

**Michael Rundell. Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus.
Oxford: Bloombury Publishing Plc. 2005.**

Éva Kovács

Phrasal verbs are a colourful and challenging aspect of the English language, and familiarity with a wide range of these verb-particle combinations and the ability to use them appropriately are among the distinguishing marks of a native like command of English. Thus a good dictionary of phrasal verbs is an indispensable source for ELT learners.

Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus is not just another dictionary on the market of ELT publications but it has unique features in comparison to other dictionaries devoted to phrasal verbs from the major ELT publishers, Oxford, Longman, Cambridge and Harper Collins Publishers. The examples of phrasal verbs in the dictionary are based on up-to-date information derived from 200 million words of English which make up the World English Corpus. Consequently, it reflects English as it is used today.

Besides phrasal verbs used in general English, it also includes coverage of the ones which occur in business (**bank with** ~ have a bank account with a particular bank, **bottom out** ~ reach its lowest and worst level before starting to improve or rise again (prices, economy), **bounce back** ~ improve or rise again after being at a low level, **credit to** ~ add an amount of money to a bank account), Internet (**be/get bumped off** ~ can no longer use the Internet because the connection with your computer is suddenly broken, **dial up** ~ get connected to the Internet on your computer by using a modem or a telephone line) and computing context (**back up** ~ make a copy of information on your computer, **boot up** ~ start working and is ready to use, **close down** ~ a computer program stops operating and disappears from the screen, **copy to** ~ send a copy of an e-mail to someone, **hack into** ~ use a computer in order to connect to someone else's computer secretly and often illegally, **load up** ~ put information or a program into a computer, **log on/off** ~ start/stop using a computer system).

This excellent dictionary deals with all the factors that make phrasal verbs seem difficult. First of all, it explains their meanings using uncomplicated language to make it easy to understand. As a unique feature,

polysemous phrasal verbs in this dictionary have a 'menu' at the top to make it easier to find the particular meaning we are looking for.

Furthermore, it gives an easy-to-use description of their syntactic properties with special attention to the place of the object, for example *see through sth* ~ recognize that something is not true, *see sth through* ~ continue doing something until it is finished, *see sy through sth* ~ make it possible for someone to continue to the end of something.

Like other dictionaries, it also gives guidance on register – the types of context they seem to be most natural and appropriate –, for example informal (*haul in* ~ earn a lot of money, *knock back* ~ drink alcohol quickly or in large amounts), formal (*allude to* ~ mention someone or something in an indirect way, *extricate from* ~ get someone out of a difficult or unpleasant situation or impolite (*piss about* ~ behave in a silly way that annoys other people, *eff off* ~ go away) or very offensive (*fuck up* ~ spoil or damage something completely).

There is also reference to the peculiarities of usage in the National Standards of English, such as British English (*cash up* ~ count and check all the money that a shop has received on a day, *fit up* ~ equip), British informal (*bodge up* ~ do sth badly, *hot up* ~ become more lively or exciting), American (*buck for* ~ try hard to get sth, especially in your job, *lay over* ~ stop somewhere for a short time during a journey), American informal (*futz around* ~ spend time doing silly or unimportant things, *plunk down* ~ pay a particular amount of money for sth, especially when it is expensive).

In addition, hundreds of synonyms (*give in* = *hand in*, *elbow out* = *ease out*) and antonyms (*team up* ≠ *split up*, *warm up* ≠ *cool down*), coverage of related words, i.e. nouns (*follow-through*, *mix-up*, *output*) and adjectives (*knockdown prices*, *broken down machinery*, *outgoing mail*) derived from phrasal verbs, lists of collocations (*die down* ■ *applause*, *commotion*, *excitement*, *fighting*, *fuss*, *laughter*, *noise*, *protest*) and reference to phrasal verbs used in idioms and other fixed expressions (*keep up appearances*, *start off on the wrong foot*) help to build students vocabulary and to speak and write more naturally.

As the word *Plus* in the title suggests, this dictionary has a wealth of additional features. One of its merits is its 26 page long Language Study section, which covers all the important aspects of phrasal verbs, namely the syntactic behaviour of phrasal verbs, metaphor and phrasal verbs, phrasal verbs and other 'phrasal' vocabulary, register and phrasal verbs, learners and phrasal verbs, pronunciation and phrasal verbs and 'new' phrasal verbs.

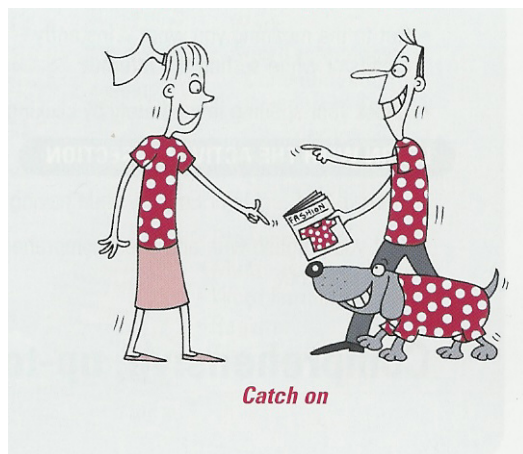
The most exciting among them is the section on metaphors which can be of great help for learners to understand and remember the meanings of phrasal verbs. Consider, for example, *away*, the meanings of which are as

follows: 1. moving (avoid getting near sth: *stay away, keep away* or disappear gradually or make sth disappear: *die away, eat away*) 2. making sy or sth move (stop sy from getting close or being involved in sth: *push away, frighten away* or remove or separate sth or become removed or separated: *brush away, give away*) 3. continuous action: *beaver away, work away*.

This section is closely related to the detailed semantic analysis of the 12 most common particles: *around, away, back, down, in, into, off, on, out, over, through* and *up*. Diagrams and tables with numerous examples show how the meanings of these particles are connected, and how the figurative meanings depart from the literal ones.

Another novelty is the index of single-word equivalents at the end of the dictionary, which lists over 1000 English verbs giving one or more phrasal verbs that express roughly the same meaning, for example *rebuke ~ tell off, tick off*. It is pointed out, however, that there is often a difference in register. For example, the phrasal verb may be more informal than the single word-verb or the meaning of one word may be more limited than that of the other.

Clear organization is essential if the dictionary is going to serve its purpose well. In the present case, layout is admirably clear with the most frequent phrasal verbs highlighted in red and graded with stars to show at a glance how important they are for students to learn. For example, *pick up***, sort out***, fall through**, bump into**, dash off**, *peter out**. Last but not least, mention must be made of one more unique feature that makes this dictionary really user friendly, namely the 100 striking two-colour cartoons that illustrate the meaning in a witty way.



Catch on



Barge in

I am convinced that as an invaluable reference book this dictionary will take pride of place on the bookshelf of all ELT learners and help them to lose their fear of phrasal verbs and to start using them more confidently.