

Some phrasal verbs can have more than one meaning:

*You were supposed to **give** this essay **in** yesterday.* (+ object = deliver)

*I know I can't beat you at chess. I **give in**!* (no object = surrender)

If an object is very long, we put it after the adverb/preposition:

✓ *I couldn't **make out** what I had done to annoy her.*

✗ *I couldn't **make** what I had done to annoy her **out**.*

4 Phrasal verbs in informal English

Many phrasal verbs have the same meaning as another, more formal verb (e.g. *find out* (information) = discover, *take off* (your coat) = remove).

FORMALITY CHECK Phrasal verbs are more common in informal English.

INFORMAL

*I **took** the damaged CD **back** to the shop.*

*We can't **put up with** his behaviour.*

*Carrie **turned down** Sean's proposal.*

*They **left me out** of the hockey team this year!*

*I think I'm going to **cut down** my hours at work.* *The management intends to **reduce** working hours.*

*Can you **throw** these old things **away**?*

FORMAL

*Please **return** damaged goods within ten days.*

*Staff will not **tolerate** rude behaviour.*

*Tutors may **reject** unsuitable topics for essays.*

*Unfortunately, our agents **omitted** this information.*

*We ask visitors to **dispose** of their rubbish.*

5 Adverb/preposition meaning

The adverb/preposition sometimes helps us to work out the meaning of a phrasal verb: *stand up* / *get up* / *lift up* / *pick up* (movement in an upwards direction). But many of them have other meanings:

	MEANING	EXAMPLES
up	complete an amount/ a distance	<i>Come on, finish your dinner up; there's isn't much left. If we run fast enough, we'll be able to catch them up.</i>
	maintain sth	<i>The Danish boat is just keeping up with the Slovaks.</i>
down	reduce, movement downward	<i>The business was losing money so we decided to run it down. He fell down and hit his head. Note your answers down on a piece of paper.</i>
out	remove	<i>Can you take the rubbish out when you leave later?</i>
	do completely	<i>I think I've managed to work out the answer to this problem.</i>
off	stop connection	<i>Turn the TV off! I can't hear myself think.</i>
	depart	<i>We're setting off really early tomorrow morning.</i>