

29. FOCUS ON: phrasal verbs and **might**, **may**, and **can**

Possibility: **may** and **might**

Both **may** and **might** are used to express a medium level of possibility. When **may** and **might** are used to express possibility in the present or future, their meaning is the same, but **may** has a slightly more formal sound. **Might** is slightly more common in everyday American English:

Nancy might **drop in** tonight.

Nancy may **drop in** tonight.

The speaker believes that the possibility that Nancy will **drop in** and the possibility that she will not **drop in** are approximately equal.

Requests: **may** and **might**

Both **may** and **might** are used to make requests. **May** has a formal sound, and is less common than **might**. **Can** is the most common in American English:

most common: Can I **drop in** tonight?

formal: May I **drop in** tonight? very rare:

Might I **drop in** tonight?

Permission: **may** and **can**

May and **can** are also used to give permission. In this case, **may** is much more formal and is much less common than **can**. **Might** is not used for this purpose:

You can **drop in** after dinner. You

may **drop in** after dinner.

Infinitive

	present tense	-ing form	past tense	past^tidple
ask	ask for & asks for	asking for	asked for	asked for

1. **ask... for** p.v. When you **ask for** something, you tell someone that you want it.

We **asked** the waiter **for** some more coffee.

My wife might **ask for** more vacation time instead of a raise.

2. **ask for** p.v. When you say that people are **asking for** something or **asking for** it, you mean that they are doing or saying something that is likely to result in punishment or a negative consequence.

I'm warning you — if you keep doing that, you're **asking for** trouble.

You're **asking for** it! Don't say that again.

Infinitive			
present tense	-ing form	past tense	past participle
come apart			
come apart & comes apart	coming apart	came apart	come apart

1. come apart p.v. When something **comes** apart, the parts separate because it is old or in bad condition or because the parts were not strongly connected to each other.

This toy airplane is such a piece of junk that it **came apart** in my hand.

Be careful with this old book. It's **coming apart**.

drop in

drop in & drops in	dropping in	dropped in	dropped in
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1. drop in (on) p.v. When you **drop in** on people, you visit them unexpectedly.

If you're ever in my neighborhood **drop in**.

Sally **dropped in** on Marsha last night.

flip out

flip out & flips out	flipping out	flipped out	flipped out
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1. flip out p.v. [informal] When you **flip out**, you become very upset or very angry.

Bob **flipped out** when the city doubled his property taxes.

Keep your hands off Jim's computer — he'll **flip out** if you screw it up.

look out

look out & looks out	looking out	looked out	looked out
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1. look out (for) p.v. When you **look out** or **look out** for something, you remain alert for someone or something that is dangerous or important. When you tell people to **look out**, you are warning them of possible danger. **Look out** is the same as **watch out**.

Look out for bears when you camp in the mountains.

There's a lot of ice on the road, so **look out**.

lockout n. A **lockout** is someone who **looks out** for someone or something that is dangerous or important.

The burglars had **lockouts** on every corner to warn them if the police came.

luck out

luck out & lucks out	lucking out	lucked out	lucked out
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1. luck out p.v. [informal] When you **luck out**, something good happens to you or you avoid something bad happening to you.

Todd **lucked out** when he found that lottery ticket on the ground; it was a \$ 1 million winner.

I missed my flight, and the plane crashed. I guess I **lucked out**.

Infinitive

	present tense	-ing form	past tense	past participle
make out	make out & makes out	making out	made out	made out

1. make ...out p.v. When you can **make** something out, you can see it or hear it even though it is difficult to do so.

The audio system is so bad in the bus station that I can never **make out** what the speakers are saying. I think that might be a mountain goat up there near the top of the mountain. I can just barely **make it out** with these binoculars.

2. make... out p.v. [always used with "to be"] When you **make** people or things **out** to be a certain way or a certain thing, you describe or consider them to be this way or to be this thing.

Stop complaining — my food isn't as bad as you **make it out to be**.

The critics **made** the film **out** to be a real bore, but I liked it.

3. make... out (to) p.v. When you write the necessary information on the front of a check, you **make** the check **out**. When you write the name of a person, company, or other organization on the check, you **make** the check **out** to that person, company, or organization.

How should I **make** this check **out**?

There must be a mistake; this check is **made out** to my brother, not to me.

Nancy **made** a check **out** to the IPS for \$ 17,000.

made out part.adj. After the necessary information has been written on the front of a check, the check is **made out**.

Is the check **made out**, or is it blank?

4. make out (on) p.v. When you **make out** or **make out** on something, you do something successfully or survive a situation even though it may be difficult.

Karen had a job interview yesterday. I wonder how she **made out**.

Even though Jerry has lost his job, we'll **make out** somehow.

How did you **make out** on the test yesterday?

run across

run across & runs across	running across	ran across	run across
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1. run across p.v. When people or things **run across** a place, room, or building, they move from one side to the other very quickly.

The receiver **ran across** the field and caught the ball.

It's crazy to **run across** the street through the traffic instead of waiting for the light.

2. run across p.v. When you **run across** people or things, you see or find them without planning or expecting to. **Come across** is similar to **run across**.

/ don't go to that supermarket anymore because I may **run across** my ex-husband. Bob **ran across** one of his army buddies at the baseball game.

EXERCISE 29a — Complete the sentences with phrasal verbs from this section. Be sure the phrasal verbs are in the correct tense.

1. Can you tell me what this says? I can't _____ it _____ without my glasses.
2. The store we're going to is on the right side of the street, so _____ for it.
3. You didn't fix this very well; it's already _____ again.
4. Okay, I'll give you the money. Who should I _____ the check _____ to?
5. I'm going to be in Dan's neighborhood tomorrow, so I might _____ on him for a quick visit.
6. Ann's going to _____ when she sees this cigarette burn on her antique table.
7. Sally thinks she _____ okay on her driving test.
8. I wasn't surprised when I _____ Sam at the beach; he goes there a lot.
9. That's enough! If you don't stop bothering me, you're _____ it.
10. A police officer stopped me for going forty miles over the limit, and all he did was give me a warning. I really _____, didn't I?
11. Every night people call and _____ money for one charity or another.
12. Leticia was right about that restaurant. It was just as good as she _____ it _____ to be.

EXERCISE 29b — Write answers to the questions using phrasal verbs and participle adjectives from this section. Be sure the phrasal verbs are in the correct tense.

1. You got very upset when I wrecked your car. What did you do?
2. Timmy might tell Santa Claus that he wants a new bicycle. What might Timmy do?
3. I unexpectedly met my college roommate at the airport this morning. What did I do at the airport this morning?
4. Tom wrote all the necessary information on the check. What did Tom do?
5. In Question 4, how would you describe the check after Tom wrote all the necessary information on it?
6. Betty isn't expecting me, but I might go to her house this evening to visit her. What might I do to Betty?
7. The pieces of this chair are becoming separated. What is the chair doing?
8. You didn't have your homework ready, but the teacher didn't find out because she forgot to ask you for it. What did you do?

9. I can't read what that sign says because it's so far away. What can't I do?
10. Susie's father told her to be careful about cars when she rides her bicycle in the street. What did Susie's father tell her to do?

EXERCISE 29c — Write eight original sentences using phrasal verbs from this section.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

crackdown, 23	handover, 19	start-up, 26	warm-up, 19
cutoff, 11	holdout, 23	stickup, 14	
fixer-upper, 15	shutoff, 26	takeout, 11	

- 1, The company is accepting applications for the position until the _____ date, March 6th.
2. A _____ before exercise is a good idea.
3. We bought a _____, fixed a few things, added a bathroom, and sold it a year later for a nice profit.
4. Mom doesn't feel like cooking tonight, so we're getting _____ food.
5. Except for a few _____ hiding in the hills, all the rebels surrendered after the peace treaty.
6. The angry citizens demanded a _____ on crime in their neighborhood.
7. Most business _____ fail in less than three years.
8. If there's a problem with the machine, the _____ switch is right here.
9. The prime minister demanded the immediate _____ of the hostages.
10. The convenience store _____ was recorded on videotape.

EXERCISE 29e, 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.

break up, 28	do with, 25	go up, 26	settle for, 25
call back, 28	dry off, 27	knock off, 27	stand up, 28
call up, 28	give away, 28	lighten up, 25	think up, 25
carry out, 28	go over, 26	mess up, 28	zip up, 21

1. The teacher was too strict with her students, and the principal suggested that she _____.

2. Tom was expecting Nancy to come to his house for dinner, but she _____ him _____.

3. Letting Timi-ny use my computer was a mistake. He _____ it _____, and now it doesn't work.

4. They're asking \$340,000 for their house, but they might _____ \$300,000.

5. I told the school principal that Hank might have something to _____ the fish in the swimming pool.

6. Andrew Carnegie was a very rich man, but he _____ most of his money _____ before he died.

7. I gave Erik my telephone number, and he said he might _____ me _____ tonight.

8. Erik called while I was in the shower, so now I need to _____ him _____.

9. After the Soviet Union _____ in 1991, several new nations came into existence.

10. The coach is worried that the rain-soaked football field might not _____ in time for the game.

11. The company is planning to _____ a major reorganization.

12. Don't put the candle there; the cat might _____ it _____ and start a fire.

13. The students didn't understand the lesson, so the teacher _____ it again.

14. It's really cold out there — you might want to _____ your coat _____.

15. The Wilsons aren't sure where they will spend their vacation. They may _____ to Alaska to visit their son.

16. Ned's a dreamer. He's always trying to _____ a way to make money without working.