

Verbs with prepositions and particles

Most English verbs can be followed by prepositions or adverb particles. Examples are: switch off, turn down, walk down, look at, stare at, sit down etc.

Please sit down.

Can you switch off the light?

Why are you staring at me?

I saw Alan as I was driving down the street.

She ran into the room crying.

John fell off the ladder and broke his arm.

Some verbs and prepositions/particles are always used together. Examples are: *look at*, *stare at*, *throw at*, *listen to*, *switch off* etc. These combinations are often called phrasal verbs. Note that the meaning of a phrasal verb is sometimes very different from the meanings of the two parts taken separately.

The meeting has been put off. (= The meeting has been postponed.) (The meaning of put off is not the same as the meanings of put and off.)

Verbs with prepositions and particles together

A few verbs can be used with both an adverb particle and a preposition. Examples are: put up with, get on with and look out for.

I can't put up with her.

Word order

When prepositions are used with verbs, they usually go before objects.

He fell off the ladder. (NOT He fell the ladder off.)

Adverb particles can go before or after noun objects.

She switched off the heating. OR She switched the heating off.

Note that particles always go after pronoun objects.

She switched it off. (NOT She switched off it.)