

Presentation Phrasal Verbs for Q&A

Inviting, Answering and Handling Questions

Name: _____ Date: _____

Lesson aims

- Learn 36 phrasal verbs for the question-and-answer part of a presentation
- Invite, clarify and answer questions politely and clearly
- Buy time, defer a question and handle a difficult question professionally
- Use the correct word order with separable and inseparable phrasal verbs

Warm-up: talk about it

- What do you find most difficult about answering questions after a presentation?
- What can you say if you do not know the answer to a question?
- How can you stay polite when someone challenges your figures?

1. Key vocabulary

Inviting questions

Word / phrase	Meaning	Example
open up	start a discussion or invite people to take part	I'd like to open up the floor to questions.
call on	ask someone to speak	I'll call on you first, Ben.
chip in	add a comment to a discussion	Please feel free to chip in at any time.
speak up	speak more loudly, or say what you think	Please speak up so that everyone can hear you.
hold back	not say or do something	Please don't hold back: all questions are welcome.
step in	join to help or to take control	The chair stepped in to move the discussion on.

Understanding the question

Word / phrase	Meaning	Example
make out	hear or understand with difficulty	I couldn't make out the last part of your question.
get at	try to say or suggest something	What exactly are you getting at?
read into	find extra meaning in something	I wouldn't read too much into one month's figures.
go on	continue	Please go on with your question.
narrow down	make a question or a choice more specific	Could you narrow down your question a little?
zero in on	focus all your attention on something	Let me zero in on the cost question.

Answering

Word / phrase	Meaning	Example
get across	communicate an idea so that people understand	I want to get across one simple message.
clear up	explain something so that there is no confusion	Let me clear up that point.
boil down to	be essentially about something	It all boils down to time and money.
come down to	be the main factor or issue	The decision comes down to cost.
set out	explain something clearly and in order	Let me set out the main reasons.
go into	discuss something in detail	I'll go into more detail after the meeting.

Buying time

Word / phrase	Meaning	Example
look into	investigate something	I'll look into it and let you know.
get back to	contact someone later with an answer	I'll get back to you by Friday.
think over	consider something carefully	Let me think that over and email you tomorrow.
come up with	find or produce an idea or answer	I'll come up with a better answer by Monday.
run by	tell someone about something to get their opinion	I'd like to run this by my manager first.
put off	delay something until later	I don't want to put off this decision.

Difficult questions

Word / phrase	Meaning	Example
back down	stop disagreeing or give up a position	I won't back down on the main figures.
stand by	continue to support something	I stand by these figures.
play down	make something seem less important	I don't want to play down the risks.
brush off	dismiss something without proper attention	Never brush off a difficult question.
push back	resist or disagree with an idea	I'd like to push back on that point.
own up to	admit a mistake	I'll own up to that mistake in the slide.

Closing

Word / phrase	Meaning	Example
wind up	finish a session	I think we should wind up there.
break up	end a meeting or a group	The meeting broke up at noon.
tie up	complete the last details	Let me tie up a few loose ends.
carry over	continue something to a later time	We'll carry over the remaining questions to next week.
sign off	finish, or officially approve	I'll sign off now. Thank you all.
take away	learn or remember something from a talk	The main thing to take away is the cost saving.

Word order in Q&A phrasal verbs

Pattern	Use
look into a question / look into it	Inseparable: the object follows.
clear up a doubt / clear it up	Separable: a pronoun goes in the middle.
think over a question / think it over	Separable: a pronoun goes in the middle.
play down a risk / play it down	Separable: a pronoun goes in the middle.
stand by a result / stand by it	Inseparable: the object follows.
get back to someone (three words)	Three-part verb: the object follows.
own up to a mistake (three words)	Three-part verb: the object follows.
boil down TO cost / come down TO cost	Followed by 'to' before the main factor.

2. Useful sentences for Q&A

Purpose	Useful phrases
Inviting questions	I'd like to open up the floor to questions. Please speak up so that everyone can hear. Feel free to chip in at any time. I'll call on you first.
Understanding	Sorry, I couldn't make that out. Could you narrow that down for me? What exactly are you getting at? Please go on.
Answering and buying time	It all boils down to cost. Let me clear that up. I'll look into it and get back to you. Let me think that over.
Difficult questions	I stand by these figures. I don't want to play down the risks. I'd like to push back on that point. I'll own up to that mistake.

3. Model conversation

Listen to (or read) a Q&A session after a talk about a new booking system. Notice the phrasal verbs and where the objects go. Underline the vocabulary from Section 1.

ANNA

Thank you. That is the end of my talk, so I'd like to open up the floor to questions. Please speak up so that everyone can hear you.

BEN

Thanks, Anna. I couldn't quite make out the figure on the cost slide. What exactly are you getting at when you say that the system will pay for itself?

ANNA

Good question. Let me clear that up. It all boils down to time. We save about two hours a week, and that adds up to around two thousand euros a year, which covers the cost.

BEN

I wouldn't read too much into those savings. Some people think the system will be slow.

ANNA

I understand the concern, and I don't want to play down the risk. But the pilot results back up these figures, and I stand by them. If you like, I can go into more detail after the meeting.

CARLA

Will the training put off the launch? Could you also narrow down the training costs?

ANNA

I'm afraid I don't have the exact figures with me. I'll look into it and get back to you by Friday.

CARLA

Thanks. Could you also run the plan by the finance team before we decide?

ANNA

Of course. I'll run it by them and think over the timeline too. I'd also like to get across one point: this is only a pilot, so we can change the plan.

ANNA

I think we should wind up there. Thank you all for your questions, and I'll sign off now.

Exercise 1: Phrasal verbs in context

Type the missing word. The first letter is given to help you.

1. I'd like to o_____ up the floor to questions.
2. Sorry, I couldn't m_____ out the last part of your question.
3. I'll look i_____ it and get back to you by Friday.
4. Let me c_____ that up for you: the figure is for the whole year.
5. I don't want to play d_____ the risks.
6. I stand b_____ these figures.
7. What exactly are you getting a_____?
8. It all boils d_____ to cost and time.

Exercise 2: Choose the correct particle

Choose the correct particle or preposition for each sentence.

by down back up on over out at

1. Let me think that _____ and email you tomorrow.
2. I'd like to run this _____ my manager first.
3. Please go _____ with your question.
4. I'll get _____ to you by Friday.
5. It all boils _____ to one question: is it worth the cost?
6. What exactly are you getting _____?
7. I'd like to open _____ the floor to questions.
8. I couldn't quite make _____ the last part of your question.

Exercise 3: Find and fix the mistake

Each sentence has one mistake in the highlighted part. Type the correct word.

1. I'll look in your question and get back to you. Correction: _____
2. I couldn't make off what you said. Correction: _____
3. It all boils up to cost. Correction: _____
4. I'll get again to you by Friday. Correction: _____
5. I stand with these figures. Correction: _____
6. Please speak on so that everyone can hear you. Correction: _____

Exercise 4: What does it mean?

Choose the correct meaning.

1. to wind up a session
 - a) to cancel it
 - b) to finish it
 - c) to continue it
 - d) to start it
2. to brush off a question
 - a) to dismiss it without a proper answer
 - b) to repeat it
 - c) to write it down
 - d) to answer it carefully
3. to play down a risk
 - a) to explain it in detail
 - b) to ignore it completely
 - c) to make it seem worse
 - d) to make it seem less important
4. to open up the floor to questions
 - a) to close the discussion
 - b) to invite questions from the audience
 - c) to answer a question quickly
 - d) to ask the audience to leave
5. to run an idea by your manager
 - a) to ignore their opinion
 - b) to hide it from them
 - c) to tell them and ask for their opinion
 - d) to give them a deadline
6. to stand by your figures
 - a) to continue to support them
 - b) to hide them
 - c) to correct them
 - d) to forget them

Exercise 5: Sort the phrasal verbs

Choose the group that each phrasal verb belongs to.

A Closing	B Buying time	C Understanding the question
D Difficult questions	E Inviting questions	F Answering

1. "narrow down" **Group:** ____
2. "wind up" **Group:** ____
3. "look into" **Group:** ____
4. "back down" **Group:** ____

5. "boil down to" **Group:** ____
6. "get back to" **Group:** ____
7. "open up" **Group:** ____
8. "make out" **Group:** ____

Exercise 6: Build the sentence

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

1. risks, / these / but / I / play / stand / I / figures. / by / the / down / don't / to / want

2. to / cost / time. / and / boils / It / down / all

3. into / and / Friday. / get / back / it / look / by / I'll / you / to

4. so / there, / should / you / thank / all. / I / we / wind / up / think

5. out / Sorry, / last / make / part / of / the / your / couldn't / question. / I

6. to / like / open / questions. / to / up / floor / I'd / the

Exercise 7: Best phrase for the situation

Choose the most natural and professional thing to say in a presentation.

1. You made an error on a slide and a listener has noticed it.
 - a) It's not a mistake, I'll play it down.
 - b) You're right, I own up to that mistake. Thank you for pointing it out.
 - c) Nobody noticed, so I'll carry on.
 - d) That slide doesn't count.
2. You want to end the Q&A.
 - a) I think we should wind up there. Thank you all for your questions.
 - b) Let's break up of questions.
 - c) Time's up, no more questions.
 - d) I think we should wind down there, bye.
3. You do not know the answer to a question.
 - a) That is not my problem.
 - b) I'll put it off forever.
 - c) I'm afraid I don't know. I'll look into it and get back to you.
 - d) I don't know and I won't look into it.

4. You want to invite questions.
 - a) I'd like to open off the floor to questions.
 - b) I'd like to open in the floor to questions.
 - c) I'd like to open down the floor to questions.
 - d) I'd like to open up the floor to questions.
5. You did not hear the question properly.
 - a) Sorry, I couldn't make that out. Could you say it again?
 - b) Sorry, I couldn't make that up. Could you say it again?
 - c) Speak up, I can't hear you!
 - d) What? Say it again.
6. A listener says your figures look wrong.
 - a) You are wrong, so back down.
 - b) I can see why you ask. I stand by the figures, and I can go into the details after the talk.
 - c) I'll brush off your question.
 - d) The figures are right, so stop asking.

Exercise 8: Separable or inseparable?

Choose the sentence with the correct word order.

1. Choose the correct sentence.
 - a) I'll get to back you.
 - b) I'll get you back to.
 - c) I'll back get to you.
 - d) I'll get back to you.
2. Choose the correct sentence.
 - a) I'll think it over it.
 - b) I'll think it over.
 - c) I'll think over it.
 - d) I'll over think it.
3. Choose the correct sentence.
 - a) Let me clear up it.
 - b) Let me clear up it quickly.
 - c) Let me clear it up.
 - d) Let me up clear it.
4. Choose the correct sentence.
 - a) I'll look into it.
 - b) I'll into look it.
 - c) I'll look into quickly it.
 - d) I'll look it into.

Exercise 9: Say it yourself

Write one or two sentences for each situation, as if you were speaking. Use a phrasal verb from this lesson.

1. Someone says your figures are wrong. Respond politely and say you support them. Use 'stand by'.

2. Invite questions from the audience. Use 'open up'.

3. You did not hear the question. Ask politely for it again. Use 'make out' or 'speak up'.

4. You do not know the answer. Promise to find it out and reply later. Use 'look into' and 'get back to'.

Your turn: handle a Q&A session

Think of a talk you have given or will give. Ask a partner or your teacher to ask you questions, or imagine them. Write what you would say at each step, using at least eight phrasal verbs from this lesson. Then practise it aloud and record yourself if you can.

1. Open - Invite questions (open up the floor, speak up, feel free to chip in).

2. Clarify - Ask for a question to be repeated or made more specific (make out, narrow down).

3. Answer - Give a clear answer (boil down to, clear up, go into, get across).

4. Buy time - Say you will find out and reply later (look into, get back to, think over, run by).

5. Handle a challenge - Respond to a difficult question (stand by, play down, push back, own up to).

6. Close - End the session politely (wind up, sign off, tie up).

Self-check

- ☐ I used at least eight phrasal verbs from the lesson.
- ☐ I put the pronouns in the correct place (clear it up, think it over).
- ☐ I used 'look into', 'get back to' and 'stand by' with the correct words after them.
- ☐ I stayed polite when I answered a difficult question.
- ☐ I finished the session clearly and politely.

TEACHER ANSWER KEY - DO NOT DISTRIBUTE**Presentation Phrasal Verbs for Q&A: Inviting, Answering and Handling Questions (Level B1+)**

The worksheet order is fixed; answers below follow the printed numbering. The interactive HTML version shuffles item order and answer positions each time it is opened.

Exercise 1: Phrasal verbs in context

1. open
2. make
3. into
4. clear
5. down
6. by
7. at
8. down

Exercise 2: Choose the correct particle

1. over; 2. by; 3. on; 4. back; 5. down; 6. at; 7. up; 8. out

Exercise 3: Find and fix the mistake

1. I'll look **into** your question and get back to you. (accept: into)
2. I couldn't make **out** what you said. (accept: out)
3. It all boils **down** to cost. (accept: down)
4. I'll get **back** to you by Friday. (accept: back)
5. I stand **by** these figures. (accept: by)
6. Please speak **up** so that everyone can hear you. (accept: up)

Exercise 4: What does it mean?

1. b; 2. a; 3. d; 4. b; 5. c; 6. a
1. 'Wind up' means to finish.
 2. 'Brush off' means to dismiss something without paying attention.
 3. 'Play down' means to make something seem less serious.
 4. 'Open up' means to invite people to take part.
 5. 'Run by' means to tell someone in order to get their reaction.
 6. 'Stand by' means to keep supporting something.

Exercise 5: Sort the phrasal verbs

1. C (Understanding the question); 2. A (Closing); 3. B (Buying time); 4. D (Difficult questions); 5. F (Answering); 6. B (Buying time); 7. E (Inviting questions); 8. C (Understanding the question)

Exercise 6: Build the sentence

1. I don't want to play down the risks, but I stand by these figures.
2. It all boils down to cost and time.
3. I'll look into it and get back to you by Friday.
4. I think we should wind up there, so thank you all.
5. Sorry, I couldn't make out the last part of your question.
6. I'd like to open up the floor to questions.

Exercise 7: Best phrase for the situation

1. b; 2. a; 3. c; 4. d; 5. a; 6. b
1. 'Own up to' means to admit a mistake. Admitting it builds trust.

2. 'Wind up' is a polite way to finish a session.
3. Be honest, and promise a follow-up.
4. 'Open up' means to invite people to take part.
5. 'Make out' is correct, and the polite wording keeps the tone professional.
6. Stay polite, support your figures and offer more detail.

Exercise 8: Separable or inseparable?

1. d; 2. b; 3. c; 4. a

1. 'Get back to' is a three-part verb: the words stay together.
2. 'Think over' is separable, so a pronoun goes in the middle.
3. 'Clear up' is separable, so a pronoun goes in the middle.
4. 'Look into' is inseparable, so the object comes after 'into'.

Exercise 9: Say it yourself

1. Model: I understand the concern, but I stand by these figures. (Acknowledge the concern first, then say you stand by the figures.)
2. Model: I'd like to open up the floor to questions. (Use 'open up the floor to questions'.)
3. Model: Sorry, I couldn't make that out. Could you say it again? (Apologise first, then ask politely.)
4. Model: I'll look into that and get back to you by Friday. (Say what you will do and when you will reply.)

Accept any accurate, natural sentence that uses suitable language from the lesson.

Teacher notes

- Suggested timing (60 minutes): warm-up 5 min; vocabulary groups 15 min (students sort the verbs into the six groups first); model conversation (listen, then read, then underline every phrasal verb) 10 min; exercises 1 to 5 in class 20 min; exercises 6 to 9 for homework or the next lesson; 'Your turn' task as a role-play with the teacher asking the questions.
- Role-play: the teacher plays the audience and asks four questions: one that is unclear, one that the student cannot answer, one that challenges her figures and one that is off topic. Give feedback on both language and politeness.
- Separable vs inseparable: with separable verbs (clear up, think over, play down, run by, narrow down, brush off), a noun object can go before or after the particle, but a pronoun must go before it. With inseparable verbs (look into, stand by, go into, zero in on) and three-part verbs (get back to, own up to, boil down to), the object always follows.
- Register: most of these verbs are suitable for a professional Q&A, but 'brush off' and 'back down' describe negative behaviour. Discuss the tone: 'I'd like to push back on that point' is more diplomatic than 'You are wrong'.
- Common B1 errors: 'look at it into'; 'clear up it' (clear it up); 'get back at you' (get back to you); 'boil down at' (boil down to); 'stand with the figures' (stand by); confusing 'make out' (hear or understand) with 'make up' (invent).
- Pronunciation to check: the particle usually takes the main stress: open UP, make OUT, boil DOWN, look INto (this one is often stressed on the verb: LOOK into). Practise linking in 'getting at' and 'make it out'.
- Extension: record the student answering four difficult questions, then play it back and ask her to find two places where she could use a phrasal verb to sound more natural or more diplomatic.