

SOME METHODS IN TEACHING PHRASAL VERBS

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Annotation: Teaching phrasal verbs is a difficult area. Many a study has proved that contextualization has an important positive effect on the ability of the students to decipher the correct meaning of a phrasal verb. In this article you will read some useful approaches to the presentation of phrasal verbs through context to improve the students' level of understanding. This article also suggests some other useful tips for teaching phrasal verbs.

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A phrasal verb is a combination of a verb and preposition that has a different meaning than the words individually. For example, "going out" has a different meaning than "going" and "out" do by themselves. Because of this, teaching phrasal verbs can be tricky for grammar or English teachers, especially those with ESL students. Start by introducing phrasal verbs slowly. Define their construction and give examples of phrasal verbs for your students to memorize. Then teach the students how to use context clues to pick out phrasal verbs for themselves. Test the class with a variety of activities to see how well they're learning the concept. Teach the construction of a phrasal verb. Start with the basic definition and construction of phrasal verbs so your students can get a baseline. A phrasal verb is a combination of 2 words, usually a verb and a preposition, that create a phrase with a different meaning. The entire phrase acts as the verb in the sentence. Remember that a verb is an action word like "ran" or "look." A preposition is a word that establishes a relationship between two parts of a sentence. For instance, in "She arrived after dinner," the preposition is "after." Review this concept with your students if you haven't already. Most often, a phrasal verb is a combination of a verb and a preposition. For example, in the sentence "I gave up when the game got too hard," the phrasal verb is "gave up." Teach your students to recognize these combinations. Identify when a verb and preposition combination is not a phrasal verb. Not all verb and preposition combinations are phrasal verbs. For a phrase to be a phrasal verb, it must have an entirely new meaning from the 2 words separately. Have your students test word combinations to see if they are phrasal verbs. If the phrase has a different meaning than the 2 words individually, then it is a phrasal verb. For example, in "I went out of the room," "went out" is just a verb and preposition that literally means that you exited the room. However, in "I went out with him," "went out" means that you went on a date. This is a phrasal verb because "went out" doesn't literally mean you exited a place. Explain the difference between separable and inseparable phrasal verbs. Some phrasal verbs can have a direct object in between their verb and prepositions. This means they are separable. Inseparable phrasal verbs must stay together or they won't make sense. The only way to tell if one is separable or inseparable is by trying the sentence both ways and seeing if they both make sense. For example, "I called John out for being rude" and "I called out John for being rude" both work grammatically. This means that the phrasal verb "called out" is separable. However, "I went through my closet" works, while "I went my closet through" does not. This means that the phrasal verb "went through" is inseparable, because sentences don't make sense with the phrase broken up. Introduce a small list of phrasal verbs every day. Don't overwhelm your students with long lists of words that they have to memorize. When you start teaching phrasal verbs, introduce them slowly. Try starting each class with a list of 5-10 phrasal verbs and reviewing their meanings. This way, the students gradually build up a list of phrasal verbs without getting overwhelmed. Always explain why these phrases are phrasal verbs as well. If you teach them how phrasal verbs are used and constructed, then they can recognize them later on. Organize phrasal verbs into categories. Since there are so many phrasal verbs, grouping similar ones together can help students learn better. People learn better with patterns than with random selections. Picking out groups of phrasal verbs that begin with the same word, for example, is a good

way to organize the phrases. Build a list of phrasal verbs that start with the same word. "Call" is one choice. Then take students through the different meanings of "call out," "call in," "call up," and all the other possible combinations. Teach students how to figure out verbs using context clues. There are over 2,000 phrasal verbs in English, so it's not possible for them to memorize each one. Rather than having students memorize lists of words, teach them how to identify phrasal verbs from sentence context clues. Show them a sentence and circle the phrasal verb. Ask them to give you a definition of the verb based on its use in the sentence. Help the students along by asking questions, but let them figure out the definition. This helps them learn better. Remember that the main sign that something is a phrasal verb is when the phrase has a different meaning than the 2 words by themselves. Have students break down verb and preposition combinations to see if each word works by itself, or if it has to be a single phrase to make sense.

"Wear out," for example, means to make something old or unusable. This is a much different meaning than "wear" and "out" by themselves. However, in "Go up the stairs," the verb "go" and the preposition "up" work individually, and don't need to be a phrase to make sense. Drill your students on recognizing these distinctions. Try having students then use that phrasal verb in a different sentence. This further trains them in proper usage for the verbs. Have your students to look up phrasal verbs in the dictionary. If students are confused or lost and can't figure out if a word is a phrasal verb, they can look it up in the dictionary. Phrasal verbs come after the singular verb in the dictionary. Let them use dictionaries when they're first learning phrasal verbs to help them if they get stuck.

If a student isn't sure if "give up" is a phrasal verb, they can look it up in the dictionary. It appears after "give" and is officially labeled as a phrasal verb.

Students can use paper or online dictionaries. Online dictionaries may be more up to date than paper dictionaries, unless they're new.

Teaching and learning phrasal verbs

A syllabus or list of phrasal verbs is not enough. We need interesting and engaging ways of presenting and practising them, and this means presentation and practice in typical, meaningful contexts. We also need to help learners understand the basic grammar of phrasal verbs, even though phrasal verbs are normally thought of as part of the vocabulary lesson. In this example from English Phrasal Verbs in Use (Intermediate level), students are presented with phrasal verbs they will probably hear the teacher use frequently in class, along with an explanation of their meanings. As with all aspects of vocabulary learning, we can never teach enough items, so, along with learning new phrasal verbs, it is important to train learners in an awareness of what phrasal verbs are and how they operate in context. In that way, we help to create learners for life.

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