

## Prepositions and Phrasal Verbs

Prepositions introduce prepositional phrases; in English, they provide information about time, place, tools, who's or what's together, ... It's hard to define prepositions because they are the leftovers of a case system that English no longer has, and all of the jobs that the lost noun cases used to have are now dumped into one big category of prepositions:

- The house is opposite the school ('opposite' is the preposition; 'opposite the school' is the phrase)
- The bike is in front of the house (phrasal preposition: 'in front of')
- They went to the store after the park (two prepositional phrases here, one for space and the other for time)
- She went to the concert with her best friend.
- The engineer fixed the microwave with duct tape. (Note the two different kinds of 'with'; can you think of more options?)

Many of the words that are often used as prepositions can also be used as parts of phrasal verbs. These are verbs that have two or more words that are part of the basic form of the verb, the infinitive form (to V), not auxiliaries and modals and all of the rest of the fun tricks that can be done with verbs, which make verb phrases: very important to recognize the difference between phrasal verbs and verb phrases.

The main differences between the particles that make phrasal verbs phrasal and the prepositions that introduce prepositional phrases are that particles don't introduce prepositional phrases and prepositions don't make phrasal verbs phrasal. 'Up' and 'down' are commonly used both ways.

<b>Phrasal verb</b>	<b>Prepositional Phrase</b>
Sit up straight.	Walk up the stairs.
He gave up a good job.	They walked up a mountain.
The crazy person was ordered to stand down.	The crazy person stood somewhere down there.
Sit down on the chair.	She set the baby on the chair.
She set the baby down on the chair. (Note that the particles can separate from the verbs.)	He found out that there would be no day off. (Note that there can be phrasal nouns!)
They're just standing in until the regulars get back.	They just standing in the freezer because it's a hot day.
The upholstery sticks out like a sore thumb.	I stuck out my sore thumb so that the doctor could examine it.

Hint 1: the particles of phrasal verbs don't mean what we might expect when they're prepositions. When one 'gives up', the 'up' doesn't have anything to do with verticality in a literal sense.

Hint 2: in some cases, the verbs and the phrasal verbs are used with different forms: sit up straight (phrasal) vs. sit on the bleachers (preposition): up vs. on.

Hint 3: phrasal verbs can be followed by prepositions, but be careful about the possibility of strings of prepositions introducing a prepositional phrase: They sat down on the bleachers ('sat down' is a phrasal verb; 'on the bleachers' is a prepositional phrase); The bird flew way up out behind the barn ('up out behind' is a complex preposition introducing the rest of the phrase, 'the barn').