

Stress in phrasal verbs

When we say phrasal verbs like *break down* or *sort out* we usually put the main stress on the particle (*down, out*). In fast speech, the verb and particle may also be linked or sounds can disappear:

I sorted it out (sortediTOUT)

It broke down (ibroDOWN)

A Practise saying the phrasal verbs. Link the words and stress the particle.

- 1 dropped out
- 2 broke in
- 3 write off
- 4 cracking down
- 5 brought me up
- 6 dates back
- 7 draw up
- 8 get over

B Work in pairs and look at these sentences. Discuss who the subject is in each case and what the sentence means.

- 1 He dropped out after six laps.
- 2 They broke in through a window.
- 3 They wrote it off as a loss.
- 4 They're cracking down on parking at the moment.
- 5 They brought me up to be polite.
- 6 It dates back centuries.
- 7 He'll draw up the contract and send it off today.
- 8 She took ages to get over the operation.

C In the same pairs, take turns to say a sentence in Exercise B. First say it slowly and then challenge each other to say it quicker each time.

In compound nouns based on phrasal verbs (e.g. *breakthrough*) the stress will normally fall on the first word in the compound – as happens with other compound nouns such as *heart disease*.

Researchers in China have made a major BREAKthrough in the treatment of HEART disease.

D With a different partner, decide where the main stress lies in the underlined words and phrases.

- 1 She had a very difficult upbringing as she grew up in a children's home.
- 2 The government's launched a crackdown on tax avoidance.
- 3 He had a breakdown when his business went under after the banking crisis.
- 4 There's quite a high dropout rate from the rehab programme because people can't keep up with the exercises.
- 5 We broke down on the motorway and, when they came to pick us up, they told us the car was a write-off.

E Use the last four units in the Vocabulary Builder (<http://www.eltoutcomes.com/vocabulary-builder>) to find other phrasal verbs and compound nouns. Practise saying some of the examples and collocations with the correct stress.