

Introduction

- 16.1** In 2.32 we defined COMPLEMENTATION as 'part of a phrase or clause which follows a word, and completes the specification of a meaning relationship which that word implies'. In this chapter, we examine the ways in which lexical verbs and adjectives determine, in this way, the grammatical patterns that follow them. We began this task in 2.19, where verbs were classified into various types (transitive, intransitive, copular, etc) according to their complementation. Now we must go further, and examine patterns of greater variety. But before doing so, we must analyse the phenomenon of multi-word verbs, a topic of peculiar importance in English. This study will occupy the first seventeen sections of the chapter, as a necessary prelude to the study of verb complementation.

Multi-word verbs**Verb-particle combinations**

- 16.2** The main category of multi-word verbs consists of such combinations as *drink up*, *dispose of*, and *get away with*, which we will study under the headings of PHRASAL VERB, PREPOSITIONAL VERB, and PHRASAL-PREPOSITIONAL VERB respectively. However, these combinations are considered multi-word verbs only where they behave as a single unit.

Since the verb has been considered a class of word (*cf* 2.35), it may seem a contradiction to speak of 'multi-word verbs'. The term 'word' is frequently used, however, not only for a morphologically defined word class, but also for an item which acts as a single word lexically or syntactically (*cf* 9.10*ff* on complex prepositions). It is this extended sense of 'verb' as a 'unit which behaves to some extent either lexically or syntactically as a single verb' that we use in labels such as 'prepositional verb'. Thus in the sentence:

We *disposed of* the problem.

the word *disposed* remains morphologically a verb, being the item which has variable inflection (*dispose/disposes/disposed*, etc); but the sequence *disposed of* also functions in various ways as a single unit, such that for some purposes the sentence can be reasonably divided into:

[We][disposed of][the problem].

rather than into:

[We][disposed][of the problem].

The words which follow the lexical verb in expressions like *drink up*, *dispose of*, and *get away with* are morphologically invariable, and will be given the neutral designation PARTICLES. They actually belong to two distinct but overlapping categories, that of prepositions and that of spatial adverbs (though such adverbs are not necessarily used with spatial meaning). The term 'particle' will therefore apply to such words as these (see the fuller lists in 9.7 and 9.66), when they follow and are closely associated with verbs.

PARTICLES

- (A) *against, among, as, at, beside, for, from, into, like, of, onto, upon, with, etc.*
 (B) *about, above, across, after, along, around, by, down, in, off, on, out* <AmE>, *over, past, round, through, under, up, etc.*
 (C) *aback, ahead, apart, aside, astray, away, back, forward(s), home, in front, on top, out* <BrE>, *together, etc.*
 (On *out* as a preposition, cf 9.18 Note.)

Those grouped in list (A) are prepositions only; those in (C) are spatial adverbs only (unless they form part of a complex preposition, as in *out of*); and those in (B) can be either prepositions or spatial adverbs, and in the latter function are known as 'prepositional adverbs' (cf 9.65f). List (C) includes adverbs like *away* and *on top*, which correspond to complex prepositions such as *away from* and *on top of* and so are also known as prepositional adverbs (cf 9.66). Thus we include particles which form the first element of a complex preposition:

Come *along* (*with us/me*). They moved *out* (*of the house*).

The most obvious difference between the prepositions and the spatial adverbs is that where prepositions require a following noun phrase as a prepositional complement, there is no such requirement for adverbs (cf, however, the phenomenon of deferred prepositions, 9.6). Hence Classes (A), (B), and (C) can be distinguished as follows:

	PREPOSITIONAL CONSTRUCTION	ADVERBIAL CONSTRUCTION
(A)	The dog went <i>for me</i> .	*The dog went <i>for</i> .
(B)	Jack fell <i>down the hill</i> .	Jack fell <i>down</i> .
(C)	*We must not look <i>back the past</i> .	We must not look <i>back</i> .

Particles of Class (B) are the only ones which are acceptable in both constructions.

Not all multi-word verbs consist of lexical verbs followed by particles. We shall illustrate other types, such as those of *take pride in*, *cut short*, *see fit*, or *put paid to*, in 16.7–8 and 16.17.

Note [a] Although the inflection of a multi-word verb is regularly attached to the lexical verb, the occurrence of 'slips of the tongue' such as the following (noted during a radio interview) deserves attention:

*The editor must do precisely as he *see fits*.

This anomalous shift of the inflection from the verb to the adjective testifies to a tendency for speakers to perceive the multi-word verb as a single grammatical unit.

[b] On the exceptional use of some Class (A) words as adverbs (eg: *to*), cf 9.66 Notes [a] and [b].

[c] The lexical verbs occurring in multi-word verbs are frequently the most common lexical verbs, and are typically associated with physical movement or state: eg: *come, fall, get, give, go, keep, make, put, and take*. At the other extreme, however, are words which occur as verbs only when combined with particles, eg: *beaver* in *beaver away*, *egg* in *egg on*, and *eke* in *eke out*:

She *egged* him *on*. *She *egged* (him).

Note also that some normally intransitive verbs can become transitive when combined with a particle, and that conversely some normally transitive verbs can become intransitive when combined with a particle:

They are *living* it *down*. *They are *living* it.
 The plane *took* *off*. *The plane *took*.

Phrasal, prepositional, and phrasal-prepositional verbs**Type I (intransitive) phrasal verbs**

- 16.3 Our procedure in 16.3–9 will be to illustrate the main categories of multi-word verbs, before the criteria for certain distinctions are considered more carefully in 16.11–16. One common type of multi-word verb is the *Type I* or intransitive phrasal verb consisting of a verb plus an adverb particle, as exemplified in:

The plane has just <i>touched down</i> .	Did he <i>catch on</i> ?
He is <i>playing around</i> .	The prisoner finally <i>broke down</i> .
I hope you'll <i>get by</i> .	She <i>turned up</i> unexpectedly.
How are you <i>getting on</i> ?	When will they <i>give in</i> ?
The plane has now <i>taken off</i> .	The tank <i>blew up</i> .

Such phrasal verbs are usually informal. The particles above come from Class (B) in 16.2, but similar examples can be given with particles from Class (C):

One of my papers has *gone astray*.
 The news made him *reel back*.
 The favourite *romped home*.
 The two girls have *fallen out*. [= 'quarrelled']

The particle functions like a predication adjunct (*cf* 8.26ff), and usually cannot be separated from its lexical verb:

?*The news made him *reel distractedly back*.

Although some of these are more idiomatic and cohesive than others, we will draw a distinction between such phrasal verbs, on the one hand, and FREE COMBINATIONS in which the verb and the adverb have distinct meanings on the other. In phrasal verbs like *give in* ['surrender'], *catch on* ['understand'], and *blow up* ['explode'], the meaning of the combination manifestly cannot be predicted from the meanings of verb and particle in isolation. But in free combinations the verb acts as a normal intransitive verb, and the adverb has its own meaning. For example:

He walked *past*. [= 'past the object/place']
 I waded *across*. [= 'across the river/water/etc']

Past and *across* here are adverbs (*cf* 9.65, 16.4 Note [d]), but their function is equivalent to that of a prepositional phrase of direction. The separability of verb and adverb in terms of meaning is shown by possible substitutions: for *wade in wade across*, for example, we could substitute *walk, run, swim, jump, fly*, etc; and for *across* we could substitute *in, through, over, up, down*, etc. In other cases, the particle may have an intensifying or aspectual force, as in *liven up, go on, or chatter away*.

There are also syntactic signs of cohesion. In free combinations, it is often possible to place a modifying adverb *right* (or sometimes *straight*) between the adverb particle and the verb:

Go *right/straight on*. Drink *right up*. Walk *straight in*.

This insertion is to differing extents unacceptable with phrasal verbs:

- ?The prisoner broke *right* down.
*She turned *right* up at last.

Another sign of a free combination is the possibility of placing the adverb before the verb with subject-verb inversion (or without inversion where the subject is a pronoun):

- Out* came the sun.
Up you come.
On we *drove* into the night.

But with phrasal verbs this is not possible:

- **Up* blew the tank.
**Up* it *blew*. ['exploded']
**Out* he *passed*. ['fainted']

However, in this as in other criteria, there is an unclear boundary between phrasal verbs and free combinations. With *They chattered away* the inversion is very marginally acceptable: ?**Away they chattered*. Some examples are more acceptable if the particle is reduplicated according to the pattern of iterative coordination (cf 13.101):

- On* and *on* he *went* about his wife and family.

And where the phrasal verb makes metaphorical use of spatial adverbs, inversion seems quite acceptable:

- Down* came the prices, and *up* *went* the sales.
There was a gust of wind, and *out* *went* the light.

We examine the boundary between multi-word verbs and free combinations more generally in 16.12.

Type II (transitive) phrasal verbs

- 16.4 Many phrasal verbs may take a direct object, and may therefore be described as transitive. However, to simplify comparison with prepositional verbs, we will call them *Type II* phrasal verbs, as contrasted with Type I (or intransitive) phrasal verbs. Examples are:

- | | |
|---|---|
| We will <i>set up</i> a new unit. | He can't <i>live down</i> his past. |
| Shall I <i>put away</i> the dishes? | I can't <i>make out</i> what he means. |
| <i>Find out</i> if they are coming. | <i>We pushed home</i> our advantage. |
| She's <i>bringing up</i> two children. | She <i>looked up</i> her friends. |
| Someone <i>turned on</i> the light. | I've <i>handed in</i> my registration. |
| They have <i>called off</i> the strike. | They may have <i>blown up</i> the bridge. |

Examples here and in 16.3 show that some combinations, such as *give in* and *blow up*, can be either Type I or Type II. In some cases, eg: *give in*, there is a substantial difference in meaning, and in others, eg: *blow up*, there is not (cf App I.18).

With most Type II phrasal verbs, as with free combinations of the same pattern, the particle can either precede or follow the direct object:

They *turned on* the light. They *turned* the light *on*.

Bearing in mind the adverbial status of the particle, we would indeed expect the latter order (SVOA) to be the more usual, even though it means a separation of the particle from its verb. When the object is a personal pronoun, the SVOA order is in fact the only one allowable:

*They *switched on* it. They *switched* it *on*.

The particle tends to precede the object if the object is long, or if the intention is that the object should receive end-focus (*cf* 18.3*f*).

As before, phrasal verbs have to be distinguished lexically from free syntactic combinations of verb and prepositional adverb. Contrast:

She *took in* the box. ['brought inside'] [FREE COMBINATION]
She *took in* her parents. ['deceived'] [PHRASAL VERB]

The verb and particle in *put out the cat*, for instance, preserve their separate meanings in that combination, as well as in a wide range of comparable combinations: *put + down/outside/away/aside; take/turn/bring/push/send/drag + out*. A highly idiomatic expression like *put off* ['postpone'] has no such variants at all, for the two words *put* and *off* are fused into a unit which allows for no substitution for the individual elements. Once again, there are unclear cases between these two extremes: some substitutions, but a limited number only, can be made in a 'semi-idiomatic' example such as *Turn out the light*:

Let's $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \textit{turn} \\ \textit{switch} \\ \textit{put} \end{array} \right\}$ it $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \textit{on.} \\ \textit{off.} \\ \textit{down.} \\ \textit{up.} \end{array} \right.$

With Type II phrasal verbs, there is no sensitive method of testing cohesion by placing the particle before the subject (*cf* 16.3), as this construction is scarcely possible even with free combinations: ?**Out he took a gun*. The other test of independence, insertion of an adverb before the particle, can however be used:

The pilot *jerked* the lever *right back*.
The dancer *threw* her hands *wildly about* above her head.

(Again, *right* is an intensifier of the particle, rather than an adverbial in itself.) Contrast the phrasal verb ?**They put the meeting hurriedly off*. Where there is an ambiguity between idiomatic and nonidiomatic interpretations of the same combination, insertion of an adverb will select the nonidiomatic one. Thus [1], unlike [2], can mean 'She reared the girls':

She *brought* the girls *up*. [1]
She *brought* the girls *right up*. [2]

But [2] can only have a spatial meaning 'She caused the girls to come up (the stairs, etc)'.
Like transitive verbs in general, Type II phrasal verbs can normally be turned into the passive without stylistic awkwardness (but *cf* Note [c]):

Aunt Ada *brought up* Roy. ~ Roy was *brought up* by Aunt Ada.

Note [a] Some Type II phrasal verbs do not easily allow the possibility of placing the particle after the object (unless the object is a pronoun):

They had *given up* hope. ~ ?They had *given* hope *up*.
They *laid down* their arms. ~ ?They *laid* their arms *down*.

This fixing of the SVAO order tends to occur, as the above examples illustrate, where there is a strong idiomatic bond (frequently matching a change from literal to metaphorical) between the phrasal verb and the object. In addition, the particle cannot normally be placed after a clausal object, such as an *-ing* clause, even when the clause is short:

She *gave up* trying. ~ *She *gave* trying *up*.

[b] Conversely, some phrasal verbs do not easily allow the placement of the particle before the object. In some cases the SVAO order is probably avoided because of ambiguity:

Get that parcel *off* right away! ~ *Get off* that parcel right away!

Here the transitive phrasal verb *get . . . off* can be confused with the intransitive verb *get* followed by the preposition *off*. This latter construction occurs, for example, in *Get off that stool – it's just been painted!* but would suggest an inappropriate meaning in the above sentence. Other reasons for avoiding the SVAO order include coordination of particles:

I *switched* the light *on and off*. ~ ?I *switched on and off* the light.

Also, as in [a] above, the order tends to be fixed by idiomatic convention:

I was	{	<i>crying</i> my eyes <i>out</i> .		{	<i>crying out</i> my eyes.
		<i>laughing</i> my head <i>off</i> .			<i>laughing off</i> my head.
		<i>sobbing</i> my heart <i>out</i> .			<i>sobbing out</i> my heart.

In these cases of conventionalized hyperbole, the SVAO order is impossible.

[c] Another restriction on phrasal verbs is that some of them do not have a passive. These are principally combinations for which the object is idiomatically limited to a particular noun or pronoun:

The train *picked up* speed. ~ *?Speed was *picked up* (by the train).
Jill and her boss don't *hit it off*. ~ *It is not *hit off* (by Jill and her boss).
['are not good friends']

[d] As in intransitive combinations, so in transitive verb-adverb combinations the adverb may be semantically equivalent to a reduced prepositional phrase, from which the complement has been omitted:

They *putted* the cart *along*. ['along the road, etc']
Move the furniture *out*. ['out of the house, etc']

These are clearly free combinations, not phrasal verbs.

[e] Expressions like *be fed up*, *be run down* appear to be passive phrasal verbs without a corresponding active:

I was *fed up* with the noise. ~ *The noise *fed me up*.

Yet these are not true passives, but rather 'pseudo-passives' (cf 3.77), as we see from their ability to combine with an intensifier such as *thoroughly*, and a copular verb such as *look*:

He *looked thoroughly* fed up.

and also by the impossibility of an agent *by*-phrase:

*I was fed up *by the noise*.

Type I prepositional verbs

16.5 Here, as in 16.3, we use *Type I* as a label for multi-word verbs without a direct object. A prepositional verb consists of a lexical verb followed by a preposition with which it is semantically and/or syntactically associated. The preposition, as is to be expected, precedes its complement:

<i>Look at</i> these pictures.	<i>Can you cope with</i> the work?
I don't <i>care for</i> Jane's parties.	I <i>approve of</i> their action.
We must <i>go into</i> the problem.	His eyes <i>lighted upon</i> the jewel.

In these examples, the lexical verb is followed by a particle which is unequivocally a preposition (*ie* from Class (A) in 16.2).

In using the term PREPOSITIONAL VERB we indicate that we regard the

second noun phrase in a sentence like [1] as the complement of the preposition *at* and not as the direct object of a verb *look at*:

Many people looked at *the pictures*. [1]

This is despite the fact that the passive is frequently possible (with some stylistic awkwardness) as in [1a]:

The picture was *looked at* by many people. [1a]

The intransitive interpretation, on the other hand, is justified (for example) by the potentiality of adverbial insertion:

Many people looked *disdainfully* at the picture.

where insertion between V and O_d is usually avoided:

*?Many people examined *disdainfully* the picture.

The noun phrase following the preposition in such constructions is termed a PREPOSITIONAL OBJECT.

There are therefore two complementary analyses of a sentence like *She looked after* ['tended'] *her son*:

ANALYSIS 1:	S	V	A
	<i>She</i>	<i>looked</i>	<i>after her son</i>
		└───┬───┘	└───┬───┘
		V	O

The former analysis is the one we follow if we call this kind of construction intransitive. Analysis 2, on the other hand, highlights the resemblance between *She looked after her son* and *She tended her son*. By naming this category of prepositional verbs 'Type I', we avoid the unclarity which results from the use of 'intransitive' or 'transitive' in this connection. The above analyses are discussed further in 16.13–15.

Note Whereas a sequence of verb and preposition like *live at* is a purely nonidiomatic free combination, in prepositional verbs like *look at*, *look for*, etc the verb word has a literal use, but has a fixed association with the preposition. These cases may, in their turn, be distinguished from other prepositional verbs, eg: *go into* ['investigate'] where both words form a semantically idiomatic (often metaphorical) unit (cf 16.12 for a further exploration of these categories and their relation to a scale of idiomaticity).

Prepositional verbs contrasted with phrasal verbs

16.6 We must now briefly attend to another distinction between similar-looking constructions. The following exemplify Type I prepositional verbs which contain particles of Class (B) in 16.2, and are therefore capable of confusion with Type II phrasal verbs (cf 16.4):

<i>She called on</i> her friends.	<i>You should invest in</i> property.
<i>We saw through</i> his imposture.	<i>She came by</i> a fortune.
<i>I've come across</i> a problem.	<i>The car ran over</i> a bump.

These are distinguished from almost all Type II phrasal verbs by the inability of the particle to be moved to a position after the following noun phrase:

- (1) She *called on* her friends. ~ *She *called* her friends *on*.
 [cf: (2) She *switched on* the light. ~ She *switched* the light *on*.]
 (1a) She *came by* a fortune. ~ *She *came* a fortune *by*. ['acquired']
 [cf: (2a) She *put by* a fortune. ~ She *put* a fortune *by*. ['kept']]

Similarly, the order of particle and pronoun is different:

- (1b) She *called on* them. NOT *She *called* them *on*.
 (2b) She *switched it on*. NOT *She *switched on* it.

Another criterion is stress. Both constructions generally permit the corresponding passive, but in the Type II phrasal verb (2), a higher degree of stress (including nuclear stress when the particle is in final position) usually falls on the adverb particle. In the prepositional verb (1), on the other hand, the stress normally occurs on the lexical verb preceding the particle:

- (1c) He *'called on* the dean. ~ The dean was *CALLED on*.
 (2c) She *switched 'on* the light. ~ The light was *switched ON*.

The same contrast of stress is observed in other constructions with a postponed particle, *eg* relative clauses:

- (1d) the fortune (that) he *CAME by*.
 (2d) the fortune (that) he *put BY*.

Compare also:

- (1e) This is a dangerous road to *GET over*. (*also* . . . to get *OVER*)
 (2e) It's a loss she will never get *OVER*.

However, the 'stress test' is not entirely reliable, as polysyllabic prepositions like *across*, *over*, and *without* usually receive stress, and other factors such as contrastive focus may affect the positioning of the nucleus:

- I could have done *withòUT* that *PRÉsent*.
 ~ That's a present I could have done *withòUT*.
 She will never get *òVER* it.
 ~ It is a loss that she will never get *òVER*.

We shall return to these distinctions in 16.16.

Note [a] It is not unusual for the same sequence of verb + particle to function either as a phrasal verb or as a prepositional verb:

- He *'turned on* his supPòRTers. [phrasal verb: 'He excited them'] [1]
 He *'turned on* his supPòRTers. [prepositional verb: 'He attacked them'] [2]

A reduced version of [1] would be *He 'turned them on*, while the correspondingly reduced version of [2] would be *He 'turned on them*.

[b] A special case of the above homonymy occurs where the phrasal and prepositional verbs are not only identical in form, but similar in meaning. Examples are *run through*, *run over*, and *look over*. Thus:

- The car *ran him over*. The car *ran over* him.

These have virtually the same meaning, but the former (the phrasal verb) is reserved for the description of driving accidents, in which the object refers to a casualty.

- The car *ran over* a BÙMP.

therefore has no corresponding phrasal verb construction:

- *The car *ran a 'bump over*.

Type II prepositional verbs

16.7 The Type I/Type II opposition applies not only to phrasal, but to prepositional verbs:

	TYPE I (without O _d)	TYPE II (with O _d)
PHRASAL VERB	Please <i>drink up</i> .	Please <i>drink it up</i> .
PREPOSITIONAL VERB	He <i>invested in</i> property.	He <i>invested his money in</i> property.

Type II prepositional verbs are followed by two noun phrases, normally separated by the preposition: the former is the direct object, the latter the prepositional object. Three subtypes may be distinguished; the italicized words indicate that the idiom has a different grammatical status in each case, as will be explained.

TYPE IIa

The gang *robbed her of* her necklace.
 He *deprived* the peasants *of* their land.
 They *plied* the young man *with* food.
 Please *confine* your remarks *to* the matter under discussion.
 This clothing will *protect* you *from* the worst weather.
 Jenny *thanked us for* the present.
 May I *remind you of* our agreement?
 They have *provided* the child *with* a good education.

TYPE IIb

They have *made a* (terrible) *mess of* the house.
 Did you *make* (any) *allowance for* inflation?
 Mary *took* (good) *care of* the children.

TYPE IIc

Suddenly we *caught sight of* the lifeboat.
Give way to traffic on the major road.
 I have *lost touch with* most of the family.

The first and most numerous type has a passive of the regular kind, the direct object becoming subject of the passive verb phrase:

She was *robbed of* her necklace (by the gang).
 The peasants were *deprived of* their land.
 The young man was *plied with* food.

With Type IIb, there are two possible passives: the regular passive in which the direct object becomes subject (labelled (1) below), and a less acceptable passive construction in which the prepositional object becomes subject (labelled (2) below):

- { (1) *A* (terrible) *mess* has been *made of* the house.
 { (2) (?) The house has been *made a* (terrible) *mess of*.
 { (1) Has (any) *allowance* been *made for* inflation?
 { (2) ?Has inflation been *made allowance for*?

But the object is still variable to some extent: *eg* an open-class adjective or a determiner can be added:

make a <i>horrible</i> mess of	take <i>some</i> notice of
pay <i>careful</i> attention to	take <i>unfair</i> advantage of
lose <i>all</i> hope of	make <i>occasional</i> mention of

To this extent, the idiomatic bond is weakened, and it is easier, especially when the object contains a modifier or determiner, to separate the object from the rest of the construction by the regular passive transformation:

Some notice was taken . . . *Careful attention* was paid . . .

In *Type IIc* the direct object is more firmly welded in its idiomatic position, so that its separation by means of the regular passive construction is awkward if not impossible: *?*Sight was caught of the lifeboat*. The object is typically invariable, and cannot easily be augmented by an adjective or a determiner: *cross swords with*, *give rise to*, *keep pace with*, *keep tabs on*, etc. Hence the dubious acceptability of *?*cross violent swords with*, *?*keep fast pace with*, *?*keep watchful tabs on*, etc. Other combinations of this kind are far more acceptable, however: *keep close tabs on*, *give sudden rise to*.

Phrasal-prepositional verbs

- 16.9 There is a further major category of multi-word verbs which will be called PHRASAL-PREPOSITIONAL verbs, because they contain, in addition to the lexical verb, both an adverb and a preposition as particles. These combinations are largely restricted to informal English:

We are all *looking forward to* your party on Saturday.
 He had to *put up with* a lot of teasing at school.
 Why don't you *look in on* Mrs Johnson on your way back?
 He thinks he can *get away with* everything.

A common sign of idiomatic status here, as with other categories, is the existence of a one-word paraphrase:

put up with = 'tolerate' *look in on* = 'visit'

The prepositional passive with such verbs is not too common, and is liable to sound cumbersome. Examples such as the following, however, are normal and acceptable:

These tantrums could not be <i>put up with</i> any longer.	['tolerated']
The death penalty has been recently <i>done away with</i> .	['abolished']
Such problems must be squarely <i>faced up to</i> .	['confronted']
They were <i>looked down on</i> by their neighbours.	['despised']

In addition to the Type I phrasal-prepositional verbs already illustrated, there are also Type II ones requiring a direct object:

<i>job N off with</i> <esp BrE>	<i>put N down to</i>	<i>take N out on</i>
<i>fix N up (with)</i>	<i>let N in on</i>	<i>put N up to</i>

(where 'N' again identifies the object noun phrase). Examples:

Don't *take it out on* me! ['vent your anger']
 The manager *fobbed me off with* a cheap camera. <esp BrE>
 We *put our success down to* hard work. ['attribute to']
 I'll *let you in on* a secret.

Only the regular passive occurs with these:

I was *fobbed off with* a cheap camera. <esp BrE>
 Our success can be *put down to* careful planning.
 Are you *fixed up with* a job yet?

Note There are two equivalent phrasal-prepositional verbs in which the two noun phrases following the verb exchange roles:

= { He *fobbed* a cheap camera *off on* the unsuspecting tourist.
 He *fobbed* the unsuspecting tourist *off with* a cheap camera.

A summary of types of multi-word verb

16.10 We have now reached a point where it will be useful to summarize the various categories described in 16.3–9. The picture which emerges in Table 16.10 is a symmetrical one, with three binary contrasts, expressed in the formula:

verb ± direct object ± adverb ± preposition

Table 16.10 Principal types of multi-word verbs

	Lexical Verb	Direct Object	Particles		+ Prepositional Object
			Adverb	Preposition	
1 (free combination) Type I PHRASAL VERB	(A) <i>come</i> (B) <i>crop</i>	—	<i>in</i> <i>up</i>	—	—
2 (free combination) Type II PHRASAL VERB	(A) <i>send</i> (B) <i>turn</i>	someone someone	<i>away</i> <i>down</i>	—	—
3 (free combination) Type I PREPOSITIONAL VERB	(A) <i>come</i> (B) <i>come</i>	—	—	<i>with</i> <i>across</i>	+ me + a problem
4 (free combination) Type II PREPOSITIONAL VERB	(A) <i>receive</i> (B) <i>take</i>	something someone	—	<i>from</i> <i>for</i>	+ me + a fool
5 (free combination) Type I PHRASAL- PREPOSITIONAL VERB	(A) <i>run</i> (B) <i>come</i>	—	<i>away</i> <i>up</i>	<i>with</i> <i>with</i>	+ it + an answer
6 (free combination) Type II PHRASAL- PREPOSITIONAL VERB	(A) <i>send</i> (B) <i>put</i>	someone someone	<i>out</i> <i>up</i>	<i>into</i> <i>for</i>	+ the world + election

[a] Examples (A) and (B) of each type illustrate respectively nonidiomatic and idiomatic variants. Thus (A) is a free combination, whereas (B) is a multi-word verb.

[b] The italicized words are those which make up the idiom or lexical unit.

Some semantic and syntactic distinctions

- 16.11 It will also be useful to analyse in a systematic manner three distinctions which underlie Table 16.10, and which have been found problematic by those dealing with this aspect of English grammar. The three distinctions, which have been touched on in preceding sections, are:

idiomatic versus nonidiomatic status (16.12)

prepositional verbs versus free combinations of verb + prepositional phrase
(16.13–15)

phrasal versus prepositional verbs (16.16)

The first two of these are gradient rather than clear-cut.

Semantic criteria for idiomatic status

- 16.12 (A) The semantic unity of multi-word verbs can often be manifested in replacement by a single-word verb; *eg: visit for call for, summon for call up, omit for leave out, tolerate for put up with*. This criterion, however, is not always reliable. First, there are multi-word verbs, like *get away with* and *run out of*, which do not have one-word paraphrases. Second, there are nonidiomatic combinations, such as *go across (= cross)*, *go past (= pass)*, and *sail around (= circumnavigate)* which do have such paraphrases.
- (B) The fact that the meaning of an idiom is not predictable from the meanings of its parts can be verified by noting that the meaning of the verb or particle in the combination does not remain constant when other parts of the idiom undergo substitution. This criterion leads us to recognize three main categories:
- (i) Free, nonidiomatic constructions, where the individual meanings of the components are apparent from their constancy in possible substitutions:

<i>bring</i>	}	<i>in</i>	}	<i>walk</i>	}	<i>up</i>
<i>take</i>		<i>out</i>		<i>run</i>		<i>down</i>
...	

- (ii) 'Semi-idiomatic' constructions which are variable but in a more limited way. The relation between the verb and particle is similar to that between a stem and an affix in word formation (*cf* App 1.5), in that the substitution of one verb for another, or one particle for another, is constrained by limited productivity. In phrasal verbs like *find out* ['discover'], *cut up* ['cut into pieces'] and *slacken off* ['reduce pace/energy'] the verb word keeps its meaning, whereas the meaning of the particle is less easy to isolate. In contrast, it is the particle which establishes a family resemblance in the following groups:

'persistent action'		'completion'	
<i>chatter away</i>	<i>fire away</i>	<i>drink up</i>	<i>break up</i>
<i>work away</i>	<i>beaver away</i>	<i>finish up</i>	<i>use up</i>
<BrE>			

'aimless behaviour'		'endurance'	
play <i>around</i>	mess <i>around</i>	draw <i>out</i>	eke <i>out</i>
fool <i>around</i>	wait <i>around</i>	last <i>out</i>	hold <i>out</i>

Completion can also be signalled by *out*, as in *find out*, *point out*, *seek out*, *figure out*, *work out*, etc.

- (iii) 'Highly idiomatic' constructions such as *bring up* ['rear'], *come by* ['acquire'], *turn up* ['make an appearance']. These are thoroughly idiomatic in that there is no possibility of contrastive substitution: *bring up/down*; *come by/past/through*; *turn up/down*; etc.

Putting a verb in the third category does not necessarily mean, however, that its meaning is completely opaque. We can see a metaphorical appropriateness in *bring up* for 'educate', and this is only one of many idiomatic verbs containing metaphors fairly clearly derived from their literal locative interpretations: *gloss over* (a difficulty); *hand down* (an heirloom), *piece together* (a story), etc. For our purposes it will be convenient in general to treat classes (II) and (III) as multi-word verbs.

Syntactic criteria for prepositional verbs

- 16.13 In distinguishing prepositional verbs such as *call on* ['visit'] in *He called on the dean* from other sequences of verb + preposition such as *called before* in *He called before lunch* (cf 16.5), the semantic criteria of idiomaticity must be supplemented by syntactic criteria.

We are chiefly concerned here with Type I verbs, whether these are prepositional verbs like *call on*, or phrasal-prepositional verbs such as *put up with*. How are we to choose between the two analyses of 16.5, that of SVO (with a prepositional object) and that of SVA (or in the case of phrasal-prepositional verbs, SVAA)? First, there are good reasons for arguing that even an idiomatic case like *He called on the dean* contains a phrase boundary between the verb and the particle:

- (A) The whole prepositional phrase may be fronted, *eg* in questions:

On whom did he call?

- (B) An adverb can be inserted between the verb and the particle:

He *called* unexpectedly *on the dean*.

- (C) The prepositional phrase can be isolated in other constructions; *eg* (optionally) in responses, in coordinate constructions, or in comparative constructions:

A: { On whom did he call?
Who(m) did he call on? } B: (On) his mother.

Did he call on the dean or (on) his friend?

He calls on the dean more often than (on) his friend.

We do not reject the SVA analysis, therefore, but rather we offer the SVO analysis as, to varying degrees, a suitable alternative.

The prepositional passive

16.14 We will accept the possibility of turning the prepositional complement into the subject of a passive sentence (*cf* 3.64) as one criterion favouring the SVO analysis. This construction, which leaves the preposition DEFERRED ('stranded') in its post-verbal position, will be called the PREPOSITIONAL PASSIVE. Contrast:

The dean *was called on*. *Lunch *was called after*.
The war *was put up with*. *Andy *was gone out with*.

Notice that ambiguous combinations like *arrive at* take the passive only when the preposition is part of an idiom:

We arrived at a station. ~ *A station was arrived at.
We arrived at a conclusion. ~ A conclusion was arrived at.

Combinations of verb and prepositional phrase which are awkward in brief sentences can, however, become more tolerable with an enlarged context:

?*This office has *been called/phoned from*.

This office has *been called/phoned from* so many times that it was natural to assume that it was the source of the latest call.

Here are some more usual cases of the prepositional passive, where the passive verb is a Type I prepositional verb:

Though something very different from ordinary forest management *is called for*, the trees in the parks do need the forester's skilled consideration.

This matter will have to *be dealt with* immediately.

Other possibilities *are talked of* by many of our colleagues.

If a woman with a university degree rejects a career for marriage, her education is not to *be thought of* as thrown away unless we count the family arena of no importance.

Other prepositional passives are:

<i>be asked for</i>	<i>be done for</i>	<i>be shouted at</i>
<i>be believed in</i>	<i>be hoped for</i>	<i>be stared at</i>
<i>be talked to</i>	<i>be done away with</i>	<i>be sent away for</i>

However, the passive is also quite acceptable with prepositions which have a locative meaning, and which on other grounds (*eg* the *wh*-question criterion of 16.15) must be judged as introducing a prepositional phrase of place:

They must have <i>played on</i> this field last week.	[1a]
~ This field must have <i>been played on</i> last week.	[1b]
Visitors are not to <i>sit on</i> these Louis XV chairs.	[2a]
~ These Louis XV chairs are not to <i>be sat on</i> .	[2b]
Primitive men once <i>lived in</i> these caves.	[3a]
~ These caves <i>were once lived in</i> by primitive men.	[3b]

We cannot, therefore, invariably regard the prepositional passive as a marker of a prepositional verb. Rather, the passive is primarily an indicator of the fact that the prepositional complement is being treated as an *affected*

participant in the clause (cf 10.19, 10.21). For example, in [1b] and [2b] above, the function of the passive is not merely to obtain end focus, but to imply that the subject of the passive clause refers to an object affected by the (unspecified) agent's action. The acceptability of the passive is thus accounted for in terms of clause participant roles (10.18*ff*), as well as in terms of convention or idiomatic status. Both factors play a role in making the passive select the abstract metaphorical meaning in:

They went into the tunnel. ~ *The tunnel was gone into.
They went into the problem. ~ The problem was gone into.

We may, in fact, recognize a strong association between these factors, and therefore between prepositional passives and prepositional verbs.

Note The prepositional passive is paralleled by a similar prepositional use in *-ed* participle clauses:
The shop *broken into* last week has now been reopened.
'Prepositional participles' can also be converted into adjectives: *the hoped-for arrival of the relief force*; *the much-talked-about visit of the Pope*. There are also 'pseudo-passive' (cf 3.77) occurrences of prepositional verbs, as in *I was feeling got at* (informal). The hyphen, in predicative position, is generally omitted.

The criterion of question forms

16.15 The second criterion for prepositional verbs is the formation of *wh*-questions with the pronouns *who(m)* and *what* (for personal and nonpersonal prepositional objects respectively), rather than with adverbial question forms such as *where*, *when*, *how*, or *why*:

John called on her. ~ *Who(m)* did John call on?
John looked for it. ~ *What* did John look for?

Contrast:

John called from the office. ~ *Where* did John call from?
John called after lunch. ~ *When* did John call?

Once again, the criterion is not clear-cut. There is firstly considerable overlap between the two question types: *She died of pneumonia* could be an answer either to the question *How did she die?* or (more usually) to the question *What did she die of?* Secondly, there are many types of prepositional phrases which are classified as adjuncts (cf 8.13, 9.14–53) but which regularly correspond with questions in *who(m)* or *what*. These are classes of adjunct for which English lacks an interrogative adverb, such as adjuncts of accompaniment:

A: { With whom did Peter go fishing? [1a]
 { Who(m) did Peter go fishing with? [1b]
B: ((He went fishing) with) his brother. [2]

The *with*-phrase in [2] can only be questioned by the interrogative pronoun *who(m)* in [1a] and [1b]; and yet the mobility and optionality of the *with*-phrase, as shown in [3], are signs of its adverbial status:

Peter (, with his brother,) went fishing. [3]

Since none of the criteria for prepositional or phrasal-prepositional verbs are

compelling, it is best to think of the boundary of these categories as a scale, such as that depicted in Fig 16.15:

V _{pass}	Q _{pro}	No Q _{adv}		
+	+	+	The police have <i>asked for</i> details.	[4]
+	+	-	The queen <i>slept in</i> this bed.	[5]
-	+	+	White wine <i>goes with</i> poultry.	[6]
-	+	-	She <i>died of</i> pneumonia.	[7]
-	-	+	His job also <i>comes into</i> the picture.	[8]
-	-	-	She <i>left before</i> noon.	[9]

V_{pass} = passive Q_{pro} = pronoun *wh*-word Q_{adv} = adverb *wh*-word

Fig 16.15

Of these, [4] is a clear case of a prepositional verb, while [5] and [6] are marginally in that class. The matrix is so arranged that the larger the number of pluses, the stronger the characteristics of the prepositional verb. For this reason, the *wh*-adverb criterion is expressed in a negative form, *ie* a plus in this column means 'the prepositional verb CANNOT be the answer to a *wh*-adverb'. *Ask for* in [4] is thus the combination which most clearly meets the requirements of the SVO analysis, and *left before* in [9], being least like a prepositional verb, is to be analysed with equal clarity as:

She [S] left [V] before noon [A].

It is perhaps surprising that [8], with its idiomatic character, scores so low on the prepositional verb scale. This is because in this sentence not only the verb and particle (*come into*) but also the object (*the picture*) is part of the idiom, a factor which inhibits the passive and interrogative transforms of the sentence.

An additional criterion for prepositional verbs is our unwillingness to have the preposition cut off from the lexical verb by fronting the whole prepositional phrase in (*eg*) *wh*-questions and relative clauses (*cf* 11.14ff, 17.9ff):

A: ?* <i>After whom</i> did she look?	}	B: She looked after Jim.
A: <i>Who(m)</i> did she look <i>after</i> ?		
A: <i>With whom</i> did she agree?	}	B: She agreed with Jim.
A: <i>Who(m)</i> did she agree <i>with</i> ?		

Similarly *What did she wish for?* is fully acceptable, but not *?For what did she wish?* By this test, *look after* and *wish for* come closer to the ideal prepositional verb than does *agree with*.

Note In addition to the mentioned *wh*-pronouns *who(m)* and *what*, there are other question forms with the determiners *what* and *which*; *eg* [5] could answer the question:

Which bed did the queen sleep in?

This alternative construction is ignored for the purposes of the above matrix.

Criteria for distinguishing phrasal and prepositional verbs

16.16 The question here is not one of gradience, but of how to distinguish two superficially like constructions, that of a Type I prepositional verb like *call*

on in *He called on the dean*, and that of a Type II phrasal verb such as *call up* in *He called up the dean* (cf 16.6).

The differences are both syntactic and phonological:

- (a) The particle of a phrasal verb can stand either before or after the noun phrase following the verb, but that of the prepositional verb must (unless deferred) precede the noun phrase.
- (b) When the noun phrase following the verb is a personal pronoun, the pronoun precedes the particle in the case of a phrasal verb, but follows the particle in the case of a prepositional verb.
- (c) An adverb (functioning as adjunct) can often be inserted between verb and particle in prepositional verbs, but not in phrasal verbs.
- (d) The particle of the phrasal verb cannot precede a relative pronoun at the beginning of a relative clause.
- (e) Similarly, the particle of a phrasal verb cannot precede the interrogative word at the beginning of a *wh*-question.
- (f) The particle of a phrasal verb is normally stressed (cf 16.6), and in final position normally bears the nuclear tone, whereas the particle of a prepositional verb is normally unstressed and has the 'tail' of the nuclear tone which falls on the lexical verb (cf App II.15).

These criteria are displayed in Table 16.16:

Table 16.16 Diagnostic frames for phrasal and prepositional verbs

TYPE I PREPOSITIONAL VERB	TYPE II PHRASAL VERB
<i>call on</i> = 'visit'	<i>call up</i> = 'summon'
(a) They <i>called on</i> the dean. ~ *They <i>called</i> the dean <i>on</i> .	They <i>called up</i> the dean. ~ They <i>called</i> the dean <i>up</i> .
(b) They <i>called on</i> him. ~ *They <i>called</i> him <i>on</i> .	They <i>called him up</i> . ~ *They <i>called up</i> him.
(c) They <i>called</i> angrily <i>on</i> the dean.	*They <i>called</i> angrily <i>up</i> the dean.
(d) the man <i>on</i> whom they <i>called</i>	*the man <i>up</i> whom they <i>called</i>
(e) <i>On</i> which man did they <i>call</i> ?	* <i>Up</i> which man did they <i>call</i> ?
(f) Which man did they <i>CALL on</i> ?	Which man did they <i>call UP</i> ?

Other multi-word verb constructions

- 16.17 Apart from the types of multi-word verb summarized in Table 16.10, some other idiomatic verb constructions may be briefly noted.

(a) VERB-ADJECTIVE COMBINATIONS

These are similar to phrasal verbs. Compare:

Meg *put* the cloth *straight*. Meg *put* the cat *out*.

Like phrasal verbs, verb-adjective combinations form cohesive units; but unlike phrasal verbs, some of them allow comparative modification:

John didn't put { the cloth as straight } as Meg.
 *the cat as out