FCE Phrasal Verb Master List

What is a Phrasal Verb?

1. The Basic Formula

A phrasal verb consists of two (or sometimes three) parts:

Verb + Particle (Adverb or Preposition) = Phrasal Verb

- The Verb: This is the "action" word (*go, look, get, take*).
- The Particle: This is a short word that usually describes direction or state (*up, off, in, out, away*).

2. Literal vs. Figurative Meaning

You must **analyse** the difference between a verb used normally and a phrasal verb.

- **Literal Use:** "I **looked up** at the stars." (You are physically moving your eyes upwards).
- **Phrasal Verb:** "I **looked up** the word in the dictionary." (You are searching for information; no physical "upward" movement is required).

The meaning of a phrasal verb is **idiomatic**, meaning the whole phrase has a specific definition that has nothing to do with the original verb's dictionary entry.

3. The Four Main Types

To master these for the FCE, you need to categorise them into four functional groups:

Type 1: Intransitive - No object is needed. The verb stands alone. *"The plane **took off**."*

Type 2: Transitive Inseparable - Needs an object, but the verb and particle **can't** be split. *"I **look after** my brother."*

Type 3: Transitive Separable - Needs an object. The object can go after the phrase OR in the middle. *"I **turned off** the light" / "I **turned** the light **off**."*

Type 4: Three-part verbs - Always has two particles and is **never** separable. *"I **put up with** the noise."*

Tips

1. The "Sandwich" Rule (Pronoun Placement)

One of the most frequent traps in the FCE is word order with **separable** phrasal verbs.

- **The Rule:** If the object is a noun, you can put it after the particle or in the middle. However, if the object is a **pronoun** (*it, him, her, them, us*), it **must** go in the middle.
- *Correct:* "I turned **the light** off" or "I turned off **the light**."
- *Correct:* "I turned **it** off."
- *Incorrect:* "I turned off **it**."

2. Particles as Clues (Logic over Memory)

Instead of memorising meanings, look for the "logic" in the particle. While not 100% consistent, it helps with guessing in the **Open Cloze**.

- **UP** often implies completion or improvement: *clean up, drink up, polish up, cheer up*.
- **OFF** often implies separation or starting: *set off, take off, cut off, go off*.
- **DOWN** often implies reduction: *cut down, turn down, narrow down, slow down*.
- **OUT** often implies exclusion or completion: *leave out, rule out, work out, carry out*.

3. Avoid Literal Thinking

Many students fail because they try to translate phrasal verbs literally.

- **The Tip:** The meaning of the phrasal verb is usually entirely different from the base verb. "Look" is about sight, but "look after" is about care, and "look down on" is about arrogance. You must think of the phrasal verb as a **single unit of vocabulary**.

1. Relationships and Socialising

- **Ask after:** Enquire about someone's health.
- **Ask out:** Invite someone on a date.
- **Bring up:** Mention a topic or raise a child.
- **Call on:** Visit someone briefly.
- **Chat up:** Talk to someone because you find them attractive.
- **Come across:** Seem to have a certain quality or personality.
- **Fall out (with):** Argue and stop being friends.
- **Get along (with):** Have a good relationship.
- **Go out with:** Have a romantic relationship.
- **Look down on:** Feel superior to someone.
- **Look up to:** Admire and respect someone.
- **Make up:** Reconcile after a fight.
- **Pick on:** Treat someone unfairly or bully them.
- **Tell off:** Scold someone angrily.

2. Travel and Movement

- **Check in/out:** Register at or leave a hotel.
- **Drop off:** Take someone somewhere and leave them.
- **Get on/off:** Enter or leave a bus, train, or plane.
- **Hold up:** Delay someone (often in traffic).
- **Look around:** Explore a place.
- **Pull over:** Move a vehicle to the side of the road.
- **See off:** Say goodbye at a station or airport.
- **Set off:** Start a journey.
- **Stop over:** Stay somewhere briefly during a long trip.
- **Turn back:** Return the way you came.

3. Money and Finance

- **Buy up:** Purchase all of something available.
- **Fork out:** Pay for something reluctantly.

- **Get by:** Manage to survive with little money.
- **Pay back:** Return borrowed money.
- **Rip off:** Overcharge someone.
- **Run up:** Accumulate a large debt or bill.
- **Save up:** Collect money for a goal.
- **Splash out:** Spend a large amount on a luxury.

4. Work, Education, and Achievement

- **Brush up on:** Improve a skill you've forgotten.
- **Carry out:** Perform a task or research.
- **Catch up (with):** Reach the same level as others.
- **Drop out (of):** Leave a course before finishing.
- **Fill in (for):** Substitute for someone at work.
- **Get ahead:** Make progress in your career.
- **Hand in:** Submit homework or a resignation.
- **Keep up with:** Stay at the same speed/level as others.
- **Lay off:** Dismiss workers for economic reasons.
- **Step down:** Resign from a high-level position.
- **Take over:** Gain control of a company or situation.
- **Work out:** Calculate a result or solve a problem.

5. Health, Fitness, and Physical States

- **Black out / Pass out:** Lose consciousness.
- **Build up:** Increase strength or size.
- **Come down with:** Become ill with a minor sickness.
- **Come round:** Regain consciousness.
- **Fight off:** Resist an illness or infection.
- **Pull through:** Recover from a serious illness.
- **Warm up:** Prepare for physical exercise.
- **Wear off:** Gradually disappear (of a feeling or medicine).
- **Wear out:** Become exhausted or make something thin/unusable.

6. Communication and Speaking

- **Blurt out:** Say something suddenly without thinking.
- **Cut in:** Interrupt someone speaking.
- **Dry up:** Stop speaking because you've forgotten your words.
- **Get across:** Successfully communicate an idea.
- **Get through to:** Make someone understand you.
- **Let slip:** Accidentally reveal a secret.
- **Speak out:** Publicly state an opinion.
- **Speak up:** Speak more loudly.
- **Talk into / Talk out of:** Persuade someone to do (or not do) something.
- **Tell apart:** Recognise the difference between two things.

7. The Household and Daily Routine

- **Clear up / Tidy up:** Make a place neat.
- **Do up:** Renovate a house or fasten clothes.
- **Put away:** Store something in its proper place.
- **Set up:** Assemble or start a system/equipment.
- **Turn off / Turn on:** Start or stop a machine or light.
- **Zip up:** Fasten a garment with a zip.

The Master Alphabetical List (1–300 Phrases)

This list is organised from A to Z. Each entry includes a definition and a brief example.

1. **Abide by:** Follow a rule — *You must abide by the rules.*
2. **Account for:** Explain the reason for — *How do you account for this?*
3. **Add on:** Include in a total — *Tax is added on at the end.*
4. **Add up:** Make sense — *His story doesn't add up.*
5. **Advise against:** Suggest not doing — *I'd advise against it.*
6. **Agree with:** Have the same opinion — *I agree with your plan.*
7. **Allow for:** Include in a calculation — *Allow for extra time.*
8. **Answer back:** Reply rudely — *Don't answer your father back.*
9. **Appeal to:** Be attractive to — *The idea appeals to me.*
10. **Apply for:** Formally request — *She applied for the job.*
11. **Ask after:** Enquire about — *He asked after your health.*
12. **Ask out:** Invite on a date — *He finally asked her out.*
13. **Back down:** Stop defending an opinion — *He never backs down.*
14. **Back out (of):** Withdraw from a deal — *They backed out of the contract.*
15. **Back up:** Support; copy data — *I'll back you up in court.*
16. **Bank on:** Rely on — *Don't bank on the weather.*
17. **Bear with:** Be patient — *Please bear with me for a moment.*
18. **Believe in:** Have faith in — *I believe in your talent.*
19. **Black out:** Faint — *She blacked out from the heat.*
20. **Blow out:** Extinguish — *Blow out the candles.*
21. **Blow up:** Explode; lose temper — *The car blew up.*
22. **Blurt out:** Say suddenly — *She blurted out the secret.*
23. **Boil down to:** Be the main point — *It boils down to money.*
24. **Break down:** Stop functioning — *The car broke down.*
25. **Break in:** Enter by force — *Thieves tried to break in.*
26. **Break off:** End a relationship — *They broke off the engagement.*
27. **Break out:** Start suddenly — *War broke out in 1939.*
28. **Break through:** Pass a barrier — *They broke through the wall.*

29. **Break up:** End a relationship — *They broke up last week.*
30. **Bring about:** Cause to happen — *The law brought about change.*
31. **Bring back:** Return — *Bring back my book tomorrow.*
32. **Bring down:** Reduce — *They brought down the prices.*
33. **Bring forward:** Move to earlier — *The meeting was brought forward.*
34. **Bring off:** Succeed — *She brought off a difficult task.*
35. **Bring on:** Cause illness — *Cold weather brings on a cough.*
36. **Bring out:** Release — *They are bringing out a new album.*
37. **Bring round:** Persuade — *I'll bring him round to our side.*
38. **Bring together:** Join — *Music brings people together.*
39. **Bring up:** Mention; raise — *Don't bring up his ex-wife.*
40. **Brush up on:** Improve a skill — *I need to brush up on my French.*
41. **Build up:** Increase — *Build up your confidence.*
42. **Burn out:** Become exhausted — *He burned out from overwork.*
43. **Burst into:** Start suddenly — *She burst into tears.*
44. **Butt in:** Interrupt rudely — *Stop butting in!*
45. **Buy up:** Purchase all — *They bought up the local shops.*
46. **Call back:** Return a call — *I'll call you back later.*
47. **Call for:** Require; collect — *This situation calls for action.*
48. **Call in:** Ask for help — *They called in the police.*
49. **Call off:** Cancel — *The match was called off.*
50. **Call on:** Visit — *I'll call on you tomorrow.*
51. **Calm down:** Relax — *Calm down and tell me what happened.*
52. **Care for:** Look after; like — *She cares for her elderly father.*
53. **Carry away:** Get over-excited — *Don't get carried away.*
54. **Carry on:** Continue — *Carry on with your work.*
55. **Carry out:** Perform a task — *They carried out the research.*
56. **Catch on:** Become popular — *The trend is catching on.*
57. **Catch up (with):** Reach same level — *I need to catch up with class.*
58. **Chat up:** Talk to attract — *He was chatting her up.*

59. **Check in:** Register — *Check in at the desk.*
60. **Check out:** Leave; investigate — *Check out the new cafe.*
61. **Check over:** Examine carefully — *Check over your work.*
62. **Cheer up:** Become happier — *Cheer up, it's not that bad.*
63. **Clear up:** Tidy; improve — *The weather is clearing up.*
64. **Close down:** Stop business — *The shop closed down.*
65. **Come about:** Happen — *How did this situation come about?*
66. **Come across:** Find by chance — *I came across an old letter.*
67. **Come apart:** Break into pieces — *The book came apart.*
68. **Come down with:** Get sick — *I've come down with a cold.*
69. **Come into:** Inherit — *He came into a lot of money.*
70. **Come off:** Succeed — *The plan didn't come off.*
71. **Come out:** Be published — *When does the film come out?*
72. **Come round:** Visit; wake up — *Come round for coffee.*
73. **Come up with:** Think of — *She came up with an idea.*
74. **Cope with:** Deal with — *I can't cope with this stress.*
75. **Count in:** Include — *Count me in for the trip.*
76. **Count on:** Depend on — *I count on your support.*
77. **Crop up:** Appear suddenly — *A problem has cropped up.*
78. **Cut back on:** Reduce spending — *We must cut back on costs.*
79. **Cut down on:** Consume less — *Cut down on sugar.*
80. **Cut in:** Interrupt — *He cut in while I was speaking.*
81. **Cut off:** Disconnect — *They cut off the power.*
82. **Cut through:** Take shortcut — *Cut through the park.*
83. **Deal with:** Handle — *I'll deal with the problem.*
84. **Die down:** Become quiet — *The noise died down.*
85. **Dig into:** Reach in — *She dug into her handbag.*
86. **Do away with:** Abolish — *They did away with the fee.*
87. **Do over:** Do again — *You'll have to do it over.*
88. **Do up:** Fasten; renovate — *Do up your coat.*

89. **Do without:** Manage without — *We'll have to do without milk.*
90. **Draw up:** Prepare document — *They drew up a contract.*
91. **Dress up:** Wear formal clothes — *Let's dress up for the party.*
92. **Drive away:** Force to leave — *The noise drove them away.*
93. **Drop in (on):** Visit briefly — *Drop in on your way home.*
94. **Drop off:** Deliver; fall asleep — *I dropped off the parcel.*
95. **Drop out (of):** Leave early — *He dropped out of school.*
96. **Dry up:** Forget words — *I dried up on stage.*
97. **Ease off:** Become less — *The rain is easing off.*
98. **Eat out:** Dine at restaurant — *Let's eat out tonight.*
99. **Egg on:** Encourage risk — *Don't egg him on.*
100. **End up:** Eventually reach — *We ended up at a bar.*
101. **Face up to:** Accept reality — *Face up to the truth.*
102. **Fall apart:** Break; fail — *The chair fell apart.*
103. **Fall behind:** Fail to keep pace — *Don't fall behind in class.*
104. **Fall for:** Be tricked; love — *I fell for the scam.*
105. **Fall out (with):** Argue — *I fell out with my boss.*
106. **Fall through:** Fail to happen — *The deal fell through.*
107. **Feel up to:** Feel strong enough — *I don't feel up to it.*
108. **Fight off:** Resist illness — *I'm fighting off a cold.*
109. **Figure out:** Understand — *I figured out the solution.*
110. **Fill in (for):** Substitute — *Who is filling in for her?*
111. **Fill out:** Complete form — *Fill out the application.*
112. **Find out:** Discover — *I need to find out the time.*
113. **Focus on:** Concentrate — *Focus on your studies.*
114. **Follow up:** Take further action — *Follow up on the lead.*
115. **Fork out:** Pay reluctantly — *I forked out £50 for it.*
116. **Gear up:** Prepare — *Gear up for the race.*
117. **Get across:** Communicate — *I can't get my point across.*
118. **Get ahead:** Progress — *Work hard to get ahead.*

119. **Get along (with):** Have good relation — *We get along well.*
120. **Get away:** Escape; holiday — *I need to get away.*
121. **Get away with:** Avoid punishment — *He got away with it.*
122. **Get by:** Survive — *It's hard to get by.*
123. **Get down:** Depress — *The rain gets me down.*
124. **Get down to:** Start work — *Get down to business.*
125. **Get in/out:** Enter/leave car — *Get in the taxi.*
126. **Get on/off:** Enter/leave bus — *Get off at the next stop.*
127. **Get over:** Recover — *He got over the flu.*
128. **Get round to:** Find time — *I'll get round to it.*
129. **Get through:** Finish; pass — *I got through the exam.*
130. **Get through to:** Reach; make understand — *I can't get through.*
131. **Give away:** Reveal; give free — *Don't give it away.*
132. **Give back:** Return — *Give back my pen.*
133. **Give in:** Surrender — *The teacher gave in.*
134. **Give off:** Produce smell/heat — *It gives off a bad smell.*
135. **Give out:** Distribute; stop — *My legs gave out.*
136. **Give up:** Stop habit — *I gave up smoking.*
137. **Go ahead:** Start — *Go ahead with the plan.*
138. **Go along with:** Agree — *I'll go along with that.*
139. **Go for:** Choose; try — *Go for the gold medal.*
140. **Go off:** Spoil; alarm — *The alarm went off.*
141. **Go on:** Continue — *Go on with your story.*
142. **Go out with:** Date — *She's going out with him.*
143. **Go over:** Review — *Go over the notes.*
144. **Go through:** Experience — *He went through a lot.*
145. **Go through with:** Complete — *She went through with it.*
146. **Grow up:** Become adult — *He grew up in London.*
147. **Hand in:** Submit — *Hand in your homework.*
148. **Hand out:** Distribute — *Hand out the leaflets.*

149. **Hand over:** Give formally — *Hand over the keys*.
150. **Hang out:** Relax — *We hung out at the park*.
151. **Hang up:** End call — *Don't hang up on me*.
152. **Head for:** Move towards — *Head for the exit*.
153. **Hold back:** Restrain — *He held back his tears*.
154. **Hold on:** Wait — *Hold on a minute*.
155. **Hold up:** Delay; rob — *I was held up in traffic*.
156. **Join in:** Participate — *Join in the game*.
157. **Keep away:** Maintain distance — *Keep away from the edge*.
158. **Keep on:** Continue — *Keep on trying*.
159. **Keep up with:** Stay at same level — *Keep up with them*.
160. **Knock off:** Reduce price; stop work — *Knock off at 5pm*.
161. **Knock out:** Make unconscious — *He was knocked out*.
162. **Lay off:** Dismiss workers — *They laid off 50 staff*.
163. **Lead to:** Result in — *Stress leads to illness*.
164. **Leave behind:** Not take — *Don't leave me behind*.
165. **Leave out:** Not include — *Leave out the details*.
166. **Let down:** Disappoint — *Don't let me down*.
167. **Let in/out:** Allow entry/exit — *Let the cat in*.
168. **Let slip:** Reveal by accident — *She let the secret slip*.
169. **Live on:** Have money for basics — *They live on bread*.
170. **Live up to:** Match expectations — *He lived up to his name*.
171. **Look after:** Take care of — *Look after the baby*.
172. **Look around:** Explore — *Let's look around the shop*.
173. **Look back on:** Think of past — *Look back on your life*.
174. **Look down on:** Feel superior — *Don't look down on them*.
175. **Look for:** Search — *I'm looking for my keys*.
176. **Look forward to:** Anticipate — *I look forward to it*.
177. **Look into:** Investigate — *They are looking into it*.
178. **Look over:** Examine quickly — *Look over the contract*.

179. **Look up:** Search info — *Look up the word.*
180. **Look up to:** Admire — *I look up to my brother.*
181. **Make away with:** Steal — *They made away with the jewels.*
182. **Make for:** Move towards — *Make for the hills.*
183. **Make out:** See/hear clearly — *I can't make it out.*
184. **Make up:** Invent; reconcile — *Make up a story.*
185. **Make up for:** Compensate — *Make up for lost time.*
186. **Mess up:** Mistake; untidy — *I messed up the exam.*
187. **Mix up:** Confuse — *I mixed up the dates.*
188. **Move on:** Start new topic — *Let's move on to the next point.*
189. **Muddle through:** Manage — *We'll muddle through somehow.*
190. **Narrow down:** Reduce options — *Narrow down the list.*
191. **Nod off:** Fall asleep — *He nodded off in class.*
192. **Open up:** Talk feelings — *She finally opened up.*
193. **Own up:** Confess — *Own up to your mistake.*
194. **Pass away:** Die — *His cat passed away.*
195. **Pass for:** Be accepted as — *He could pass for 20.*
196. **Pass on:** Give to another — *Pass on the message.*
197. **Pass out:** Faint — *I almost passed out.*
198. **Pay back:** Return money — *I'll pay you back.*
199. **Pay off:** Settle debt; succeed — *The work paid off.*
200. **Pick on:** Bully — *Don't pick on me.*
201. **Pick out:** Choose — *Pick out a shirt.*
202. **Pick up:** Collect; learn — *I'll pick you up.*
203. **Point out:** Draw attention — *She pointed out the error.*
204. **Pull down:** Demolish — *They pulled down the old house.*
205. **Pull in/over:** Side of road — *Pull over here.*
206. **Pull through:** Recover — *She'll pull through.*
207. **Push for:** Demand — *They are pushing for change.*
208. **Put across:** Explain — *Put across your ideas.*

209. **Put away:** Store — *Put away your toys*.
210. **Put forward:** Suggest — *Put forward a proposal*.
211. **Put off:** Postpone — *Don't put it off*.
212. **Put on:** Dress; stage — *Put on your coat*.
213. **Put out:** Extinguish; annoy — *Put out the fire*.
214. **Put through:** Connect phone — *I'll put you through*.
215. **Put up with:** Tolerate — *I can't put up with it*.
216. **Read out:** Say aloud — *Read out the text*.
217. **Rely on:** Trust — *I rely on you*.
218. **Rip off:** Overcharge — *That shop is a rip-off*.
219. **Round off:** Finish — *Round off the evening*.
220. **Rule out:** Exclude — *Don't rule out the possibility*.
221. **Run away:** Leave secretly — *The boy ran away*.
222. **Run into:** Meet by chance — *I ran into her today*.
223. **Run out of:** Have none left — *We ran out of milk*.
224. **Run over:** Hit with car; review — *Run over the plan*.
225. **Run up:** Accumulate debt — *He ran up a big bill*.
226. **Save up:** Collect money — *Save up for a car*.
227. **See off:** Say goodbye — *See him off at the airport*.
228. **Sell out:** No stock left — *The tickets sold out*.
229. **Send back:** Return by post — *Send back the dress*.
230. **Set aside:** Save for purpose — *Set aside some time*.
231. **Set back:** Delay — *The rain set us back*.
232. **Set in:** Start and stay — *Winter has set in*.
233. **Set off:** Start journey — *We set off early*.
234. **Set out:** Start journey; display — *Set out the items*.
235. **Set up:** Start business — *Set up a website*.
236. **Settle down:** Stable life — *He finally settled down*.
237. **Shake off:** Get rid of — *I can't shake off this cold*.
238. **Shop around:** Compare prices — *Shop around for a deal*.

239. **Show off:** Impress — *Stop showing off!*
240. **Show up:** Arrive — *He didn't show up.*
241. **Shut down:** Close — *Shut down the computer.*
242. **Sit down:** Take seat — *Please sit down.*
243. **Slip up:** Mistake — *I slipped up today.*
244. **Sort out:** Organise — *Sort out your room.*
245. **Speak out:** State opinion — *Speak out for your rights.*
246. **Speak up:** Louder — *Please speak up.*
247. **Speed up:** Faster — *Speed up the process.*
248. **Splash out:** Spend much — *I splashed out on a watch.*
249. **Stand by:** Support — *I'll stand by you.*
250. **Stand for:** Represent; tolerate — *What does UK stand for?*
251. **Stand out:** Noticeable — *The house stands out.*
252. **Stand up for:** Defend — *Stand up for yourself.*
253. **Stay away:** Not go near — *Stay away from the fire.*
254. **Stay up:** No bed — *I stayed up late.*
255. **Step down:** Resign — *He stepped down as CEO.*
256. **Stick to:** Continue — *Stick to the plan.*
257. **Stop over:** Stay briefly — *Stop over in Paris.*
258. **Take after:** Resemble — *He takes after his dad.*
259. **Take apart:** Disassemble — *Take apart the engine.*
260. **Take away:** Remove — *Take away the plates.*
261. **Take back:** Retract; return — *Take back what you said.*
262. **Take down:** Write; remove — *Take down the notes.*
263. **Take in:** Deceive; understand — *Don't be taken in.*
264. **Take off:** Plane; success — *The plane took off.*
265. **Take on:** Accept job — *Take on a challenge.*
266. **Take out:** Remove; date — *Take out the rubbish.*
267. **Take over:** Gain control — *He took over the firm.*
268. **Take up:** Start hobby — *Take up tennis.*

269. **Talk into:** Persuade — *Talk him into coming.*
270. **Talk out of:** Persuade not to — *Talk her out of leaving.*
271. **Talk over:** Discuss — *Talk over the problem.*
272. **Tell apart:** Difference — *I can't tell them apart.*
273. **Tell off:** Scold — *The teacher told him off.*
274. **Think over:** Consider — *Think over the offer.*
275. **Think up:** Invent — *Think up a plan.*
276. **Throw away:** Discard — *Throw away the trash.*
277. **Tidy up:** Make neat — *Tidy up the room.*
278. **Try on:** Check fit — *Try on the shoes.*
279. **Try out:** Test — *Try out the new car.*
280. **Turn away:** Refuse entry — *They were turned away.*
281. **Turn back:** Return — *We had to turn back.*
282. **Turn down:** Reject; lower — *Turn down the music.*
283. **Turn into:** Become — *It turned into a disaster.*
284. **Turn off/on:** Machine — *Turn off the light.*
285. **Turn out:** Result — *It turned out well.*
286. **Turn up:** Arrive; louder — *He turned up late.*
287. **Use up:** Finish all — *I used up the milk.*
288. **Wait for:** Stay until — *Wait for me.*
289. **Walk out:** Protest leave — *They walked out.*
290. **Warm up:** Prepare exercise — *Warm up before running.*
291. **Watch out:** Be careful — *Watch out for the car!*
292. **Watch over:** Guard — *Watch over the children.*
293. **Wear off:** Disappear — *The pain wore off.*
294. **Wear out:** Tiring; broken — *I'm worn out.*
295. **Wipe out:** Destroy — *The village was wiped out.*
296. **Work out:** Solve; exercise — *Work out the answer.*
297. **Write down:** Record — *Write down my number.*
298. **Write up:** Final version — *Write up the report.*

299. **Zip up:** Fasten — *Zip up your jacket.*

300. **Zoom in:** Magnify — *Zoom in on the photo.*