Phrasal Verbs

*A phrasal verb is a verb plus a small word (**up, out, off, on…**) that together make a new meaning: give + up = rendirse. They are everywhere in spoken English. Learn them by particle, then by verb.*

A2–C1 · with Spanish

By particle

up, down, out, off, on, in, away

sth / *sb* before the particle = you can put the object in the middle (*pick the eggs up*). After it = the object must come last (*look after the lambs*).

+ up — everyday actions

get **up**	*levantarse*
wake **up**	*despertarse*
stand **up**	*ponerse de pie*
grow **up**	*crecer, criarse*
give **up**	*rendirse; dejar de*
pick *sth* **up**	*recoger, coger*
look *sth* **up**	*buscar (en el diccionario)*
turn *sth* **up**	*subir (el volumen)*

+ up — make, finish, raise

set *sth* **up**	*montar, crear*
make *sth* **up**	*inventar(se)*
bring *sth* **up**	*sacar (un tema); criar*
take *sth* **up**	*empezar (una afición)*
end **up**	*acabar (en / por)*
fill *sth* **up**	*llenar*
use *sth* **up**	*gastar, agotar*
clean *sth* **up**	*limpiar, recoger*

+ down — less, lower, stop

sit **down**	*sentarse*
slow **down**	*ir más despacio*
calm **down**	*calmarse*
break **down**	*averiarse*
turn *sth* **down**	*rechazar; bajar*
cut *sth* **down**	*talar*
write *sth* **down**	*apuntar*
let *sb* **down**	*fallar a, decepcionar*

+ out — discover, solve

find **out**	*enterarse, averiguar*
work *sth* **out**	*resolver, calcular*
run **out**	*agotarse, acabarse*
go **out**	*salir*
eat **out**	*comer fuera*
carry *sth* **out**	*llevar a cabo*
point *sth* **out**	*señalar*
sort *sth* **out**	*arreglar, solucionar*

+ out — leave, appear

hand *sth* **out**	*repartir*
drop **out**	*abandonar (los estudios)*
stand **out**	*destacar*
check **out**	*dejar el hotel*
break **out**	*estallar*
set **out**	*ponerse en camino*
turn **out**	*resultar*
fall **out**	*pelearse, reñir*

+ off — leave, stop, remove

take **off**	*despegar*
take *sth* **off**	*quitarse (ropa)*
turn *sth* **off**	*apagar*
put *sth* **off**	*aplazar*
set **off**	*salir, partir*
get **off**	*bajarse (de)*
call *sth* **off**	*cancelar*
show **off**	*presumir, fardar*

+ on — start, continue, wear

turn *sth* **on**	*encender*
put *sth* **on**	*ponerse (ropa)*
get **on**	*subirse (a)*
carry **on**	*seguir*
go **on**	*continuar; pasar*
hold **on**	*esperar (un momento)*
try *sth* **on**	*probarse*
take *sth* **on**	*asumir; contratar*

+ in — enter, give

come **in**	*entrar, pasar*
get **in**	*entrar; subir (al coche)*
fill *sth* **in**	*rellenar*
give **in**	*ceder*
hand *sth* **in**	*entregar*
move **in**	*mudarse (a)*
check **in**	*facturar; registrarse*
drop **in**	*pasarse (por casa)*

+ away — leave, remove

go **away**	*irse, marcharse*
put *sth* **away**	*guardar*
throw *sth* **away**	*tirar (a la basura)*
give *sth* **away**	*regalar; revelar*
run **away**	*huir, escaparse*
get **away**	*escaparse*
take *sth* **away**	*quitar, llevarse*
pass **away**	*fallecer*

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More particles

back, over, through, round, and three-word verbs

sth / *sb* before the particle = you can put the object in the middle (*pick the eggs up*). After it = the object must come last (*look after the lambs*).

+ back

return

come **back**	*volver*
give *sth* **back**	*devolver*
call *sb* **back**	*devolver la llamada*
get *sth* **back**	*recuperar*
pay *sb* **back**	*devolver (dinero)*
look **back** on *sth*	*recordar*
cut **back** on *sth*	*recortar*
hold *sth* **back**	*contener*

+ over

control, review, fall

take **over** *sth*	*asumir el control (de)*
get **over** *sth*	*superar*
think *sth* **over**	*pensárselo*
turn *sth* **over**	*dar la vuelta a*
go **over** *sth*	*repasar*
hand *sth* **over**	*entregar*
fall **over**	*caerse*
look *sth* **over**	*revisar*

+ through

from start to end

go **through** *sth*	*pasar por; revisar*
get **through** *sth*	*superar; aprobar*
look **through** *sth*	*hojear*
fall **through**	*venirse abajo*
put *sb* **through**	*pasar con (al teléfono)*
see *sth* **through**	*llevar hasta el final*
read *sth* **through**	*leer de principio a fin*
break **through**	*abrirse paso*

+ round / around

turn, visit

look **around**	*mirar alrededor*
turn **round**	*darse la vuelta*
come **round**	*venir a casa; volver en sí*
show *sb* **round**	*enseñar (un sitio)*
go **round**	*alcanzar para todos*
hang **around**	*pasar el rato*
get **round** *sth*	*sortear, eludir*
walk **around**	*pasear*

+ after, for, into…

the object comes last

look **after** *sb*	*cuidar*
take **after** *sb*	*parecerse a (un pariente)*
look **for** *sth*	*buscar*
stand **for** *sth*	*significar*
care **for** *sb*	*cuidar de*
run **into** *sb*	*toparse con*
look **into** *sth*	*investigar*
come **across** *sth*	*dar con, encontrar*

+ by, along, ahead

manage, agree, go on

get **by**	*arreglárselas*
get **along** with *sb*	*llevarse bien con*
go **along** with *sth*	*estar de acuerdo con*
drop **by**	*pasarse*
pass **by**	*pasar por delante*
come **along**	*venir (con)*
go **ahead**	*adelante, seguir*
plan **ahead**	*planificar con antelación*

+ three words

never split them

look **forward to** *sth*	*tener ganas de*
get **on with** *sb*	*llevarse bien con*
put **up with** *sth*	*aguantar, soportar*
come **up with** *sth*	*idear, ocurrírsele*
run **out of** *sth*	*quedarse sin*
cut **down on** *sth*	*reducir*
look **up to** *sb*	*admirar*
get **away with** *sth*	*salir impune de*

+ on the farm

the farmer's year

round *sth* **up**	*juntar (el ganado)*
bring *sth* **in**	*recoger (la cosecha)*
turn *sth* **out**	*soltar (el ganado) al pasto*
muck *sth* **out**	*limpiar (la cuadra)*
dry *sth* **off**	*secar (una vaca)*
fatten *sth* **up**	*engordar, cebar*
plough *sth* **in**	*enterrar con el arado*
set *sth* **aside**	*dejar en barbecho*

get

one verb, many meanings

get **up**	*levantarse*
get **on**	*subirse; llevarse bien*
get **off**	*bajarse*
get **over** *sth*	*superar*
get **by**	*arreglárselas*
get **back**	*volver*
get **away**	*escaparse*
get **in**	*entrar; llegar*

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By verb

the same verb, a new particle, a new meaning

take

one verb, many meanings

take **off**	*despegar; quitarse*
take **up**	*empezar (una afición)*
take **after**	*parecerse a*
take **over**	*asumir el control*
take **in**	*asimilar; engañar*
take **on**	*contratar; asumir*
take **back**	*devolver; retirar (lo dicho)*
take **apart**	*desmontar*

put

one verb, many meanings

put **on**	*ponerse*
put **off**	*aplazar*
put **out**	*apagar (un fuego)*
put **up with**	*aguantar*
put **up**	*montar; alojar*
put **down**	*dejar, soltar*
put **away**	*guardar*
put **forward**	*proponer*

look

one verb, many meanings

look **after**	*cuidar*
look **for**	*buscar*
look **up**	*buscar (en el diccionario)*
look **into**	*investigar*
look **out**!	*¡cuidado!*
look **forward to**	*tener ganas de*
look **up to**	*admirar*
look **round**	*visitar, mirar*

go

one verb, many meanings

go **on**	*continuar; pasar*
go **off**	*sonar; estropearse*
go **out**	*salir; apagarse*
go **over**	*repasar*
go **through**	*pasar por*
go **back**	*volver*
go **up**	*subir*
go **down**	*bajar*

come

one verb, many meanings

come **across**	*encontrar por casualidad*
come **back**	*volver*
come **up with**	*idear*
come **in**	*entrar*
come **out**	*salir; publicarse*
come **round**	*venir a casa*
come **up**	*surgir*
come **from**	*ser de*

turn

one verb, many meanings

turn **on**	*encender*
turn **off**	*apagar*
turn **up**	*subir; aparecer*
turn **down**	*bajar; rechazar*
turn **into**	*convertirse en*
turn **out**	*resultar*
turn **round**	*darse la vuelta*
turn **over**	*dar la vuelta a*

Where does the object go?

- **Separable:** *pick the eggs up* or *pick up the eggs*.
- **A pronoun always goes in the middle:** *pick **them** up*, not ~~*pick up them*~~.
- **Inseparable:** *look after the lambs / look after **them***, not ~~*look them after*~~.
- **Three-word verbs** never split: *I can't put up with **it***.
- A dictionary shows the pattern: *pick sth up* or *look after sb*.

Spanish speakers, watch out

- Don't translate word by word: *give up* is *rendirse*, not "dar arriba".
- One particle, two meanings: *turn up* = subir **or** aparecer.
- In formal writing, a single verb often sounds better: *put off* → **postpone**, *find out* → **discover**, *look into* → **investigate**, *put up with* → **tolerate**.
- In speech, the phrasal verb is more natural: *Get in!*, not *Enter the car!*

Want more?

Sophia explains phrasal verbs in **Up, Off, and Away** (Philo & Sophia, Lesson 13).

See also Grammar Guides 16: **Dependent Prepositions**.

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