

Micheal McCarthy & Felicity O'Dell. English Phrasal Verbs in Use Advanced. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

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- Where does the object come: before or after the particle in a verb + particle combination?
- When and how are phrasal nouns and adjectives used?
- What kind of words do phrasal verbs collocate with?
- Are phrasal verbs really typical of more informal English?
- How are the literal and metaphorical meanings of phrasal verbs connected?
- How are new phrasal verbs formed?
- What meanings do particles contribute to the meaning of the whole combination?
- What kind of meanings do the lexical verbs in phrasal verbs carry?
- How is it possible to learn phrasal verbs in topic-based exercises?

The new level of *English Phrasal Verbs in Use* written by Michael McCarthy & Felicity O'Dell gives you the answer to these and some other questions related to English phrasal verbs. This excellent book, including 1000 phrasal verbs, is a major new reference and practice book specifically designed for advanced level students wishing to improve their knowledge of this notoriously difficult area of the English language.

As all books of the popular *In Use* series are informed by the CANCODE corpus, a unique collection of five million words of naturally-occurring spoken English developed by *Cambridge University Press*, it is ensured that the phrasal verbs selected in the book are not only up-to-date but they are presented and practised in natural contexts as well.

As far as the arrangement of the material is concerned, the 60 two-page units are organised into different sections. The first nine units are concerned with some important aspects of phrasal verbs, such as the grammar of phrasal verbs, phrasal nouns, phrasal adjectives, collocation and phrasal verbs, register, meaning and metaphor, idioms using phrasal verbs and new phrasal verbs. The next section covering units 10-16 deals with some of the most important

particles used in forming phrasal verbs, for example *down*, *in*, *off*, *out* and *up*, etc.

Similarly to *English Phrasal Verbs in Use Intermediate*, the real merit of *English Phrasal Verbs in Use Advanced* is that a considerable part of it (units 17-31) is also devoted to phrasal verbs that are related to different concepts, such as time, cause and effect, change and memory, etc. as well as functions, such as supporting and opposing people or views, discussing problems, deciding and influencing, etc. These sections are followed by a large number of topic-based units (units 32-55) focusing on issues like nature, weather, places, transport, the news, technology, food and drink, etc.

The final section (units 56-60) looks at some of the most common verbs, such as *come*, *get*, *go*, *keep* and *take* which are used to form phrasal verbs. This section and the one practising particles justify the new approach to analysing phrasal verbs, according to which phrasal verbs are not an arbitrary combination of a verb and one or two particles, but the particles also contribute special meanings to the meaning of the whole combination.

The book ends, admirably, with a key to all the exercises and a useful *Mini dictionary*, which provides clear and easy-to-understand definitions of all the phrasal verbs that appear in the preceding units.

A wide range of interesting and enjoyable exercises provide exposure to phrasal verbs in a natural context, such as dialogues, e-mails, word puzzles, questionnaires, headlines, commentaries, encyclopaedia entries, horoscopes, private diaries, radio interviews, situations, short texts, pictures, charts and summaries, etc. These practice exercises contain, among others, error correction, answering questions, opposites and synonyms, completing and rewriting sentences with phrasal verbs, matching clauses, putting words in the correct order and explaining play on words, etc. As illustrated by the examples below, the latter type of exercise will enable learners to realize how playfully phrasal verbs are sometimes used by native speakers: 'The twins *doubled up* laughing.' or 'The carpenter *screwed his face up* as the job was very difficult.'

What makes phrasal verbs a much dreaded area of vocabulary learning is the fact that the meanings of phrasal verbs seem to have no connection with the words that they consist of. In fact, many phrasal verbs are metaphorical, and if learners understand the metaphors they use, it will be easier for them to understand and remember their meanings. Recognising this important feature of the semantics of phrasal verbs, the authors refer to the metaphorical meanings whenever it is possible. Consider the following 'weather' phrasal verbs used metaphorically: *breeze in* ~ 'walk in quickly and confidently', *storm out* ~ 'leave in an angry way' and *freeze up* ~ 'become so afraid that they can't do or say anything'.

The flexibility of phrasal verbs and their sensitivity to context account for the fact that new phrasal verbs are constantly being invented, especially in informal English and scientific and technical areas. As a result, the book also introduces such new combinations as *poodle around* ~ 'wander around in a

relaxed way', *phish for* ~ 'fraudulently obtain people's financial details through dishonest websites' or *sex down* ~ 'make something less exciting', etc.

As another unique feature, the book also includes some useful study tips (e.g. *If you notice a phrasal verb in a text, it may be useful to copy out the whole sentence. This can help you to be able to use it as well as understand it.*) and follow-up tasks (e.g. *Women's magazines are full of articles about relationships. Find an example of one. Make a note of any phrasal verbs you find in the article you choose and write them down.*) that help learners deepen their understanding of how phrasal verbs are used.

All through the book special attention is given to the differences in register in the usage of phrasal verbs. For example, *cotton on* ~ 'begin to understand' (informal), *bat sth around* ~ 'discuss different ways of dealing with an issue' (slightly informal) and *adhere to* ~ 'obey' (formal), etc.

As phrasal verbs are introduced and practised in natural contexts, the exercises provide some useful information about typical collocations of phrasal verbs, i.e. what typical words they combine with. Consider the following examples:

He *dug up* **some unpleasant facts**.

It was obvious she *was choking back* **her anger**.

Her voice *trailed off*.

Aimed primarily at advanced learners, the book also has reference to idioms using phrasal verbs, such as *throw the baby out with the bathwater*, *let off steam*, *put in a good word for me*, *dig your heels in* ~ 'refuse to do what others try to persuade you to do' or *wake up and smell the coffee* ~ 'be realistic' (informal), etc.

Reading the key features pointed out on the back cover of the book, one would expect to find certain error warnings to help students avoid making common mistakes. The only criticism of the book is that it contains only one single error warning: *We say 'I went into the garden and **picked** some flowers.'* *Don't say 'picked up some flowers'; **pick up** is used for things which are on or have fallen to the ground* (p. 36). I'm sure that there are some more difficult aspects of learning English phrasal verbs than the one mentioned above. All the same, they would be really useful to make learners aware of the areas of difficulties in the usage of phrasal verbs.

In spite of the above criticism, *English Phrasal Verbs in Use Advanced* is of an invaluable help to anyone who wants to take their knowledge of phrasal verbs to a more advanced level. Not only does it address the major problems associated with this colourful and complex area of the English language, but it also presents and practices phrasal verbs in typical contexts. I am convinced that it will be a welcome addition to the bookshelf of any learner and teacher of English.