

Phrasal verb	Meaning	Example
look for	search/seek	He is looking for his keys
look up to	have a great deal of respect for a person	His father is his model. He is the person he looks up to.
look forward to	await eagerly/anticipate with pleasure	She is looking forward to visiting Paris.
look up	to try to find a piece of information by looking in a book or on a computer:	She didn't understand the word. So she looked it up in her dictionary

The meaning of phrasal verbs

Sometimes, it is difficult to understand the meaning of phrasal verbs. Before looking them up in a dictionary, it would be helpful to use the context to understand them.

Literal meaning

Some phrasal verbs have a literal meaning. They can be easily understood.

- She opened the door and *looked outside*.
- She was *walking across* the street when she heard the sound of an explosion.

Idiomatic meaning

Phrasal verbs can also have a figurative or idiomatic meaning which makes them difficult to understand.

- Can you *put me up* for tonight?
The phrasal verb '*put up*' here does not mean to build (as in *putting a fence up*). It has, however, an idiomatic/figurative meaning. It means to let someone stay in your house.

Separable or inseparable?

1. Sometimes, the preposition/adverb is placed either after the verb or after the object.

Examples:

- Mary ***made up*** a really entertaining story.
- Mary ***made*** the story ***up***.

2. If the object is a pronoun, however, the preposition/adverb has to be placed after the pronoun (object).

Examples:

- She ***made*** it ***up***.
- ***Put*** it ***down***.
- ***Take*** it ***off***.

3. Some phrasal verbs are always inseparable.

Example:

- I ***came across*** some old photos in a drawer.

NOT

- I ~~*came*~~ some old photos ~~*across*~~ in a drawer.