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6 Minute Grammar

Phrasal and prepositional verbs



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This is not a word-for-word transcript

Finn

Hello and welcome to 6 Minute Grammar. I'm Finn...

Catherine

And I'm Catherine. And today we're talking about phrasal verbs and prepositional verbs.

Finn

Yes, we'll explain what they are and how you use them...

Catherine

We'll have lots of examples and of course we'll finish with a quiz.

Finn

But first, let's listen to Mary. She's a lifestyle coach and she has some advice for us about friends and friendship.

Catherine

And listen out for the answer to this question: What do psychologists say that it is important to do?

INSERT

Mary

How often do you and your friends **get together**? In our busy lives today, it's easy to **let our friends down** by **putting off** social arrangements or even forgetting to **ring them up**. Yet our friends are the people who **stand by us** when we need support. So while it's great to **keep up with** people on social media, psychologists **point out** that it's really important to make time to **meet up** together too.

Finn

So that was Mary. And we asked: What do psychologists say that it is important to do?

Catherine

And the answer is: They say it's important for us and our friends to **meet up**. And I think they mean face to face. What do you think, Finn?

Finn

They do. Face-to-face meeting up is the best thing, they say. And there's our first phrasal verb – **meet up**.

Catherine

Yes, meet up. Now, a phrasal verb is a two-word verb made of a verb plus a little word like **in**, **on**, **out**, or **up**. We usually think of **in**, **on**, **out**, and **up** as prepositions, but in phrasal verbs they behave more like adverbs.

Finn

They do. In the phrasal verb **meet up**, the adverb **up** modifies the meaning of the verb **meet**. **Meet** and **meet up** are very similar in meaning. But the adverb sometimes does more than that. Listen to this clip.

INSERT

Mary

...psychologists **point out** that it's really important to make time to **meet up** together too.

Finn

Right, we heard the phrasal verb **point out** there, but it doesn't mean the same as the verb **point**. **Point out** means to say something interesting, or unusual or useful. And the adverb changes the meaning significantly.

Catherine

It does. Now listen out for more phrasal verbs in this clip.

INSERT

Mary

In our busy lives today, it's easy to **let** our friends **down** by **putting off** social arrangements or even forgetting to **ring** them **up**.

Finn

Now if we **let** our friends **down**, it means that we don't help or support them. And when we **put off** arrangements, we cancel or delay them. And if we **ring** people **up**, we phone them.

Catherine

And those are interesting phrasal verbs because when they have an object, we can put the object either between the verb and the adverb, or we can put it after the adverb.

Finn

Like this: we can **let our friends down** or we can **let down our friends**.

Catherine

You wouldn't let your friends down.

Finn

I'd never let my friends down, Catherine. Or my colleagues.

Catherine

And we can **put off arrangements** or **put arrangements off**.

Finn

We can. But be careful. If the object is a pronoun, you have to put it in the middle. For example, you have to say **ring them up**.

Catherine

Yeah. Don't say **ring up them**.

Finn

No, don't say that. Now, one more clip. Can you spot any more phrasal verbs?

INSERT

Mary

Yet our friends are the people who **stand by us** when we need support.

Catherine

Well, we just heard **stand by us**. And you are probably wondering why the pronoun is at the end of the verb because we just said that you can't put pronouns at the end. But **stand by** is a slightly different type of verb, because **by** isn't an adverb. It's a preposition.

Finn

That's right. In some two-word verbs, the second word such as **by**, **with**, **into**, or **on** behaves like a preposition, not an adverb. And in these verbs, the object or object pronoun always comes after the preposition.

Catherine

OK. So Mary said that it's great to **keep up with** people on social media. And **keep up with** means **keep in contact with**, and it's a phrasal verb made of three parts: a verb: **keep**, plus an adverb: **up**, plus a preposition: **with**.

Finn

That's right. And with phrasal verbs with three parts, the object always comes at the end. We **keep up with people**.

IDENT

6 Minute Grammar from the BBC.

Catherine

And it's time for a quiz! Number one. Is this sentence correct or wrong? She took her coat off, hung it up and sat down.

Finn

That's correct. Number two: correct or wrong? We keep with each other up by phone and email.

Catherine

And that one is wrong...

Finn

I know.

Catherine

...sounds horrible! The correct sentence is: We keep up with each other by phone and email. So, number three: I turned down the job because it was too far away. Now the question is: can you also say a) I turned down it. Or b) I turned it down?

Finn

Well, this time you can say b) I turned it down.

Catherine

You can. And very good if you got those right at home.

Finn

There's more about this at bbclearningenglish.com. So join us again soon for more 6 Minute Grammar.

Both

Bye!