

# Presentation Phrasal Verbs

## Asking for Feedback, Giving It and Improving Your Talk

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Lesson aims

- Learn 36 phrasal verbs for asking for, giving and responding to feedback on a presentation
- Praise and suggest improvements in a polite, professional way
- Talk about practising and improving your own presentations
- Use the correct word order with separable and inseparable phrasal verbs

### Warm-up: talk about it

- Who gives you feedback on your presentations? How useful is it?
- How do you feel when someone criticises your work? What helps you accept it?
- What do you do after a presentation to improve the next one?

## 1. Key vocabulary

### Asking for feedback

| Word / phrase        | Meaning                                     | Example                                       |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>ask for</b>       | request something                           | Could I ask for some honest feedback?         |
| <b>ask around</b>    | ask several people for their opinions       | I'll ask around to see what colleagues think. |
| <b>sit down with</b> | meet someone for a serious conversation     | I'd like to sit down with you after the talk. |
| <b>check in with</b> | contact someone to see how things are going | I'll check in with you next week.             |
| <b>reach out to</b>  | contact someone to ask for help or advice   | I reached out to a mentor for advice.         |
| <b>sound out</b>     | find out what people think, informally      | I'll sound out a few colleagues first.        |

### Praising

| Word / phrase         | Meaning                              | Example                                   |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <b>come across as</b> | seem to other people                 | You came across as very confident.        |
| <b>carry off</b>      | succeed in doing something difficult | You carried off the opening really well.  |
| <b>pull off</b>       | succeed in doing something difficult | She pulled off a very clear explanation.  |
| <b>go down well</b>   | be received well by the audience     | The story at the start went down well.    |
| <b>liven up</b>       | make something more interesting      | The example livened up the talk.          |
| <b>bring out</b>      | show the best qualities of something | The chart brings out the main difference. |

### Suggesting improvements

| Word / phrase | Meaning                               | Example                                             |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| cut out       | remove something                      | I'd cut out the last two slides.                    |
| tone down     | make something less strong or extreme | You could tone down the humour a little.            |
| tidy up       | make something neater                 | Let's tidy up the chart on slide five.              |
| iron out      | solve small problems                  | We need to iron out a few problems with the timing. |
| speed up      | make something faster                 | Speed up the introduction to save time.             |
| slow down     | make something slower                 | Try to slow down at the start.                      |

### Reflecting

| Word / phrase | Meaning                                           | Example                                                   |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| look back on  | think about something that happened in the past   | When you look back on the talk, you'll see your progress. |
| think back to | remember a past time                              | Think back to your first presentation.                    |
| go back over  | review something again                            | Let's go back over the main points.                       |
| mull over     | think about something for a long time             | I'll mull over your comments tonight.                     |
| dwell on      | think or talk too much about something unpleasant | Don't dwell on one small mistake.                         |
| get over      | recover from something unpleasant                 | She got over her nerves quickly.                          |

### Practising

| Word / phrase | Meaning                                    | Example                                        |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| work on       | try to improve something                   | I need to work on my pace.                     |
| brush up on   | improve a skill you already have           | I want to brush up on my presentation phrases. |
| build on      | use something as a base to develop further | Let's build on last month's feedback.          |
| try out       | test something to see if it works          | I'll try out a shorter version tomorrow.       |
| polish up     | make something better with small changes   | I'll polish up the final slides tonight.       |
| keep at       | continue trying hard to do something       | Keep at it: you're improving every week.       |

### Responding

| Word / phrase  | Meaning                                      | Example                                            |
|----------------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| take on board  | accept and consider advice or ideas          | Thanks, I'll take that on board.                   |
| act on         | take action because of advice or information | I'll act on your suggestions.                      |
| follow through | do what you said you would do                | It's important to follow through on feedback.      |
| come along     | progress or develop                          | How is your presentation coming along?             |
| shape up       | develop well                                 | The talk is really shaping up.                     |
| turn around    | change something from bad to good            | She turned around a weak presentation in one week. |

### Word order in feedback phrasal verbs

| Pattern                                    | Use                                          |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| work on a slide / work on it               | Inseparable: the object follows.             |
| brush up on your skills (three words)      | Three-part verb: the object follows.         |
| cut out a slide / cut it out               | Separable: a pronoun goes in the middle.     |
| tidy up a chart / tidy it up               | Separable: a pronoun goes in the middle.     |
| iron out problems / iron them out          | Separable: a pronoun goes in the middle.     |
| take a comment on board / take it on board | Separable: a pronoun goes before 'on board'. |
| act on advice / act on it                  | Inseparable: the object follows.             |
| look back on a talk (three words)          | Three-part verb: the object follows.         |

## 2. Useful sentences for feedback

| Purpose           | Useful phrases                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Asking</b>     | Could I ask for some feedback?<br>I'd like to sit down with you after the talk.<br>I'll check in with you next week.<br>I'm going to sound out a few colleagues. |
| <b>Praising</b>   | You came across as very confident.<br>You carried off the opening really well.<br>The story livened up the talk.<br>The ending went down well.                   |
| <b>Suggesting</b> | You could cut out the last slide.<br>Try to slow down at the start.<br>Let's tidy up this chart.<br>We need to iron out a few problems.                          |
| <b>Responding</b> | Thanks, I'll take that on board.<br>I'll work on my pace.<br>I want to brush up on my vocabulary.<br>I'll act on your advice.                                    |

### 3. Model conversation

*Listen to (or read) a feedback conversation after a practice talk. Notice the phrasal verbs and where the objects go. Underline the vocabulary from Section 1.*

**PRIYA**

Thanks for coming to my practice talk. Could I ask for some honest feedback? I'd also like to sit down with you afterwards to go through it.

**DAN**

Of course. First, you came across as very confident, and you carried off the opening really well. The story at the start livened up the talk, and it went down well.

**PRIYA**

Thank you. Is there anything I should work on?

**DAN**

A few things. You spoke quickly, so try to slow down, especially at the start. I'd cut out the last two slides, because they repeat the main point. I'd also tidy up the chart on slide five: it's too crowded.

**PRIYA**

That makes sense. I'll take that on board. I was nervous, and I couldn't shake it off until the middle.

**DAN**

Don't dwell on it. Everybody gets nervous, and you got over it quickly. When you look back on the talk, you'll see how much you've improved.

**PRIYA**

I hope so. I want to brush up on my phrases for questions, and I'll try out a shorter version tomorrow.

**DAN**

Good idea. We also need to iron out a few problems with the timing. If you speed up the introduction, you'll save two minutes.

**PRIYA**

I'll act on that. I'll check in with you next week, and I'll sound out a few colleagues too.

**DAN**

Great. Keep at it. The talk is really shaping up, and you have already built on last month's feedback.

## Exercise 1: Phrasal verbs in context

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

1. We need to i\_\_\_\_\_ out a few problems with the timing.
2. I'll a\_\_\_\_\_ on your advice and make the changes tonight.
3. I want to b\_\_\_\_\_ up on my phrases for answering questions.
4. You came a\_\_\_\_\_ as very confident during the whole talk.
5. I'd c\_\_\_\_\_ out the last two slides because they repeat the main point.
6. Could I a\_\_\_\_\_ for some honest feedback on my talk?
7. Thanks for the advice. I'll take that on b\_\_\_\_\_.
8. Let's t\_\_\_\_\_ up the chart on slide five, because it is too crowded.

## Exercise 2: Choose the correct particle

Choose the correct particle or preposition for each sentence.

over back out up down off across on

1. You should cut \_\_\_\_\_ the last slide, because it repeats the main point.
2. Let me go \_\_\_\_\_ my notes before the next rehearsal.
3. I couldn't shake \_\_\_\_\_ my nerves until the middle of the talk.
4. I'd like to sit \_\_\_\_\_ with you after the talk.
5. When you look \_\_\_\_\_ on the talk, you'll see how much you've improved.
6. Let's tidy \_\_\_\_\_ this chart.
7. You came \_\_\_\_\_ as very confident.
8. I'll work \_\_\_\_\_ my pace before the next rehearsal.

## Exercise 3: Find and fix the mistake

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

1. You carried **on** the opening really well. Correction: \_\_\_\_\_
2. I'll take that **in** board. Correction: \_\_\_\_\_
3. You got **off** your nerves quickly. Correction: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Let's iron **up** a few problems with the timing. Correction: \_\_\_\_\_
5. I'll ask **through** a few colleagues for feedback. Correction: \_\_\_\_\_
6. I want to brush **over** on my phrases for questions. Correction: \_\_\_\_\_

## Exercise 4: What does it mean?

Choose the correct meaning.

1. to carry off an opening
  - a) to cancel it
  - b) to do it successfully
  - c) to repeat it
  - d) to shorten it
2. to take a comment on board
  - a) to accept and consider it
  - b) to repeat it
  - c) to reject it
  - d) to forget it
3. to come across as confident
  - a) to become confident
  - b) to feel confident
  - c) to seem confident
  - d) to pretend to be confident
4. to liven up a talk
  - a) to make it more formal
  - b) to make it shorter
  - c) to make it quieter
  - d) to make it more interesting
5. to iron out problems
  - a) to solve small problems
  - b) to ignore problems
  - c) to explain problems
  - d) to create problems
6. to shake off your nerves
  - a) to increase them
  - b) to get rid of them
  - c) to show them
  - d) to explain them

## Exercise 5: Sort the phrasal verbs

Choose the group that each phrasal verb belongs to.

|                       |              |                           |
|-----------------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| A Practising          | B Praising   | C Suggesting improvements |
| D Asking for feedback | E Reflecting | F Responding              |

1. "dwell on" **Group:** \_\_\_\_
2. "tone down" **Group:** \_\_\_\_
3. "brush up on" **Group:** \_\_\_\_
4. "act on" **Group:** \_\_\_\_

5. "speed up" Group: \_\_\_\_
6. "carry off" Group: \_\_\_\_
7. "sound out" Group: \_\_\_\_
8. "build on" Group: \_\_\_\_

## Exercise 6: Build the sentence

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

1. and / on / pace. / board / that / I'll / Thanks, / on / work / my / take  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. before / my / I / brush / rehearsal. / phrases / up / to / the / next / on / want  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. carried / opening / You / off / and / came / very / as / well. / confident / the / across  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. the / cut / slides / I'd / two / last / the / main / repeat / because / they / out / point.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. with / We / few / out / to / timing. / need / the / a / problems / iron  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. feedback / some / my / I / Could / for / ask / talk? / honest / on  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Exercise 7: Best phrase for the situation

*Choose the most natural and professional thing to say.*

1. You want to suggest, politely, that a colleague shortens the talk.
  - a) Cut off the last slides or else.
  - b) You could cut out the last two slides, because they repeat the main point.
  - c) Cut out the last slides, they're awful.
  - d) I'd cut up the last two slides.
2. You want to say how you will improve.
  - a) I'll work on my pace and brush up on my vocabulary.
  - b) I'll work in my pace and brush down my vocabulary.
  - c) I'll work up my pace and brush out my vocabulary.
  - d) I'll work off my pace and brush on my vocabulary.
3. A colleague says you spoke too fast.
  - a) You're wrong; I'll carry on like that.
  - b) I don't agree, so I'll brush it off.
  - c) Thanks, I'll take that on board and slow down at the start.
  - d) Nobody else said that, so I'll play it down.

4. A nervous colleague is upset about a mistake.
- a) Forget it, you were bad.
  - b) You'll never shake off that mistake.
  - c) Dwell on it, it was a disaster.
  - d) Don't dwell on it. You got over it quickly and the talk is really shaping up.
5. You want to ask a colleague for feedback on your talk.
- a) Could I ask for some honest feedback on my talk?
  - b) I don't need feedback, but say something.
  - c) Tell me what you think, quickly.
  - d) Give me feedback now.
6. You want to praise a colleague's opening.
- a) Your opening was not terrible.
  - b) You carried off the opening really well. It went down well.
  - c) I'll carry on your opening.
  - d) You came across as quite boring, but fine.

## Exercise 8: Separable or inseparable?

*Choose the sentence with the correct word order.*

1. Choose the correct sentence.
- a) I'll on act it.
  - b) I'll act on quickly it.
  - c) I'll act on it.
  - d) I'll act it on.
2. Choose the correct sentence.
- a) I'll on work it.
  - b) I'll work on it.
  - c) I'll work it on.
  - d) I'll work on quickly it.
3. Choose the correct sentence.
- a) Let's up tidy it.
  - b) Let's tidy up it.
  - c) Let's tidy up it quickly.
  - d) Let's tidy it up.
4. Choose the correct sentence.
- a) I'll take it on board.
  - b) I'll on take board it.
  - c) I'll take on board it.
  - d) I'll take on it board.

## 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. A colleague gives you feedback. Accept it and say what you will do. Use 'take on board', 'work on' or 'act on'.

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2. Praise a colleague's opening. Use 'come across as', 'carry off' or 'go down well'.

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3. Ask a colleague politely for feedback on your talk. Use 'ask for'.

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4. Suggest one improvement to a colleague. Use 'cut out', 'tidy up', 'slow down' or 'iron out'.

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## Your turn: give and receive feedback

Give a one-minute talk to a partner or your teacher, or record it. Then role-play the feedback conversation: you ask for feedback, the other person responds, and you answer. Write what you would say at each step, using at least eight phrasal verbs from this lesson.

**1. Ask** - Ask for feedback politely (ask for, sit down with, sound out).

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**2. Praise** - Say two things that went well (come across as, carry off, go down well, liven up).

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**3. Suggest** - Suggest two improvements (cut out, tidy up, slow down, iron out).

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**4. Respond** - Accept the feedback and say what you will do (take on board, work on, act on).

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**5. Reflect** - Say how you feel and what you have learned (get over, dwell on, look back on).

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**6. Plan** - Say how you will improve before the next talk (brush up on, try out, keep at).

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### Self-check

- ☐ I used at least eight phrasal verbs from the lesson.
- ☐ I put the pronouns in the correct place (tidy it up, take it on board).
- ☐ I used 'work on', 'act on' and 'brush up on' with the correct words after them.
- ☐ I gave feedback that was polite and specific.
- ☐ I accepted feedback and said what I will do next.

**TEACHER ANSWER KEY - DO NOT DISTRIBUTE****Presentation Phrasal Verbs: Asking for Feedback, Giving It and Improving Your Talk (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. iron
2. act
3. brush
4. across
5. cut
6. ask
7. board
8. tidy

**Exercise 2: Choose the correct particle**

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

**Exercise 3: Find and fix the mistake**

1. You carried **off** the opening really well. (accept: off)
2. I'll take that **on** board. (accept: on)
3. You got **over** your nerves quickly. (accept: over)
4. Let's iron **out** a few problems with the timing. (accept: out)
5. I'll ask **around** a few colleagues for feedback. (accept: around)
6. I want to brush **up** on my phrases for questions. (accept: up)

**Exercise 4: What does it mean?**

1. b; 2. a; 3. c; 4. d; 5. a; 6. b
1. 'Carry off' means to succeed in doing something difficult.
  2. 'Take on board' means to accept advice and think about it seriously.
  3. 'Come across as' describes the impression you give to other people.
  4. 'Liven up' means to make something more interesting or energetic.
  5. 'Iron out' means to solve small difficulties.
  6. 'Shake off' means to get rid of something that is bothering you.

**Exercise 5: Sort the phrasal verbs**

1. E (Reflecting); 2. C (Suggesting improvements); 3. A (Practising); 4. F (Responding); 5. C (Suggesting improvements); 6. B (Praising); 7. D (Asking for feedback); 8. A (Practising)

**Exercise 6: Build the sentence**

1. Thanks, I'll take that on board and work on my pace.
2. I want to brush up on my phrases before the next rehearsal.
3. You came across as very confident and carried off the opening well.
4. I'd cut out the last two slides because they repeat the main point.
5. We need to iron out a few problems with the timing.
6. Could I ask for some honest feedback on my talk?

**Exercise 7: Best phrase for the situation**

1. b; 2. a; 3. c; 4. d; 5. a; 6. b
1. 'You could...' with a reason sounds polite and helpful.

2. 'Work on' and 'brush up on' are the correct phrasal verbs.
3. Accept the feedback and say what you will do.
4. Supportive language helps a nervous colleague.
5. A polite request with 'ask for' is natural and professional.
6. 'Carry off' and 'go down well' are positive and specific.

### Exercise 8: Separable or inseparable?

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

1. 'Act on' is inseparable, so the object comes after 'on'.
2. 'Work on' is inseparable, so the object comes after 'on'.
3. 'Tidy up' is separable, so a pronoun goes in the middle.
4. A pronoun goes between 'take' and 'on board'.

### Exercise 9: Say it yourself

1. Model: Thanks, I'll take that on board and work on my pace. (Say thank you, accept the feedback and name one action.)
2. Model: You came across as very confident, and the opening went down well. (Be specific about what was good.)
3. Model: Could I ask for some feedback on my talk? (Use 'Could I ask for...' to sound polite.)
4. Model: You could cut out the last slide, because it repeats the main point. (Use 'You could...' or 'Try to...' to stay polite.)

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 feedback.
- Role-play: the student gives a one-minute talk, then the teacher gives feedback using four of the verbs (one praise, two suggestions, one question). The student must respond politely and name an action. Swap roles if time allows.
- Separable vs inseparable: with separable verbs (cut out, tidy up, iron out, tone down, take on board, polish up), a noun object can go before or after the particle, but a pronoun must go before it. With inseparable verbs (work on, act on, dwell on) and three-part verbs (brush up on, look back on, check in with, sit down with), the object always follows.
- Giving feedback politely: use 'could', 'try to' and 'might' to soften suggestions, and balance praise with improvement ('I'd cut out the last slide, but the opening was very strong'). Contrast 'You should cut out...' with 'You could cut out...'.
- Common B1 errors: 'tidy up it' (tidy it up); 'work on to my pace' (work on my pace); 'carry on the opening' (carry off); 'I take it on board' (I'll take it on board); 'cut off the slide' (cut out); confusing 'get over' (recover from) with 'get on' (progress).
- Pronunciation to check: the particle usually takes the main stress: cut OUT, tidy UP, iron OUT, take it on BOARD. In 'brush up on', the second word is stressed: brush UP on.
- Extension: ask the student to write short feedback (four sentences) on a colleague's slide using at least four verbs. Then ask the student to rewrite it in a more diplomatic way.