

Meeting English — C1

Meeting Phrasal Verbs

Name: _____ Date: _____ Score: _____

What is a Phrasal Verb?

At C1 level, phrasal verbs carry subtle distinctions in meaning and tone. Here are 8 advanced phrasal verbs used in formal business meetings — for justifying positions, driving change, presenting arguments, and managing difficult discussions.

Phrasal Verb	Meaning	Example
account for	to explain or give a satisfactory reason for something	Can you account for the discrepancy in the Q3 figures?
bring about	to cause something to happen, especially a significant change	The new strategy is designed to bring about lasting change.
build up to	to approach a significant point gradually or carefully	He spent twenty minutes building up to his main proposal.
cut across	to affect or apply to several different groups or areas at once	This issue cuts across all departments.
follow through on	to complete an action that was promised or started	We need to follow through on the commitments made last quarter.
gloss over	to deliberately avoid giving proper attention to a problem	The report glosses over the risks associated with the merger.
set out	to explain or present something clearly and systematically	She set out the case for restructuring in three clear stages.
stand by	to continue to support a decision or statement despite criticism	The board is standing by its original position.

Exercise 1: True or False

Read each statement. Write True or False on the line.

1. To gloss over a problem means to examine it thoroughly. _____
2. To account for something means to provide an explanation for it. _____
3. To follow through on a commitment means to abandon it. _____
4. To cut across departments means to affect several areas at once. _____
5. To bring about change means to cause it to happen. _____
6. To stand by a decision means to withdraw it under pressure. _____
7. To set out a proposal means to present it clearly. _____
8. To build up to a point means to approach it gradually. _____

Exercise 2: Multiple Choice

Circle the correct answer.

1. The CFO was asked to _____ the unexpected variance in costs.
a) gloss over b) stand by c) account for d) build up to
2. The new leadership team hopes to _____ a shift in company culture.
a) cut across b) bring about c) follow through on d) set out
3. She spent the first ten minutes _____ her central argument.
a) standing by b) building up to c) accounting for d) glossing over
4. This regulatory challenge _____ every team in the organisation.
a) glosses over b) sets out c) cuts across d) follows through on
5. We must _____ the promises we made to our stakeholders last year.
a) gloss over b) follow through on c) stand by d) cut across
6. The presenter appeared to _____ the financial risks in her summary.
a) bring about b) set out c) gloss over d) account for
7. He _____ the rationale for the proposed merger in four clear stages.
a) stood by b) set out c) cut across d) built up to
8. Despite fierce criticism, the committee chose to _____ its decision.
a) account for b) bring about c) gloss over d) stand by

Exercise 3: Matching

Match each phrasal verb (1–8) with its meaning (a–h).

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 1. account for | a. to continue supporting a decision despite criticism |
| 2. bring about | b. to approach a point gradually |
| 3. build up to | c. to explain or justify something satisfactorily |
| 4. cut across | d. to deliberately avoid addressing a problem properly |
| 5. follow through on | e. to complete something that was promised |
| 6. gloss over | f. to cause a significant change to happen |
| 7. set out | g. to affect several groups or areas simultaneously |
| 8. stand by | h. to explain something clearly and systematically |

Exercise 4: Gap Fill

Word bank: account for | cuts across | follow through on | bring about | gloss over | built up to | set out | stand by

1. The audit team could not _____ the missing funds.

2. This initiative aims to _____ a fundamental shift in how we work.
3. After a lengthy preamble, he finally _____ his proposal.
4. The skills shortage _____ engineering, sales, and operations alike.
5. It is essential that we _____ the commitments in the action plan.
6. The summary seemed to _____ several critical compliance concerns.
7. The director _____ the new governance framework in detail.
8. The chair made clear the board would _____ its original ruling.

Exercise 5: Word Order

Put the words in the correct order to make a sentence.

1. Can / you / account / for / the / discrepancy / in / Q3?
2. The / strategy / is / designed / to / bring / about / change.
3. He / spent / time / building / up / to / his / main / proposal.
4. This / issue / cuts / across / all / departments.
5. We / must / follow / through / on / our / commitments.
6. The / report / glosses / over / the / risks / of / the / merger.
7. She / set / out / the / case / in / three / clear / stages.
8. The / board / is / standing / by / its / original / position.

Exercise 6: Word Sort

Sort the phrasal verbs into the correct category.

Phrasal verbs: bring about | follow through on | set out | gloss over | build up to | stand by | account for | cut across

Presenting & Explaining

_____	_____	_____
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Influencing & Changing

_____	_____	_____
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Avoiding & Defending

_____	_____
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Exercise 7: Complete the Conversation

Fill in the missing phrasal verb in each line.

Chair: I need someone to _____ the budget shortfall.

Lea: I can _____ the reasons clearly if you give me a moment.

Chair: Please do. Don't _____ anything — we need the full picture.

Lea: Of course. I was working up to the key issue. Let me _____ it properly.

Chair: This problem will _____ procurement, finance, and logistics.

Lea: Exactly. We must _____ the review we promised.

Chair: Agreed. This could _____ a significant process change.

Lea: I hope the board will _____ the decision once it is made.

■ ANSWER KEY — Do Not Distribute to Students

Exercise 1: True or False — Answers

1. False
2. True
3. False
4. True
5. True
6. False
7. True
8. True

Exercise 2: Multiple Choice — Answers

1. c) account for
2. b) bring about
3. b) building up to
4. c) cuts across
5. b) follow through on
6. c) gloss over
7. b) set out
8. d) stand by

Exercise 3: Matching — Answers

1. account for → c) to explain or justify something satisfactorily
2. bring about → f) to cause a significant change to happen
3. build up to → b) to approach a point gradually
4. cut across → g) to affect several groups or areas simultaneously
5. follow through on → e) to complete something that was promised
6. gloss over → d) to deliberately avoid addressing a problem properly
7. set out → h) to explain something clearly and systematically
8. stand by → a) to continue supporting a decision despite criticism

Exercise 4: Gap Fill — Answers

1. account for
2. bring about
3. built up to
4. cuts across
5. follow through on
6. gloss over
7. set out
8. stand by

Exercise 5: Word Order — Answers

1. Can you account for the discrepancy in Q3?

2. The strategy is designed to bring about change.
3. He spent time building up to his main proposal.
4. This issue cuts across all departments.
5. We must follow through on our commitments.
6. The report glosses over the risks of the merger.
7. She set out the case in three clear stages.
8. The board is standing by its original position.

Exercise 6: Word Sort — Answers

Presenting & Explaining: set out, build up to, account for

Influencing & Changing: bring about, cut across, follow through on

Avoiding & Defending: gloss over, stand by

Exercise 7: Complete the Conversation — Answers

1. Chair: I need someone to account for the budget shortfall.
2. Lea: I can set out the reasons clearly if you give me a moment.
3. Chair: Please do. Don't gloss over anything — we need the full picture.
4. Lea: Of course. I was working up to the key issue. Let me build up to it properly.
5. Chair: This problem will cut across procurement, finance, and logistics.
6. Lea: Exactly. We must follow through on the review we promised.
7. Chair: Agreed. This could bring about a significant process change.
8. Lea: I hope the board will stand by the decision once it is made.