

33. FOCUS ON: phrasal verbs and midsentence adverbs

As we saw in Section 17, adverbs are words that modify verbs. Some adverbs are called **midsentence** adverbs because they are commonly placed in the middle of a sentence.

Midsentence adverbs are usually placed before main verbs:

He X **goofs around**. She X
helped him **out**.

after any form of be:

He is X **goofing around**. She wasn't X
helping him **out**.

and between an auxiliary (helping) verb and the main verb:

He will X **goof around**.
She can't X **help** him **out**.

In questions, a midsentence adverb is usually placed between the subject and the main verb:

Does he X **goof around**?
Is he X **goof ing around**?
Has she X **helped** him **out**?

The following are common midsentence adverbs.

Adverbs of frequency

ever	typically	normally	hardly ever
always	ordinarily	occasionally	almost never
constantly	often	sometimes	never
almost always	frequently	seldom	not ever
usually	generally	rarely	

Other midsentence adverbs

already	merely	ultimately	probably
just	finally	eventually	most likely

Infinitive

	present tense	-ing form	past tense	past participle
blow up	blow up & blows up	blowing up	blew up	blown up

1. **blow... up p.v.** When something **blows up** or when someone **blows** something **up**, it explodes.

Seven people were killed when the building **blew up**.

The hijackers ultimately **blew** the plane **up**.

2. **blow... up p.v.** When something **blows up** or when someone **blows** something **up**, it becomes much larger because air or something else is being forced into it.

It always takes me an hour or more to **blow up** the balloons for a party.

Hank **blew up** a beach ball and threw it in the pool.

3. **blow... up p.v.** When you make a picture or photograph larger, you **blow** it **up**.

I **blew** the photograph **up** and framed it.

When you **blow** this photo of the car **up**, you can make out the license plate number.

blowup n. A **blowup** is a picture or photograph that has been made larger.

made a **blowup** of the photo and framed it.

4. **blow up (atlover) p.v. [informal]** When you **blow up** or **blow up** at someone, you suddenly become very angry. When you **blow up** over something, you suddenly become very angry because of it.

Heather **blew up** when she saw her boyfriend dancing with Linda.

Heather **blew up** at her boyfriend when she saw him dancing with Linda.

Dad **blew up** over the increase in our property taxes.

catch on

catch on & catches on	catching on	caught on	caught on
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1. **catch on p.v.** When a fashion or habit becomes popular and is adopted by many people, it **catches on**. When a product or service becomes popular and is used or bought by many people, it **catches on**.

Beta VCRs never **caught on**.

If his striped business suits **catch on**, the designer will become famous.

2. **catch on p.v.** When you eventually begin to understand something or begin to learn a skill after practicing and studying, you **catch on**.

When Sally studies something, she usually **catches on** right away.

Learning to dance the cumbia wasn't easy, but I eventually **caught on**.

3. **catch on (to) p.v.** When you **catch on** or **catch on** to people, you realize that they are trying to trick or cheat you.

If you keep lying to everyone, they'll eventually **catch on**.

It took me a while, but I finally **caught on** to him.

Infinitive

present tense	-ing form	past tense	past participle
come about come about & coming	come about	came about	come about

1. **come about** p.v. When something **comes about**, it happens, usually as a result of a series of events and actions.

He was the richest man in town, and now he's bankrupt. How did that **come about**?

Several major medical advances have **come about** in the last fifty years.

fall behind

fall behind & falls behind	falling behind	fell behind	fallen behind
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1. **fall behind** p.v. When you are in a group that is walking, running, driving, and so on, and they move ahead of you because you are moving more slowly than the others, you **fall behind**. **Keep up** is the opposite of **fall behind**.

Alfonso and Tom are walking so fast that I've **fallen behind**.

I was supposed to be following Linda to the party, but I **fell behind** and got lost.

1. **fall behind** (in) p.v. When you are in a group that is studying, working, and so on, and they learn faster or get more work done because you are learning or working more slowly than the others, you **fall behind** or **fall behind** in your work, studies, and so on. When you do not complete work as fast as it was originally planned and expected, you **fall behind** schedule. **Get behind** is similar to **fall behind**. **Keep up** is the opposite of **fall behind**.

Timmy was sick last semester, and he **fell behind** in his studies.

The sales manager wanted to know why I had **fallen behind** the rest of the department.

The building project will **fall behind** schedule if the construction workers go on strike.

3. **fall behind** (in) p.v. When you do not make the regular payments you are required to make, you **fall behind** or **fall behind** in your payments.

When I lost my job, I **fell behind** in my mortgage payments.

Don't **fall behind** in your payments, or your car will be repossessed.

goof around

goof around & goofs around	goofing around	goofed around	goofed around
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1. **goof around** p.v. [informal] When you waste time playing or doing silly or unimportant things, you **goof around**. **Fool around** is the same as **goof around**.

My brother drives his teachers crazy. He constantly **goofs around** and creates problems.

Stop **goofing around** and get to work.

Infinitive

	present tense	-ing form	past tense	past participle
help out	help out & helps out	helping out	helped out	helped out

1. **help... out** (with) **p.v.** When you **help out** or **help** people **out**, you assist them in doing some work or you lend or give them money or something else that they need.

Can you **help me out**? I need a hundred bucks until payday.

We had a lot of work to do, so Maria **helped out**.

know about

know about & knows about	knowing about	knew about	known about
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1. **know about p.v.** When you **know about** a situation, plan, or other information, you are aware of it.

Jim isn't here. Maybe he doesn't **know about** the schedule change.

Thanks for telling me, but I already **know all about** it.

2. **know about p.v.** When you have studied something and learned it, you **know about** it.

I don't **know** much **about** history. I was a business major.

Knowing about art and being an artist are two different things.

pull off

pull off & pulls off	pulling off	pulled off	pulled off
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1. **pull ...off p.v.** When you **pull** something off, you succeed in doing something difficult and possibly sneaky or illegal even though the chances of success are not high.

Mike tried to juggle three butcher knives and two bowling balls at the same time, but he couldn't pull it **off**.

When Jake said he was going to try to rob a Las Vegas casino, no one believed he **could pull it off**.

2. **pull off p.v.** When you are driving and you **pull off** the road, you drive to the side of the road and stop.

If I get sleepy while I'm driving, I always **pull off** the road and take a nap.

When I heard that strange noise, I **pulled off to** the side and checked the engine.

EXERCISE 33a — Complete the sentences with phrasal verbs from this section. Be sure the phrasal verbs are in the correct tense.

1. I need to move some furniture, and it's too heavy for me. Could you _____ me _____ tonight?

2. Television was invented in the 1920s, but it didn't start to _____ until the 1950s.
 3. Math is very difficult for Mike. If he takes the advanced class, he'll most likely _____.
 4. I didn't think Todd could manage going to school and working at the same time, but he _____ it _____.
 5. When Jim shows his terrible report card to his mother, she'll _____.
 6. Nancy's a hard worker. She never _____.
 7. The terrorists tried to _____ the embassy.
 8. A lot of changes have _____ in the last few years.
 9. The truck driver was lost, so he _____ to the side of the road and checked his map.
 10. Sam and Dave are so much faster on their bikes than I am that I always _____.
 11. Don't ask Ann; she doesn't _____ anything _____ it.
 12. I used to be able to trick my rich uncle into giving me money, but he's starting to _____ to me.
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13. _____ the balloons now; the party's going to start soon.
14. Bob started taking dance lessons, and he _____ right away.
15. If you _____ in your credit card payments, you'll damage your credit rating.
16. I usually ask Bill what he thinks before I buy a stock. He _____ a lot _____ investing.
17. I asked the photo lab to _____ the photo _____ 300 percent.

EXERCISE 33b — Complete the sentences with the correct second particles.

1. Todd was fired after he **blew up** _____ his boss.
2. Todd is usually so easygoing. What did he **blow up** _____?
3. Karen thinks she's so clever, but I'm starting to **catch on** _____ her.
4. If you don't start working harder, you're going to **fall behind** _____ math.
5. Thanks for **helping** me **out** _____ my algebra homework.

EXERCISE 33c — Write answers to the questions using phrasal verbs from this section. Be sure the phrasal verbs are in the correct tense.

1. The company started to sell chocolate toothpaste, but it never became popular. What didn't chocolate toothpaste do?
2. Sam has a lot of work to do before 5:00, so Lydia is doing some of it for him so that he won't have to work late. What is Lydia doing for Sam?
3. Nobody in the criminal gang thought they could steal an airplane, but they did. What did the gang do?
4. Ali doesn't usually do any work. He usually watches TV and listens to music. What does Ali usually do?
5. They sometimes destroy old buildings by making them explode. What do they sometimes do to old buildings?
6. The teacher frequently gets very angry at his students. What does the teacher frequently do?

7. Janice is aware of the problem because someone told her about it. What can you say about Janice and the problem?
8. The company was supposed to finish the project by September 1, but they didn't finish until November 14. What happened?
9. The professor asked you to explain how this situation happened. What did the professor ask you?

EXERCISE 33d, Review — Complete the sentences with these phrasal verbs from previous sections. Be sure the phrasal verbs are in the correct tense. To check their meanings, review the section number given after each one.

come out, 32	fall out, 32	look into, 31	rule out, 31
cut out, 31	give away, 28	plan on, 31	sort out, 30
do without, 31	go around, 20	put off, 31	space out, 30
empty out, 32	go out, 32	put out, 30	stick out, 32

1. Jake was in jail when the crime was committed, so the police were able to _____ him _____ as a suspect.
2. My fiancée's father got sick suddenly, so we had to _____ the wedding until later.
3. I was a little _____ when Melanie disagreed with me.
4. Linda's going to _____ getting her teeth bleached.
5. No one was surprised when the news _____.
6. The family business had to be sold after the family members _____ with each other.
7. I _____ and forgot to put socks on this morning.
8. I felt like an idiot — I had to _____ all day without socks on.
9. You can still eat this apple — just _____ the bad part.
10. When we decided on the Bahamas for our honeymoon, we didn't _____ a hurricane.
11. I was angry with my sister, but we talked and _____ everything _____.
12. Timmy told his mother that he hadn't eaten any cake, but the chocolate frosting on his face _____ him _____.
13. If you're studying a language, you can't _____ a dictionary.
14. Jim's job is very dangerous, but if he _____ it _____ for another year, he can retire with a pension.
15. These trash cans are getting full. Could you _____ them _____, please?
16. Put some more wood on the fire — it's starting to _____.