

Phrasal Verbs! Attack' Em With Two Prongs!

I'm constantly being asked by learners "How can we learn phrasal verbs?" Actually, I'm not sure what they mean exactly by 'phrasal verbs', but after some questioning I realise they mean any verb with a preposition or adverb after it. What bewilders them is

- a) the meaning, especially when it's not literal e.g. *I took up tennis last year*
- b) which preposition or adverb to put after the verb e.g. *is it I came across/over/into/to/on some old letters the other day?*

There are of course other issues too (e.g. Can the parts be separated? What about different meanings of, say, *take up?*), but these seem to be the main problems.

Of course, the main answer to students' pleas for help is to expose them to as much English as possible:

- you and other fluent speakers speaking *naturally*;
- read, read, read magazines, newspapers, readers
- listen, listen, listen to tapes, videos, songs etc.

It is estimated that a learner needs to encounter a new item of vocabulary or grammar at least **seven** (yes, that's 7) times before they begin to internalise it. So your lessons aren't enough – unless you recycle constantly.

One way to *accelerate* the process of internalisation, and a way of *powering up* (don't worry, I've just coined it!) one of the seven encounters, is to adopt the following two-pronged approach:

Prong 1: Avoid teaching a phrasal verb in isolation; try to teach it as a word partnership, together with nouns that it often collocates with. So rather than teach *take up*, teach *take up yoga/Spanish*. Whenever possible, as well as providing a **co-text** (the words that typically come before/after the phrasal verb), help learners to encounter it in a **context** e.g. a story, anecdote, joke etc.

Prong 2: *Personalise* the verb. In other words, encourage learners to apply the verb to their own lives, experiences, beliefs, thoughts etc. In this way there is perhaps a chance that they will begin to 'own' the verb. Here I am using *own* in two senses: in the sense of ownership; and in the sense of applying it to their own lives (geddit?).

The following activity is an adaptation of one I found on www.onestopenglish.com, an excellent website. The instructions come after the two worksheets. If you try it out, and your learners find it useful, perhaps you can write your own Find Someone Who phrasal verb worksheets.

Do let me know how you get on – feedback welcome at alaninmalta@googlemail.com, my email address.

Good luck!

Alan

PHRASAL VERBS

WORKSHEET 1

Look at the phrasal verbs below. Each phrasal verb is followed by a word or words that commonly go together with it. Can you match the phrasal verb in the first list to the equivalent word in the second list?

List 1

1. **Get over** an illness, a broken heart
2. **Take after** a parent, grandparent
3. **Give up** smoking, drinking, trying
4. **Look into** a problem, a crime, a decision
5. **Get on well with** your family, your colleagues at work, your boss
6. **Bring up** a son, daughter, children
7. **Put off** a homework, a decision
8. **Put out** a cigarette, a fire
9. **Talk over** a problem, a decision
10. **Take up** a sport, hobby, interest, pastime
11. **Make up** a story, an excuse
12. **Bump into** an old friend

List 2

- a) _____ = make the fire stop
- b) _____ = feel well again after an illness or a disappointment
- c) _____ = be similar to your mum or dad or an uncle or aunt, or a grandparent in looks or character
- d) _____ = decide to do something at a later date or time, and not now
- e) _____ = discuss and consider
- f) _____ = meet by chance
- g) _____ = start doing a new regular activity, sport, hobby, habit etc
- h) _____ = stop doing a new regular activity, sport, hobby, habit etc
- i) _____ = investigate, examine (e.g. the details of a problem, a future decision)
- j) _____ = create in the imagination
- k) _____ = have a good relationship with
- l) _____ = give birth to and educate; help your children to grow

Find Someone Who ...

	<u>Name</u>
1	_____ gets over coughs and colds very quickly.
2	_____ takes after their Mum more than their Dad.
3	_____ has given up smoking sometime in the past.
4	_____ has looked into changing jobs/schools recently.
5	_____ gets on well with all their brothers and sisters.
6	_____ was brought up in the countryside.
7	_____ usually puts everything off to the last minute.
8	_____ has put out a fire.
9	_____ likes to talk things over before making a decision.
10	_____ has recently taken up a new sport or pastime.
11	_____ likes making up stories.
12	_____ has bumped into an old friend recently.

Adapted by Alan Marsh from an idea taken from the vocabulary section in www.onestopenglish.com

FIND SOMEONE WHO: PHRASAL VERBS

Procedure:

- 1 **Elicit/teach** the phrasal verbs by giving the meaning and collocations e.g. to recover from an illness, a broken heart. It's often useful to do this through a mini-situation e.g. *My sister was heartbroken when she and her boyfriend broke up after being together for three years. She cried and cried and was miserable for weeks. But recently she's been going out more often, smiling and joking. I don't think she has a broken heart any more. Do you know another way of saying this. She's _____ her broken heart. That's right: she's got over her broken heart.* If your learners don't know the word, tell them. Then establish other noun collocations e.g. *she's got over her illness / disappointment*
- 2 Learners consolidate by matching phrasal verbs with meaning (see Worksheet 1). You might want them to cover List 1, and then when they've done as much as they can of List 2, they can look at List 1 and complete List 2.
- 3 Distribute Worksheet 2 and explain the **Find Someone Who** activity. The learners must go around the class to find a person who fits one of the sentences. They do this by asking *have you ... / do you... / did you ... / were you...* etc. questions. When they find that person, they write their name in the space. Just to demonstrate, write the first two sentences on the board and elicit the questions:
Do you get over colds and coughs very quickly?
Do you take after your Mum more than your Dad?
- 4 Set up a time limit and tell everyone to stand up and start the activity.
- 5 Take feedback: what answers did the class find? Ask any interested follow-up questions.
- 6 Ask learners to write an original sentence in their notebooks about themselves using each of the phrasal verbs. They can do this in class, or for homework.

Good luck!

Alan Marsh