

An Introduction the World of Phrasal Verbs

Hello!

In today's lesson, we'll learn a bit more about **phrasal verbs**. They are verbal structures which are very common in *colloquial* (= spoken English). Mastering phrasal verbs is very important if you're studying English, because they can help you understand spoken/written English better, as well as express your own ideas in a way that is closer to the "genuine" language spoken by English speaking citizens.

The Lexico.com (Oxford online Dictionary) defines phrasal verbs as:

*An **idiomatic phrase** consisting of a **verb and another element**, typically either an adverb, as in "break **down**", or a preposition, for example "see **to**", or a combination of both, such as "look **down on**".*

https://www.lexico.com/definition/phrasal_verb

In this definition, the expression **idiomatic phrase** means: *an expression frequently used by citizens who have English as their mother tongue (= natural language)*. Also:

* **break down** (machines *break down* = *estragam, quebram, param de funcionar*);

* **see to** (= *tratar, no sentido de cuidar de alguma coisa, para que funcione, ou seja feita*);

* **look down on somebody** (= *menosprezar, desprezar*)

If you've been studying English for some time, you have already become familiar with expressions such as "go up", "get down", "go in", "take off" - English is literally full of them.

A crucial, yet complicated aspect in the study of phrasal verbs is the fact that they can have a **literal** meaning ("go up" literally means "subir, ascender" in Portuguese), or a **non-literal** meaning ("blow up" literally means "~~soprar/estourar para cima~~", while in idiomatic English, it means "to explode", or to "reprimand (= repreender, admoestar) someone severely". In this case (blow up / blow somebody up), the particle (the adverb "up") does not imply the idea of "going up", but rather the idea of "entirely, completely" (The car blew up = all of it exploded).

It may sound complicated, but it's not so hard. **The secret is to choose one or two phrasal verbs with which to start, and to try to memorise them.**

For this purpose, we'll study the different meanings of a single phrasal verb today: "work out".

Contrary to what may seem, "work out" **does not** mean "~~trabalhar fora~~" in Portuguese (it is not literal). Rather, its core meaning (= sentido principal) seems to be related to the idea of "solving a mathematical problem, or solving a personal problem / a difficult situation". There **is a very important exception**, however: I'll **work out** today means "I will **EXERCISE** today"), in colloquial English.

A single phrasal verb may have **several different meanings** (sometimes, **really** different from each other!!), depending on the context in which they are used, or whether they have a grammatical

object or not (work **something** out / **something** works out).

Another secret to learn phrasal verbs more effectively is to repeat them as often as you can, **as an actor would do to learn their part** (= aprender seu papel) **in a play or a movie**. Since repetition and reading aloud, though effective, are not particularly appreciated by most students, **a good way to work this out** (= solve this problem) **is to find phrasal verbs in songs, learn the lyrics & sing along**. This is how we'll approach our phrasal verb "work out".

First, study the following definitions of **8 different meanings of "work out"** (according to the Lexico.com). Then, read and listen to the lyrics of a very famous song by the Beatles, 'We Can Work it Out' (don't forget to sing along, and invite your friends & family to join in!).

Finally, think about these questions:

1. **Which of the 8 meanings of "work out" applies to the context of the story told in the song?**
2. **Can you find other phrasal verbs in the song? What do they mean in this particular context?**

And above all, have fun with this beautiful song!

Cheers,

Rodrigo

SAMPLE SENTENCES WITH THE PHRASAL VERB "WORK OUT" (all extracted from www.lexico.com) **WITH A TRANSLATION** (provided by Rodrigo Garcia Garay):

* to work something out (with object = something)

⇒ 1. Solve a sum or determine an amount by calculation.

*'she **worked out** sums on her way to school'*

*'Precise mathematical calculations are **worked out** and this determines how a person's life is affected.'*

TRADUÇÃO: resolver/solucionar um cálculo/problema matemático.

⇒ 1.2 Find the answer to something.

*'I couldn't **work out** whether it was a band playing or a record'*

*'They will demonstrate how the culinary magic of Mangalore could be **worked out** with three ingredients that create the characteristic taste of Mangalore - fish, rice and coconut.'*

TRADUÇÃO: compreender/entender (= sacar, in colloquial Portuguese)

⇒ 2. Plan something in detail.

'I have a very scientific approach to cooking, and I have a lot of ideas about what flavours would work together, but they often remain hypothetical, and I usually spend half an hour **working my dishes out** on paper before preparing them

TRADUÇÃO: planejar (algo) detalhadamente.

⇒ 3. Work a mine until it is exhausted of minerals.

'Cornish production supplied most of the needs of Britain and Europe until the mid-19th cent. when **many mines were worked out.**'

'This became Europe's most important source of gold until the deposits were **worked out** by the 1760s.'

TRADUÇÃO: extrair os recursos de uma mina até a exaustão (= exaurir os recursos minerais).

* to work out (no object = ~~NO SOMETHING~~)

⇒ 4. (of an equation) be capable of being solved.

'The way things worked was easy... I can show you how an **algebra equation works out** on paper.'

TRADUÇÃO: como se resolve/funciona um cálculo ou equação.

⇒ **5. work out at**

Be calculated at.

*'the losses **work out** at \$2.94 a share'*

TRADUÇÃO: *ter uma estimativa, estimar o valor.*

⇒ **6. Have a good or specified result.**

*'things don't always **work out** that way'*

*'But we've been in bad situations before, and everything **has always worked out.**'*

TRADUÇÃO: *funcionar /dar certo/resolver um problema ou complicação.*

⇒ **8. Engage in vigorous physical exercise.**

*'they regularly walked, danced, ran and **worked out** at the gym'*

TRADUÇÃO: *exercitar-se, fazer musculação (= malhar, in colloquial Portuguese)*



We Can Work It Out - The Beatles

Try to see it my way,
Do I have to **keep on** talking till I can't **go on**?
While you see it your way,
Run the risk of knowing that our love may soon be gone.
We can **work it out**,
We can work it out.

Think of what you're saying.
You can get it wrong and still you think that it's alright.
Thinkk of what I'm saying,
We can work it out and get it straight, or say good night.
We can work it out,
We can work it out.

Life is very short, and there's no time
For fussing and fighting, my friend.
I have always thought that it's a crime,
So I will ask you once again.

Try to see it my way,
Only time will tell if I am right or I am wrong.
While you see it your way
There's a chance that we may **fall apart** before too long.

We can work it out,
We can work it out.

Life is very short, and there's no time
For fussing and fighting, my friend.
I havealways thought that it's a crime,
So I will ask you once again.

YOUTUBE LINK:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IgRrWPdzkao>