

# Phrasal Verbs for English Language Learners



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By

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## PREFACE

English as a global language has just about encompassed the whole world, resulting in the inevitable development of varieties called World Englishes. However in particular contexts, such as academia, the business world, and where it is used as a second language (in immigration settings and former English colonies), mastery of the language is what people strive for. This may involve knowing grammar, vocabulary, and having proficiency in written and spoken language.

I have had the privilege and pleasure of working with students from various countries and cultures, both in the States and overseas. Obviously, gaps in aspects of a second language are apparent.

Different instructors do point these out and endeavor to help second language learners rectify them as a means of adding refinement to the use of the language. One glaring gap I have encountered when working with English language learners (ELLs) is being able to use phrasal verbs, either correctly or not using them at all. Phrasal verbs resemble idiomatic expressions in that individual words do not carry meaning on their own. Teachers recognize the need to add grace and exactness to speech and writing, and the mastery of phrasal verbs is one aspect of the English language that can enhance language refinement. Phrasal verbs therefore need familiarity and practice and should be incorporated into regular teaching of grammar and vocabulary.

This book is designed to support teachers and students. It is a compilation of major English phrasal verbs, designed to draw the attention of ELLs and others to their existence, and encourage ELLs to use them in enhancing their use of the English language for the purpose of enriching their proficiency in the language.



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# PHRASAL VERBS INTRODUCTION

The English language is a messy thing indeed. The beginnings of English come from the original inhabitants of the British Isles who spoke a very young version of the early Germanic languages and lived nearly 2,000 years ago. Since then, English has adapted to foreign invasions, Latin influence, the lack of a standardized record-keeping system, and cultural differences among early English speakers through constant evolution, taking bits and pieces from many sources over thousands of years and arranging them in a continuously shifting pattern. One of the many results of this pattern is the emergence of English phrasal verbs.

While the exact definition of a phrasal verb has been the subject of lengthy academic debate, most discussions on the topic start with a common framework (Gardner and Davies 341). For the purposes of this workbook, we will understand "phrasal verb" to refer to an ordinary verb combined with a preposition or an adverbial particle that has at least one meaning which is unpredictable and different than what would be denoted by taking the literal meanings of the individual words separately and placing them together (The American Heritage Dictionary of Phrasal Verbs v). More simply stated, a phrasal verb is a grouping of at least two words (usually a verb and a particle) that, once grouped, has a different meaning than the words would have by themselves.

To give an example of a phrasal verb, imagine that you are a student in a biology class that just learned peanuts are officially classified as a fruit, and you want to share this with a friend. In order to do this, you might say to your friend:

"I found out peanuts are technically a fruit!"

Here, the words "found out" act as a phrasal verb. This can easily be explained by simply looking at the sentence and thinking about all the different ways it can be understood. For example, if "found" and "out" were interpreted literally, the sentence would have no real meaning at all. Consider the same sentence with greater focus on the two words in question where the brackets [ ] indicate grouping of words:

“I [found] [out] peanuts are technically a fruit!”

In this instance your friend might think of your sentence in this manner: “I” (the subject of the sentence) “found” (a verb meaning, in this case, “to physically discover”) a person or thing named “out.” This makes sense by itself, but then we have the rest of the sentence which declares “peanuts are technically a fruit!” This example can easily be seen as nonsense, since even if someone could find/discover something named “out,” it would be silly to also make a comment about peanuts in the same sentence, as the two ideas are unrelated and this will ultimately confuse your friend. There are also grammatical issues with this interpretation when looking at the written sentence; if “out” was the formal name of something (a proper noun) it would be capitalized as “Out.” Because it is not, we know this interpretation is incorrect.

Similarly, your friend could also think of the same sentence as:

“I found [out peanuts] are technically a fruit!”

In this example your friend could assume that “I” (the subject) found a thing called “out peanuts” (the object), which are logically the same as fruit. However, this is clearly ridiculous since “out peanuts” do not exist. Even if they did it would make no sense to say that the act of finding them can be labeled as “a fruit.” If that were the case, then any action described with a verb could be labeled by an unrelated noun, which does not make sense.

What does make sense, though, is the following interpretation:

“I [found out] peanuts are technically a fruit!”

Now the sentence becomes more intelligible. In this case, the grouping of “found” and “out” fits the part of the sentence where a verb should go, as if the sentence looked like this:

“I [verb] peanuts are technically a fruit!”

Since “I” (the subject) needs a verb to connect it to “peanuts” (the object), we know that anything that violates the grammatical rules of the sentence is incorrect English (like we saw with the previous two examples). With that, when you are telling your friend about biology class, you need a sentence with a verb that means “to discover or learn.” One way English speakers accomplish this task is with the phrasal verb “found out.” In other

words, the sentence

“I found out peanuts are technically a fruit!” is grammatically the same as the sentence

“I learned peanuts are technically a fruit!”

Considering all of this, students can hopefully see that phrasal verbs, after some practice, are nothing to be afraid of. They are not so different from the regular English verbs that we are accustomed to. The only difference is that, instead of one word acting as the verb, there are multiple.

The next step is to differentiate between the two most common types of phrasal verbs: *transitive* and *intransitive*.

Transitive phrasal verbs are used with a direct object (a word or part of a sentence that is affected by the action of a verb), and “are evenly spread across written and spoken registers,” meaning they are relatively common in regular conversation and written texts (Biber, Conrad, and Leech 129). Examples of this type of phrasal verb are presented below, with the phrasal verbs underlined:

We should give up this project.

I need to drop off the kids at school.

I need to set up the decorations before everyone arrives.

As we can see, all of these examples have the phrasal verb rely on another part of the sentence. Someone needs a project in the first place before they can stop working, or “give up” on it. In the same way, one needs kids in order to leave them somewhere, or do a “drop off.” Finally, if there are no decorations, then nobody has to arrange, or “set up” anything.

In contrast, intransitive phrasal verbs have no direct object (Carter and McCarthy 433). They refer to an action that is complete without relying on an object, as a transitive verb does. Examples might include:

Be patient and hang on one moment!

Come on, let’s just go already.

I am so sleepy. I need to wake up.

Here, we can see that these phrasal verbs indeed act differently than transitive phrasal verbs. In each example the sentence does not need a direct object to make sense, for “hang on” simply means to “wait,” “come on” calls for action like the word “hurry,” and “wake up” is interchangeable with “energize” or “vivify.”

With a little bit of practice we can begin to see that phrasal verbs are really no trouble at all.

However, in spite of this theoretical simplicity, phrasal verbs still present difficulties for English language learners (abbreviated ELLs). There are multiple reasons for this, one of which is the unpredictability that accompanies phrasal verbs (White 419). For instance, when does an ELL know when to apply a literal definition of a verb compared to grouping the verb with a particle to make it a phrasal verb? Going back to our very first example, what about “found” in particular makes it so that it can be grouped with “out” (or vice versa)? While the first few examples we looked at hopefully present one with a useful guideline when considering the grammatical structure of the sentence, not all cases will be so straightforward. In the same way that simple, everyday words in English can have multiple definitions and meanings, so can phrasal verbs (Consigny 2). While on the surface this may not seem to significantly impact ELLs, when one considers the fact that, on average, an ELL will encounter one phrasal verb for every 150 regular English words, the task of mastering the language becomes more integral to learning English, especially if the native language of a given ELL has no phrasal verbs to begin with (White 420).

The implications of these difficulties are obvious, as not only do they complicate the already challenging process of learning the English language, but it has been documented that ELLs will avoid phrasal verbs altogether out of the natural anxiety that comes with confusion and frustration, which ultimately slows the process of learning (Liao and Fukuya 194).

To address this problem, we created this workbook to assist ELLs in their journey to mastering the English language. Numerous studies indicate that one of the most efficient ways for ELLs to increase fluency with phrasal verbs is for students to be provided with “symbolic artifacts” that act as psychological and educational tools to help ensure phrasal verbs are easily remembered (White 422). In other words, having a contextual reference

point for phrasal verbs will help students learn them better, and with less anxiety. This workbook provides a reference point for ELLs by giving them real examples of how phrasal verbs are applied in normal, everyday English sentences, and then gives them a chance to practice what they have learned with training exercises. Not only will this give students a formal list of phrasal verbs, it will also give them needed experience that will help them remember the verbs more effectively, which is also important to language development and allowing English into one's own way of speaking (Gardner and Davies 354).

We organized this workbook in sections. We compiled and defined a list of phrasal verbs which are accompanied by example sentences illustrating correct usage in varying situations for each. We broke the list of verbs into sections. At the end of each section there is a series of exercises that allow for the student to practice using the verbs.

In an effort to maintain consistency we have grouped the shorter sections together. These sections are [H, I, J, K], [M, N, O], [Q, R], and [U, W, Z].

Finally, we designed this book for those already familiar with the basics of the English language. Having said that, students who are unfamiliar with the simpler vocabulary words, the basics for conjugating tense, or proper sentence construction should wait until they are communicating at a higher level before using this workbook.

The English language is complex and constantly evolving. We created this workbook with the hope that students can use it to become more comfortable with the many phrasal verbs of the English language, and also have increased ability to communicate with English speakers in general, whether it be in conversation with a complete stranger, dialogue with a coworker, or even simply explaining to a friend what they learned in biology class.

Enjoy!

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# USAGE DICTIONARY

## A

**abide by** to follow a rule or obey a law

There are rules that you must live by. If you cannot abide by them you will be punished. I'm afraid that you were not abiding by the speed limit. I'll have to issue you a citation. There's no talking during class. If you don't abide by that, you'll be asked to leave.

**account for** explain in a satisfactory way or give a reason for something  
Your budget must account for every dollar you spend.

You need to account for your whereabouts during the last twelve hours. Does your conclusion account for all of the data?

**act on** Also, **act upon** do something because of outside stimuli (new information or action) When a chance comes along, you must act on it.  
I have just gotten a tip I am going to act on.  
The police acted on a tip and they caught the criminal.

**act up** a person disobeys a rule, a machine ceases to function properly  
Why are you misbehaving? You should not act up like that. My car is starting to act up, so I might need a ride to the party. John was acting up in class, so he got a detention.

**act like** behave like another person or display those characteristics  
You are doing things that Jim would do. Why would you act like Jim?  
Stop that! You are acting like an idiot!  
Don't act like you didn't see this coming.

**add in** include something as a part of something else  
Once the soup begins to boil, add in some seasoning. Start adding in the cream as you whisk the sauce.  
Oh! You added in the salt too early!

**add on 1** join something to something else, such as cost or amount People are required to add on a sales tax to the cost of a car. Why did he add on all those extra charges?

He will be adding the new features to your existing package.

**2** make a building larger

You may want to add on an extra room to your house.

We will be adding on a new sunroom to our house next year. They added on a new wing to the hospital last year.

**add up 1** getting an expected amount when numbers are combined One plus one adds up to two.

Add up all of the numbers in this column and write the total at the bottom. I have just finished checking the business accounts and everything adds up.

**2** be clear and consistent

Something doesn't make sense. It does not add up.

His story does not match those of the other witnesses. It doesn't add up.

**3** combine two or more numbers

If you add up the numbers you will get the total.

See if the sales numbers for the year add up to the expected total.

Remember to add up your receipts to get reimbursed.

**add up to** equal a sum

All of these things combine to make the end result. They add up to the end result.

**addicted (to)** be incapable of stopping some behavior (usually a harmful behavior) I cannot stop eating oranges. I am afraid that I am addicted to oranges.

I am becoming addicted to cigarettes.

Jordan used to be addicted to heroin, but she stopped using it years ago.

**alight on/upon** land on something

If you jump out of the tree you will alight on/upon the ground. The bird alit upon the branch.

The acrobat swung off of the bar, and alit on the pad.

**alight from** disembark; step out of or off of a vehicle

This is the last stop for this train so everyone has to get off. Please alight from the train. After landing the passengers alit from the plane.

John will be alighting from the back of the car.

**allow for** think about possible problems and costs when planning

Sometimes there are emergencies you must be prepared for. Your plan should allow for this possibility.

Include a few extra hours in your travel plans to allow for delays.

Allow extra time for bathroom breaks when planning your road trip.

**amount to 1** when something is more or less equal to the something else

He didn't say the words "I love you," but it amounted to the same thing. What you just said amounts to a confession of guilt.

You can make as many excuses as you want, but it all amounts to an admission of guilt.

**2 equal** a total number

I have added up all of the numbers and it amounts to the sum. The sales numbers for the year amount to \$300,000.00.

Figure out what the cost of the deal will amount to before we proceed.

**answer back** respond without respect

Don't answer back, young man. Kids should not answer their parents back. He is such a polite boy. He never answers back.

Just listen to what I am saying and don't answer back.

**answer for 1** explain your actions and you may suffer the results

You have done things that you are responsible for. You have to answer for them. You will have to answer for your crimes when you go to court.

I do not know why the CEO is not being forced to answer for the embezzlement.

**2 state** that someone will act in a certain way or has a specific quality Will you vouch for him and answer for his honesty?

My former employer can answer for my work ethic.

Her professors can answer for her academic integrity.

**answer to** obey or report to someone

You are not my superior. I do not answer to you. I am my own boss. I

answer to no one.

An elected official answers to the people.

**apologize (to or for)** express regret to someone or for doing something I did the right thing and I will not apologize for it.

You should apologize to your wife for missing your anniversary. I have to apologize to you for my mistake.

**appeal to 1** be found attractive by a person Her personality appeals to me.

We added another character to appeal to a younger audience.

What appeals to me about this house is the location in the heart of the city.

**2** request a higher court revisit or change the findings of a lower court

The defense may have lost their case, but they will appeal to a higher court. The prisoner is appealing to the Supreme Court from jail.

**apply oneself** work on a project or towards a goal

You will have to apply yourself for the rest of the year to improve your grades. You will achieve success only by applying yourself.

She has made great strides this year by diligently applying herself to her work.

**approve of 1** believe that something is right or appropriate She does not approve of cheaters.

Do you approve of the way the media handled this story? I approve of strenuous examinations.

**2** agree to something officially

Congress approved an amendment to the Social Security Act. The board approved of your plan to take the company public. Will the president approve of this bill?

**ask for** also, **ask for it** continue in a course of action despite the likelihood of a negative outcome You are asking for trouble, behaving this way.

The way she speeds she is asking for a ticket.

He was asking for trouble, ignoring the rules like that.

**ask out** invite another person on a date

When are you going to ask out that girl you like? Simon just asked me

out!

Did you ask my daughter out on a date?

**avail oneself of** utilize a resource or take advantage of something He availed himself of the university's free legal counsel  
He will avail himself of the opportunities provided by the university.  
Please avail yourself of our collective experience to get through this troubling time.

## B

**back away** move backwards

If an angry dog approaches, you move in the opposite direction. You back away from it. The police officer ordered him to back away from the vehicle.

Please back away from the edge.

**back down** surrender or stop fighting

Two men were arguing; but when it when one man realized he was wrong, he stopped arguing. He backed down.

You know you are wrong. Why won't you just back down? She will not back down if she knows she is right.

**back off 1** stop defending an ideological or physical position

Originally he wanted full custody, but he backed off to shared custody.

This is an untenable position. We need to back off.

His argument is foolish, but he won't back off.

**2** move backwards or away from something or someone You are standing too close. Back off a little bit. Back off of the ledge slowly.  
Back off. I think that dog is going to attack.

**3** stop trying to make someone do something or do something in a certain way I know what I am doing, so just back off.  
She is the expert, not you, so back off okay?

**back onto** the back of it faces something

These houses back onto the alley that runs through the center of the block. My house backs onto a cemetery.

The airport backs onto an abandoned lot.

**back out** decide against something you promised to do or stop supporting something or someone I didn't realize how expensive this would be. I have to back out of the deal.

You have already signed the contract, so you cannot back out now. She got nervous and backed out of the marriage.

**back up 1** say that something is true or what someone is saying is true  
Can you back up your claims with any evidence?

I was there too, so I can back up his story.

She made some wild claims, but there was video to back her up.

**2** move a vehicle backwards

You have about four feet to go, so keep backing up. The road is clear, so you can back out of the driveway. You should back up into the parking place.

**3** move backwards

Can you back up a little bit? You are blocking my light. Do not back up too far or you will fall off the ledge.

She backed up to avoid the cyclist.

**4** make a separate copy of information in case the original is damaged or lost Make sure you back up all of the data onto an external drive.

Back up all of the photos from your phone onto the cloud. I found a back up of all the corporate records in my desk.

**5** traffic that is moving very slowly or not at all

The accident caused traffic to back up for miles. Traffic is backed up all the way to Canal Street.

Traffic was so backed up I was an hour late for my appointment.

**6** overload something so that it stops functioning The toilet is backed up again.

Someone left a hairball on the sink and backed up the drain. With all the rain, the sewers are all backed up.

**bandy about or bandy around** bring up people or information in conversation This is sensitive information, so do not bandy about it.

He was fired for bandying around company secrets at the pub. His name was bandied about in association with a scandal.

**be to** (is to/are to/were to etc) to describe what will or should happen or should have happened You are to be here promptly at 9:00 tomorrow morning.

The package was to be here today. I do not know what happened to it.  
I am to be married on Tuesday.

**bear down on** quickly move closer to someone or something

The storm was bearing down on us so we pulled into a covered parking lot. The police were bearing down on the suspect.

The other team is bearing down on our keeper.

**bear out** prove that something is true or correct The experiment bore out our hypothesis. Will the findings bear out your claims? Research will bear out my thesis.

*Note: **bear, stand, tolerate, put up with** -Use these words to talk about accepting or dealing with a bad situation.*

*Bear is more formal, and means that someone is being brave: The pain was almost too much to bear.*

*Stand is usually used in the phrase "can't stand": I can't stand this noise!*

*Tolerate and put up with mean the same thing, but tolerate is more formal:*

*Why do you put up with being treated so badly? I'm surprised she tolerates his behavior. Don't say "support" instead of any of these words.*

**bear with** ask somebody to be patient while you are finding information or complete what you are doing

If you will bear with me, I will let you know as soon as possible. I know this has been difficult, so thank you for bearing with me. She bore with me through the most trying parts of his illness.

**beat off** drive away someone trying to attack or hurt you The taxi driver beat off the crazy rider.

Good luck beating off an attacking bear with a whistle and pepper spray. He was unable to beat off the bear with his meager defenses.

**beat out** win in a competition with someone or something India beat out England in the soccer competition.

Our company will beat out the competition for this contract. Their team is constantly beating out the competition.

**beat up** strike or hit somebody repeatedly

Joshua tried to beat up his friend, but the friend ran away. The police are beating up the robber.

If she sees him tonight, she will beat him up.

**believe in 1** being sure that something exists

Do you believe in a snake that has many heads? I didn't know that Stephen believed in God.

I cannot help believing in Santa Claus.

**2** you approve of something because you think it is right Sandra believes in having a good education.

Not all world leaders believe in democracy.

Roger has never believed in leaving a gratuity. He is the worst.

**3** surety in the success of a particular person

I have never stopped believing in Patrick.

You can be successful if you believe in yourself.

If Daniel had just believed in himself, he might have won.

**belt out** *informal* sing a song loudly, explosively

The local performer likes to belt out local songs.

You will know Sally has had too much to drink when she starts belting out "Piano Man." Sally belted out "Piano Man" with wild abandon around 2:00am.

**blend in or blend in with** fitting in with other things, such as color, landscape, etc.

The fox blended in with the tall grass.

The new building blends into the landscape.

You will have a hard time blending in with that bright orange hair.

**blow away** *informal* to be overwhelmed or surprised by something

The judges were blown away by the perfect skating of the Thai skater.

My former student's success in the business world blew me away.

Susan's insights are continuously blowing me away.

**blow off** refuse to deal with it; ignore

The police are not going to blow off that strange break-in. I will not blow off my girlfriend's request.



**blow out 1** put out

Blow out the candle before you get to bed. The explosion blew out all the windows. The wind keeps blowing out our lanterns.

**2** explode (shatter outward)

The blast blew out the windows.

If you turn the volume all the way up there is a danger of blowing out the speakers. Rapid depressurization might blow out your eardrums.

**blow over** go away without much of a problem

The concern about babies crying at the park will blow over.

**blow up 1** fill with air

How many balloons can you blow up in the next hour? She blew up the air mattress for you.

I will blow up the raft for the children to play on.

**2** destroy with explosives or explosive force

The construction company blew up the old building.

I accidentally blew up the shed with this year's fireworks. Criminals used dynamite to blow up the bank vault.

**3** become angry very quickly

You should have seen her blow up when she found out she was being fired. Please do not blow up at me, but I crashed your car.

He was fired for blowing up at a client.

**board up** put wood over a door or window

Because of the bad weather, the people affected boarded up their windows.

I was told that it is best to board up doors and windows when there is a hurricane. The grocer is boarding up her store before the storm.

**bone up on** *informal* acquaint or reacquaint oneself with a subject of information in a short amount of time

I have a test tomorrow, so I will bone up tonight.

He spent a month boning up on his Spanish before his vacation to Mexico. She needs to bone up on her English verbs before the test.

**bounce around 1** moving from situation to situation or from job to job

John has been bouncing around working three jobs.

Lisa bounced around from job to job, never staying too long at any. It looks bad on you CV to bounce around from job to job too often.

**2** moving up and down violently against barriers or objects

All that stuff in the trunk of my car has been bouncing around.

Kevin drank too much coffee and bounced around like a maniac for two hours. If you give your children too much sugar they will bounce around all night.

**bounce back** to get back to normal

Maria bounced back after she lost her first tennis match. John did bounce back after experiencing a misfortune.

Willard is bouncing back quickly after the accident.

**bounce sth off** ask someone for their suggestions or opinions

Whenever I need to bounce off some ideas, I call my friend, Matthew.

My students like to bounce research paper topics off each other.

Alan was bouncing ideas off of his sister.

**box sb in** restricted to a particular place because of things or people around I feel boxed in.

There were so many animals at the fair that my poor horse felt boxed in. Between the river and the canyon the enemy troops were boxing us in.

**branch off** go to a different direction

Drive for ten miles and then branch off to the right when you see a red sign.

The discussion about weather did not last long. The people branched off and began a discussion on world peace.

**branch out** doing something different from what one does normally

The mathematics teacher branched out into directing the school choir.

Maria fixes hair but she also branches out into doing ladies' nails.

**break down 1** separate something into smaller sections; disaggregate

Let's break down the bill to see what everyone owes for dinner. We used chemicals to break down the adhesive.

What can we use to break down this molecule to its base elements?

**2** cease functioning or malfunction

I heard her car broke down, so she will be late to work today.

One of the machines broke down so the factory is way behind schedule. We need to replace this piece before the whole machine breaks down.

**3** disassemble, especially in a destructive way I broke down the door.

The invading army is trying to break down the perimeter walls. They used psychological warfare to break down the enemy.

**break in/into 1** enter a place by illicit or illegal means

Oh no! Someone broke into my apartment and stole my computer!

I lost my key so I had to break into my own house by smashing a window. The criminals broke into the police station to steal the evidence.

**2** wear a new item of clothing until it comfortably fits one's body

These new shoes are going to be uncomfortable until I break them in. It can take two or three days to break in a new pair of running shoes. I have no idea how long it takes to break in a cowboy hat.

**3** allow a new employee time to become used to their duties

We will have you work with Jonah until you are broken in.

**break off** end something abruptly

I hate to break off this conversation, but I have an appointment. He was so distracted he broke off midsentence.

I don't love you anymore. We have to break off the engagement.

**break up 1** cause to come apart or separate

The police came in and broke up the fight.

I broke up the company and sold off the pieces for a greater profit. I think the party is breaking up. Everyone is going home.

**2** stop dating someone or bring an end to a personal relationship

When I realized we had nothing in common I broke up with her.

She met someone else that she liked, so she broke up with her boyfriend. Douglas broke up with his girlfriend because he did not trust her.

**bring back** return something to where or who it was taken from

Be sure to bring back those library books before they are due. Did she bring back the tools that she borrowed?

The brought back the clothing when they realized it didn't fit.

**bring off** successfully complete something considered difficult or impossible I cannot believe you brought that off. I thought it would never work.

They only had two days to rehearse, but they brought off the play beautifully. It is a big project. Do you think you can bring it off?

**bring out** make something easier to notice through comparison with something else She always brings out the best in me.

That sweater really brings out the blue in your eyes. Roasting coffee beans really brings out the flavor.

**bring up 1** raise as a topic of conversation

Is anyone going to bring up the poor sales numbers?

I did not want to talk about that. Why did you bring it up? I heard you talking about Theresa. Who brought her up?

**2** raise as a child to adulthood

My grandparents brought me up after my parents died. You are so polite! Someone brought you up right.

She wants to bring up her children in a wholesome environment.

**brush up on** acquaint or reacquaint oneself with a subject of information in a short time I need to brush up on my Italian before we vacation there next month.

That is the wrong answer. Maybe you should brush up on the material. I have studied the material, but I should brush up before the exam.

**burn down** destroy something that stands upright with fire

Someone left a candle burning and the whole building burnt down. We are going to burn down the forest to plant crops.

Lightning hit the barn and it burned down.

**burn up 1** destroy something that does not stand upright with fire All of my old family photos burned up in the fire.

A prairie fire is burning up the countryside.

This carpet is ruined. We may as well burn it up with the rest of the

garbage.

**2 fill with rage**

It really burns me up to see your father treat you that way. John was really burned up after failing that exam.

When people do not do their homework it really burns her up.

**butt in** insert oneself rudely into a conversation or situation

Wait here for a moment. Do not butt in on their conversation. He is so rude to butt in where he is not wanted.

She is busy right now so do not butt in.

**butter up** compliment or be obsequious to someone in hopes of somehow benefiting He will have to butter up the boss if he wants that promotion.

She is immune to compliments so do not try to butter her up.

He tried to butter up the teacher, but he still had to make up the homework.

## C

**can't/couldn't help 1** indicate an inability to stop from doing a certain thing I can't help it if I think dead bodies are creepy.

She couldn't help laughing at him when he fell off his chair. It is a compulsion. I can't help picking my news.

**2 can't/couldn't help it** indicate a person does not think something is their fault I can't help it if you do not know how to do your job.

I couldn't help it. It was too tempting not too.

She couldn't help herself. She couldn't stop eating the cake.

**call off** cancel a scheduled event

Her birthday is tomorrow so we cannot call off the party now.

She had to call off the wedding when her fiancé had a car accident.

They are calling off the game because of the rain.

**call on** pick one person out of a classroom to answer a question

I hope the teacher does not call on me because I do not know the answer. She never raises her hand to be called on in class.

The teacher never called on him, but he knew all the answers.

**calm down** become less agitated or help someone else to become less agitated You need to calm down. You are upsetting the baby.

Can someone get her to calm down before we are asked to leave? Only his father can calm him down when he gets like this.

**care for 1** desire, enjoy, or approve of Would anyone care for a sandwich?

I am sorry to say I do not care for your friend. We did not care for the movie.

**2** look after or attend to

She moved home to help care for her aging father. He is not responsible enough to care for a pet.

We need to hire someone to care for the children while we are out tonight.

**catch on** develop an awareness of, or become comfortable with a situation or phenomenon She started the job this week, but she is catching on quickly.

I think I am starting to catch on.

If he does not start paying attention he will not be able to catch on.

**catch up (with)** be equal or level with someone or something after having been behind or lower Do not wait for me. I will catch up to you later.

Dan missed a week of school, so he will have to work hard to catch up. She just turned in her final paper so she is all caught up.

**check in (to)** officially record one's presence or arrival Can someone go to the hotel and check in?

Please check in at the front desk.

My plane lands at 9:00 so I should be checking into the hotel by 10:00.

**check off** indicate on a list which items or tasks have been obtained or completed

It feels so good to check that off of my to do list.

He checked each task off of his list as he completed it. She will check it off when she finishes.

**check out (of) 1** go through the process of leaving a place, usually a hotel or hospital I had such a good time at the hotel that I did not want to check out.

Checking out of the hotel is always such a hassle. What time are you