

MA GRAMMAR / WEEK 10

Multi-word verbs

MA Grammar · Week 10
Quirk et al., Chapter 16

Is every verb + preposition one unit?

Constructed contrast

The students looked up the term.

The students looked at the diagram.

The students walked up the stairs.

Today's goals

Distinguish particles and prepositions.

Use converging diagnostics.

Separate idiomaticity from syntax.

Phrasal verbs contain an adverb particle

Intransitive

The discussion carried on.

No direct object follows in this use.

Transitive

We looked up the term.

We looked the term up.

We looked it up.

Prepositional verbs retain a PP relation

Simple pattern

We relied on the transcript.

We relied on it.

*We relied it on.

With an additional object

We supplied the students with notes.

Students and notes have different roles.

Phrasal-prepositional verbs have both

Constructed example

We put up with the noise.
We put up with it.

Structure to test

Put + up + with + object.

Up is a particle; with introduces the prepositional object.

Meaning and syntax are separate evidence

Look up a term has a conventional dictionary-search meaning.

Walk up the stairs has a transparent directional meaning.

A nonliteral meaning supports lexical unity but does not identify the syntactic type.

Record the meaning being tested before applying movement.

Use a diagnostic matrix

Pronoun position: look it up versus rely on it.

Movement: look the term up versus *rely the transcript on.

Questions: What did they rely on? / On what did they rely?

Passive: the term was looked up; this account can be relied on.

Theory check · Diagnose the intended sense

The tutor turned down the invitation.

The tutor turned the invitation down.

The tutor turned it down.

What do the three forms show, and what have they not proved?

Workshop 1 · Apply at least two tests

1. The group carried out the study.
2. The analysis depends on the coding scheme.
3. We look forward to the discussion.
4. The student walked into the office.

Classify the use and state one limitation of your evidence.

Drill key · Test the construction

Items 1–2

1: transitive phrasal; carried it out.

2: prepositional; depends on it, not

*depends it on.

Items 3–4

3: phrasal-prepositional; look forward to it / discussing it.

4: a directional PP in a transparent motion construction.

Workshop 2 · A lecturer's evaluation

“I don't know whether I pull it off.”

Authentic extract · Yale, Philosophy 176, Lecture 1
Kagan reflects on accomplishing his teaching aim.

Classify pull it off in this sense.
What does the pronoun's position show?

The pronoun supports a particle analysis

Pull off here means accomplish successfully.

The unstressed pronoun occurs before off.

*Pull off it does not preserve this ordinary pronoun pattern.

Whether introduces a finite complement of know, a separate structural relation.

Text laboratory · Laboratory support thread

Constructed teaching data

- 1 Rana: We need to set up the recorder before the seminar.
- 2 Noor: I will look into the connection problem.
- 3 Ali: Can the group put up with the background noise?
- 4 Rana: Please switch it off during the break.
- 5 Noor: I am looking forward to testing the new microphone.

Build a five-row diagnostic matrix

Record the multi-word verb and its meaning.

Replace the complement with a pronoun where possible.

Test movement without changing the lexical sense.

Explain why to in line 5 cannot introduce a plain infinitive here.

Suggested analysis of the support thread

Phrasal / prepositional

1: set up, transitive phrasal; set it up.

2: look into, prepositional in the investigate sense.

4: switch off, transitive phrasal; switch it off.

Phrasal-prepositional

3: put up with; put up with it.

5: look forward to; followed by an -ing clause.

The final preposition keeps its complement.

Challenge · Does a passive prove an object?

The problem was looked into.

Claim: problem must be a direct object because it becomes passive subject.

Use the active pronoun pattern to challenge that conclusion.

Exit response · Keep the sense constant

We took up the proposal at the meeting.

Test take up in the sense discuss or consider.

Give a pronoun version and explain what it supports.

Collect multi-word verb tokens

Collect eight occurrences with sentence context.

Record the intended meaning and source.

Apply two tests and note any uncertain judgement.

Next week: Quirk et al., §§16.18–28.