

Phrasal Verbs: Explanation

A *phrasal verb* is a verb combined with a particle (a preposition or an adverb) that creates a new meaning.

They are extremely common in everyday English and appear often in exams such as CAE, IELTS, and PTE.

Phrasal verbs can be:

- **Literal** (easy to understand: *sit down*, *wake up*)
- **Idiomatic** (the meaning is different from the words: *break down*, *phase out*)

Understanding them helps with listening, reading, and paraphrasing tasks.

Common Phrasal Verbs

1. Break down

Meaning: stop working

Example: The car broke down on the motorway.

2. Scroll down

Meaning: move to the lower part of a webpage

Example: Scroll down to see the instructions.

3. Phase out

Meaning: gradually remove or eliminate

Example: Many companies are phasing out older systems.

4. Back up

Meaning: make a copy; save data

Example: Always back up your files.

5. Set up

Meaning: prepare or install something

Example: You should set up an antivirus program.

Grammar Notes

Separable vs. Inseparable Phrasal Verbs

Separable:

You can put the object in the middle.

- *I backed up my files.*
- *I backed my files up.*

Inseparable:

You cannot separate the verb from the particle.

- *Scroll down the page. (✓)*
- *Scroll the page down. (X)*

Tense Changes

The particle stays the same even when the verb changes tense:

- *breaks down, broke down, has broken down*
- *phase out, phased out, are phasing out*

Practice 1: Complete the Sentences

Write the correct phrasal verb.

1. My laptop stopped working yesterday. It completely _____.
2. The website isn't clear — you need to _____ to find the FAQ.
3. Many older machines will be _____ in the next few years.
4. You should always _____ your documents.
5. It's a good idea to _____ a security program.

Practice 2: Match the Phrasal Verb to the Meaning

- A. break down
- B. set up
- C. back up

D. scroll down

E. phase out

1. Move to the lower part of a page
2. Prepare or install something
3. Stop functioning
4. Gradually remove something
5. Make a copy of data

Practice 3: Rewrite the Sentence Using a Phrasal Verb

1. The company plans to remove the older version of the software.
→ The company plans to _____.
2. The phone stopped working last night.
→ The phone _____.
3. Don't forget to save a copy of your project.
→ Don't forget to _____.

Answers (Teacher Use)

(You can remove this section for the student version.)

Practice 1

1. broke down
2. scroll down
3. phased out
4. back up
5. set up

Practice 2

- 1–D
- 2–B
- 3–A
- 4–E
- 5–C

Practice 3

1. phase out the older version / plans to phase it out
2. broke down
3. back up your project

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