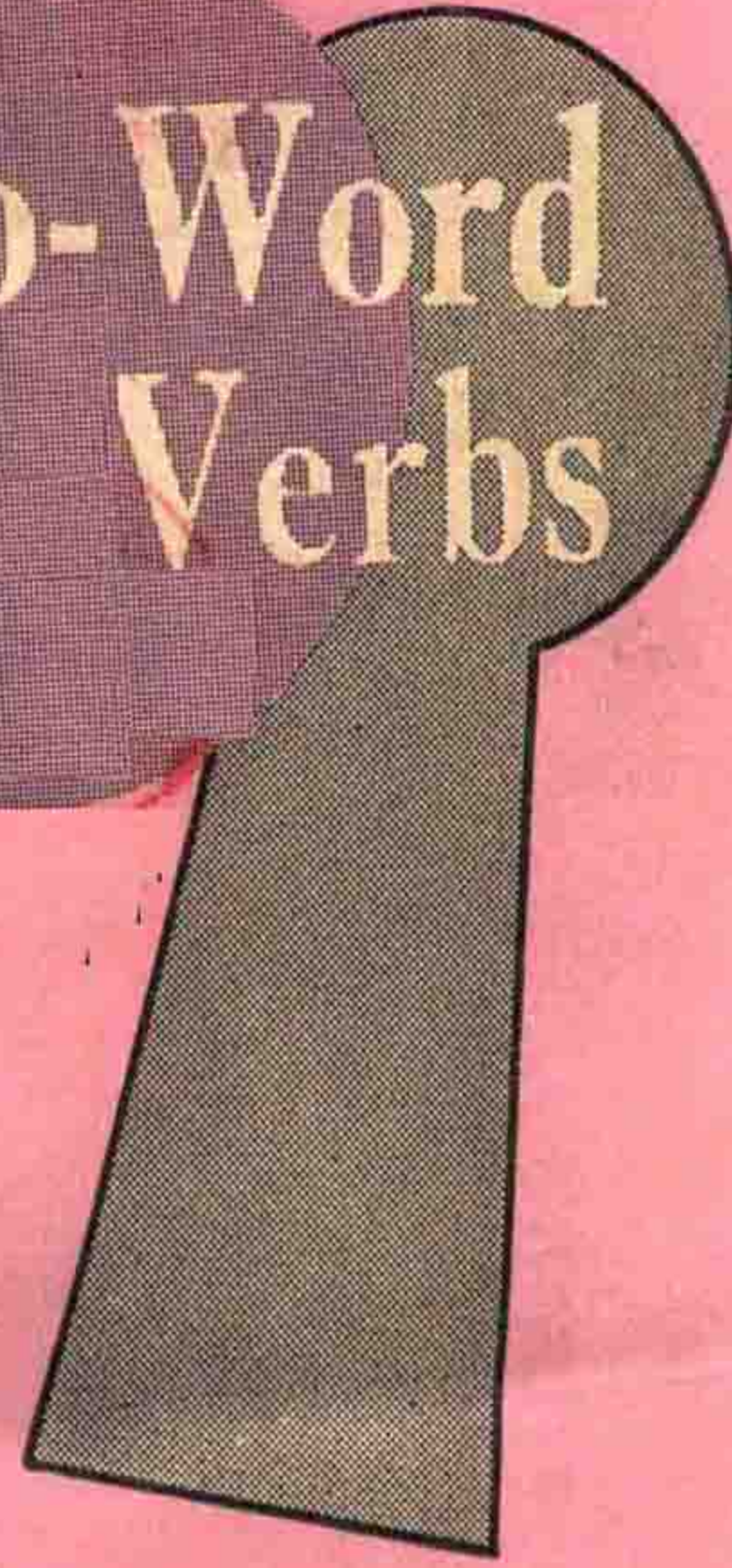
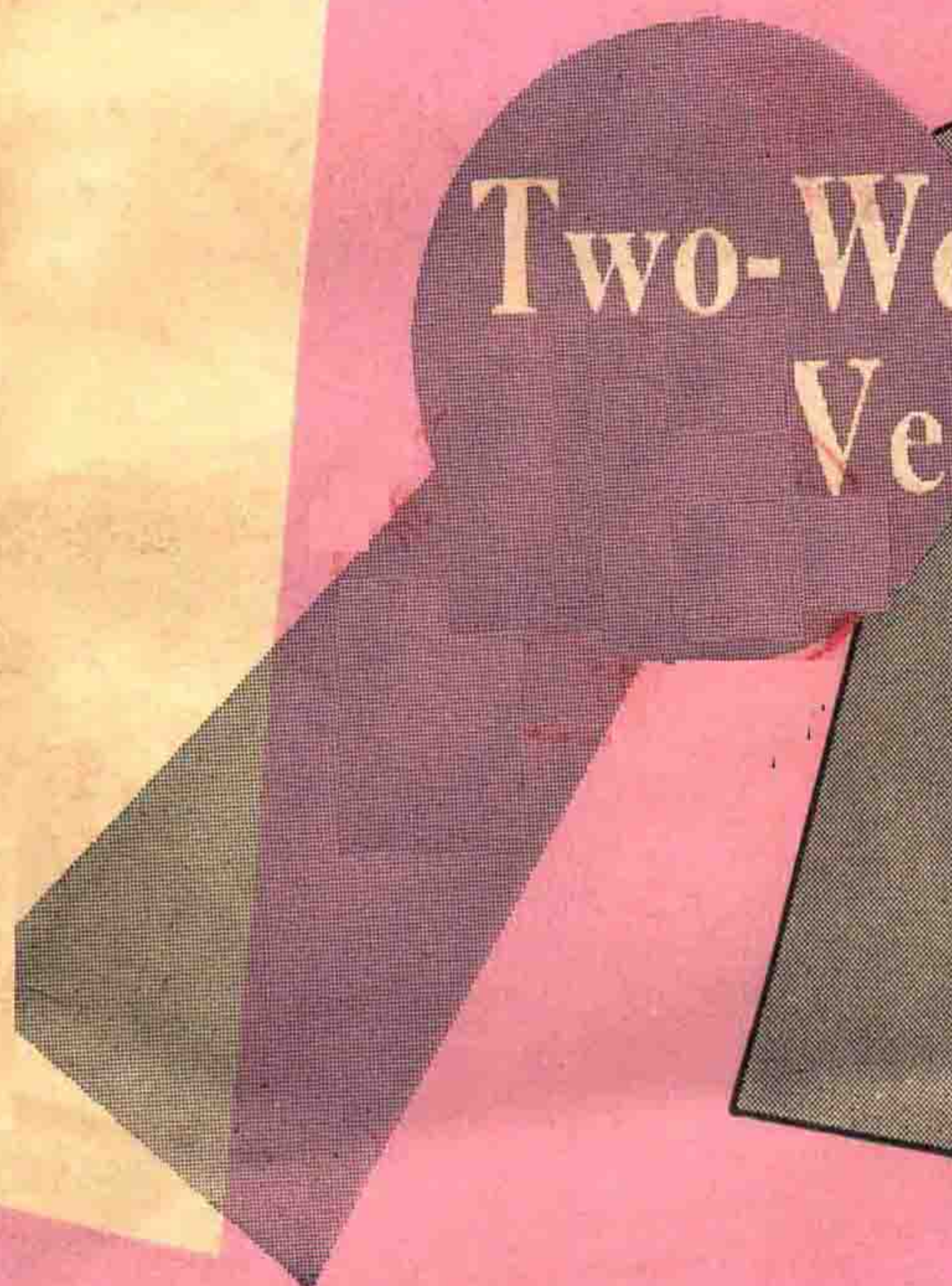




The Key to English



Two-Word Verbs

ENGLISH LANGUAGE SERVICES

the key to english



Two-Word Verbs

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PREFACE

This manual is intended to help the student, either in a class or working alone, to master a troublesome matter in English verb patterning, namely, the combination VERB + ADVERB (OR PREPOSITION), with or without a following noun object. These combinations are variously called "two-word verbs" (as in this book), "merged verbs," "compound verbs," "verb-adverb combinations," and so forth. We are dealing, of course, with structures like **put it on**, **call up Mr. Smith**, **take this information down**, in which a verb and a function word (adverb) work closely together to express a meaning. In addition, when an object is present, these words *may* be separated by noun objects and *must* be separated by unstressed pronoun objects. Such combinations are usually called "separable two-word verbs."

We also have combinations like **get on the bus**, **look for the money**, **wait on the customers**, which are inseparable—we say **get on it**, **look for it**, **wait on them**—but which nevertheless are more intimately connected than a mere intransitive verb followed by a prepositional phrase.

In identifying the inseparable two-word verbs, we have relied almost entirely on meaning. There is some overlapping with *The Key to English Prepositions 2*, since that book treats combinations of verbs and prepositional phrases. Our criterion is this: if the meaning of a combination can be predicted on the basis of the meaning of the individual parts (*listen to*, *insist on*), it is called a verb followed by a preposition; if not (*look for*, *call on*), it is called a two-word verb.

Some students may need to use a bilingual dictionary along with this book, as the vocabulary has not been restricted. The Glossary at the end of the book lists about 400 combinations, with definitions. It is indicative of the productivity of the two-word verb in English that only 120 full verbs occur in the list; differences in meaning are

expressed by changing the function word. The Glossary is not exhaustive; new combinations are readily coined, and new meanings of existing combinations are constantly being created. Nevertheless the Glossary contains most of the meanings of most of the combination that the student is likely to encounter in reading and in informal conversation, and if he masters all those presented in this book he should have little difficulty in the future with two-word verbs.

It was intended that the material in the book be studied in sequence, since each lesson is based to a degree on preceding material. Nevertheless, individual exercises can be used at any time to teach a point if desired.

The dots used to indicate stress are adapted from those originated by Kenneth Croft and are used with his authorization and approval.

This book is one of the KEY TO ENGLISH series, prepared for the Collier Macmillan English Program by the Materials Development Staff of English Language Services, Inc., under the co-direction of Edwin T. Cornelius, Jr., and Willard D. Sheeler. *The Key to English Two-Word Verbs* was written by Earle W Brockman and Winifred Jones.

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INTRODUCTION

To the learner of English, one of the most irritating and frustrating aspects of the language is the formation of special expressions or idioms. The student discovers, to his dismay, that there are dozens of word combinations whose meaning bears little or no relationship to the individual words of which they are composed. He learns, for example, the words *call* and *off*, and then some time later discovers that there is a special expression *call off* which means "cancel." On another occasion he may encounter the expression *off and on* and be astonished to learn that this phrase is an expression of time, not one of place or location or direction. (It means "intermittently.")

And so it continues, a seemingly endless list of formations involving nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and function words without any apparent regard for logic in either construction or meaning. This process of combining individual words into new units having variant meanings is not peculiar to English, of course; similar idiomatic formations exist in all languages. Many such special expressions, in English as well as in other languages, are unpredictable and patternless because they are derived from cultural factors other than language, from folklore, from famous proverbs, even from politics and current events. Expressions such as "sitting duck" (*an easy target*), "pull someone's leg" (*tease or fool someone*), or "New Deal" (a particular governmental policy developed in the United States under President Franklin D. Roosevelt) have similarly picturesque counterparts in other languages. Phrases such as these are probably best learned one by one as separate vocabulary items.

In one area of this maze of special expressions, however, a more systematic approach is possible. The **two-word verb** occurs in sufficient numbers and with sufficient consistency in structural patterns to permit the formation of organized lists and certain rules of word order. Gram-

marians are not in complete agreement upon the definition of two-word verbs in English, nor, for that matter, even upon the existence of such a category. Many call them verb-adverb or verb-preposition combinations. But for the student of English the presentation of such groups of verbs along with certain guides to problems of word order, stress, and intonation is a definite aid in his study of the language. And this, of course, is the intent of this textbook: to provide a practice and guide book in the use of two-word verbs.

Definition of the Two-Word Verb

For the purpose of this text, we will say that the two-word verb in English has the following characteristics:

(a) The two-word verb consists of a verb followed by a function word that may also function in English sentences as a preposition.

(b) The two-word verb is a semantic unit having a meaning which often differs from the sum of the meanings of its individual parts.

(c) The two-word verb is a grammatical unit which fulfills normal verb functions in English sentences. It may or may not be followed by a noun object. Whether a following noun is the object of the verb or the object of the preposition following the verb is of little consequence here. We will call all such nouns simply "objects."

This is not presented as a definitive statement. Indeed, as we progress in our study of this particular problem in English grammar, we become more and more aware of the difficulties of making a complete classification of two-word verbs, and we will be forced to modify our definition at certain points.

Note on Stress and Intonation

Stress is the degree of loudness with which a syllable is spoken. English has three levels: loud, which will be

represented in this book by a large dot ●; medium, represented by •; and weak, represented by .

In addition, we must discuss **word stress**. Every word, as well as many compounds that are written as more than one word (for example, *look over*), has its own stress pattern. There is one loud stress, and the other syllables, if any, have medium or weak stress.

Examples:

● . . ● .
extinguish look over

There can be only one loud stress in each phrase. Therefore, when words are combined in phrases, the word stresses of all but one of them are reduced to medium or weak.

Examples:

● . . ● .
out out the window

● . ●
put put out

. . . . ● .
put it out the window

It is always the word stress that is reduced. The other syllables of the word or phrase remain unchanged.

Intonation is the rise and fall of the pitch of the voice as one talks. It is closely bound up with stress, so much so that authorities disagree as to the best way to analyze these features and some of them insist that they cannot be treated separately. A detailed treatment of intonation is beyond the scope of this book. In general, if the intonation requires the pitch level of a phrase to change, it will change on the syllable that has loud stress. In a falling intonation pattern, as at the end of most statements, the

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pitch drops during the utterance of the loud syllable if it is the last one in the phrase and immediately after it if there are other syllables in the phrase.

This is not a complete statement of intonation phenomena, of course. There are many complications, and mastery of stress and intonation can come only after long practice and careful imitation of a good speaker of English.

Say these words and phrases:

●
put

●
look

● ●
put on

● ●
look out

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
Put on your rubbers today. Look out for the cars.

LESSON 1

Review of Verbs and Prepositions

In our study of the two-word verb in English, let us first consider the form of this type of word grouping. According to our definition, a two-word verb consists of a verb followed by a second word which normally functions as a preposition. Since verbs and prepositions are integral parts of two-word verbs, we should first of all establish our definitions of these two types of words. Briefly, in review, a verb is any word which can have the endings *-(e)s*, *-ing*, and *-(e)d* (or certain irregular inflections) and which can appear in one or more of the following positions in English sentences:

Don't _____. (*go, laugh, smoke, worry*)

Don't _____ it. (*take, move, believe, repeat*)

They (You. We) _____ strange. (*are, seem, look, sound*)

A preposition is a function word that appears before nouns and relates the noun to some other construction in the sentence.

We walked _____ the park. (*in, through, around, toward*)

_____ our vacation we went to New York. (*During, Before, After*)

The package is _____ my new desk. (*in, on, under, near, by*)

Sentences for Practice

A. Practice these sentences, giving loud stress to the last word.

1. Don't play in the street.
2. Don't fall down the stairs.
3. Don't walk on the grass.

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4. Don't speak to the guards.
5. Don't climb up the tree.
6. Don't run through the park.
7. Don't talk to the boys.
8. Don't stand by the door.
9. Don't drive near the lake.
10. Don't run down the hill.

B. Practice these sentences, each of which ends with a prepositional phrase.

1. We drove our car *around the block*.
2. She served ice cream *after dinner*.
3. I took a walk *along the river*.
4. She swept the dust *under the rug*.
5. They hung the painting *above the fireplace*.
6. He studies French *during the summer*.
7. I received a card *from my friends*.
8. We sent a notice *about the meeting*.
9. He threw a stone *across the lake*.
10. I explained the problem *to the class*.

C. Practice these sentences, each of which contains a noun followed by a prepositional phrase.

1. The boy *in the blue suit* is my brother.
2. The man *with the red hair* seems familiar.
3. The gift *for his wife* was beautiful.
4. The shop *across the street* looks familiar.
5. The apples *from this tree* taste delicious.
6. The roses *behind the house* smell fragrant.
7. The lock *on the door* feels loose.
8. The news *about the crisis* appears encouraging.
9. The train *to the city* was crowded.
10. The story *of his life* sounds interesting.

Exercises

A. Read the following paragraph. List all the verbs (including ing-forms and past participles). Then list all the prepositions (omitting *to* before verbs).

The children, of course, were delighted by the trip to the circus, and even the adults had to admit that they were pleased with the evening's performance. It was difficult to see everything, for the spectators had to choose among the spectacles in each of the three rings. The animal trainer, with his lions and tigers, was the first to appear in the center ring, while on the left, the high-wire artist performed under a glowing spotlight, and to the right a troupe of weight-lifters astonished the audience. The tricks of the trained dogs, jumping and dancing around the ring with their tiny red hats on their heads, especially pleased the children. The trapeze artists, swinging high above the crowd, were a thrilling sight of skill and grace. All in all, it was a lot of fun for everyone who went.

B. In each of the following sentences, substitute two or more different prepositions for those in italics. In the first, for example, the prepositions *before*, *after*, and *at* could be substituted for *until*, and the meaning of the sentence altered.

1. The bus won't leave *until* ten o'clock.
2. The children ran *to* the playground.
3. In the classroom, John sits *behind* Charles.
4. The post office is *near* the bank.
5. The Smiths live in the apartment *above* ours.
6. We will be in New York *in* three hours.
7. I met Mr. and Mrs. Carter *during* the dance.
8. Does this bus go *toward* the museum?

C. In each of the following sentences, substitute two or more different verbs for each verb in italics. For example, in the first, the verbs *fly*, *go*, and *travel* could be used instead of *drive*.

1. Next year we are going to *drive* to New York.
2. Have you *finished* all the lessons in the book?
3. The Andersons *painted* their house last week.
4. The guests are *waiting* in the living room.
5. My sister doesn't *want* to travel around the world.
6. When will they *report* the news to the public?
7. In the evening, I enjoy *talking* to my friends.
8. Do you intend to *work* in Philadelphia?

Examples of Two-Word Verbs

From the information presented in Lesson 1, we might expect that two-word verbs could be freely formed by combining the verbs presented in the first group of examples and the prepositions presented in the second group.

Verbs

go
laugh
smoke
worry
take
move
believe
repeat
are
seem
look
sound

Prepositions

in
through
around
toward
during
before
after
in
on
under
near
by

But such is not the case. We cannot "create" a two-word verb by arbitrarily combining any verb whatever with any preposition whatever. The problem of the student is not to make two-word verbs, but to recognize them.

Now we must differentiate between two-word verbs and normal verb-preposition sequences.

At this point let us refer to another section of our definition: a two-word verb is a semantic unit having a meaning which often differs from the sum of the meanings of its separate parts. Notice, for example, the contrasts in meaning in these two sentences using the sequence *call up*.

Please *call up* the stairs and wake the children.

(*Call* and *up* have their ordinary meanings.)

I want to *call up* the department store, but I don't know the number.

(*Call up* means "telephone.")

In the first sentence we have used *call* as a verb and *up* in a prepositional phrase, indicating direction. In the second sentence, however, *call up* has a meaning of its own: "telephone." *Call up*, then, is a typical two-word verb. Other examples are illustrated in the sentences below.

<i>Verb + Prepositional Phrase</i>	<i>Two-Word Verb</i>
The boys ran <i>into the street</i> .	Mr. Brown ran into an old friend yesterday. (<i>met by accident</i>)
The two housewives enjoy talking <i>over the fence</i> .	The committee is talking over our report. (<i>discussing</i>)
We looked up <i>the street</i> but saw no one.	Sally looked up the word because she didn't understand it. (<i>sought in a reference book</i>)
After turning on <i>Tenth Street</i> , drive north.	Don't you remember turning on the light? (<i>starting the operation of</i>)
Turn off <i>the highway</i> at the next intersection.	Turn off the radio, please. (<i>stop the operation of</i>)
I waited on <i>the corner</i> for an hour.	She waited on us quietly and efficiently. (<i>served</i>)
If you look over <i>the mountains</i> , you will see a rainbow.	The teacher will look over our tests tomorrow. (<i>examine</i>)
The passers-by looked into <i>the window</i> curiously.	Have the policemen looked into the bank robbery? (<i>investigated</i>)

These pairs of sentences illustrate differences not only in meaning, but also in the interior relationships of the sentence parts. The first column of sentences clearly illustrates the use of prepositional phrases as adverbial

modifiers. For each of these sentences we can compose a question with "where" and give a meaningful answer by using the prepositional phrase.

Where did the boys run? Into the street.

Where did the housewives talk? Over the fence.

Where did we look? Up the street.

If we form a question with "where" for the sentences in the second column, however, we find that there is no meaningful response.

Where did Mr. Brown run? Into an old friend. (*not meaningful*)

Where is the committee talking? Over the report. (*not meaningful*)

But when we formulate a question with "what" or "whom," using our two-word verb as *a unit*, we find that the meaning is clear.

Whom did Mr. Brown run into? An old friend.

What is the committee talking over? The report.

What did Sally look up? The word.

We have now applied the last part of our definition: a two-word verb is a grammatical unit which fulfills the normal functions of a verb in a sentence. In all of the sentences above, we will consider the noun phrases which follow the two-word verbs as the objects of the two-word verbs, not as the objects of the prepositions. In other words, these two-word verbs have objects just like ordinary transitive verbs. Here are some other common two-word verbs that can have objects, with some of their meanings. (Many two-word verbs have several meanings, as the student will learn upon consulting the Glossary at the end of this book.)

bring about	<i>cause to happen</i>
bring up	<i>raise, care for from childhood</i>
call off	<i>cancel</i>
call on	<i>visit</i>
carry on	<i>continue</i>
carry out	<i>fulfill; complete</i>
come across	<i>discover accidentally</i>
get off	<i>descend from, leave (e.g., a public vehicle or other conveyance)</i>
get on	<i>mount, enter (a public vehicle, a horse, etc.)</i>
leave out	<i>omit</i>
look over	<i>examine</i>
make up	<i>invent, compose</i>
pick out	<i>select</i>
put off	<i>postpone</i>
put on	<i>dress in</i>
put out	<i>extinguish</i>
take up	<i>begin to study; prepare for a career in</i>

Sentences for Practice

A. Practice saying the following sentences aloud, paying particular attention to the differences in stress and the location of the pause. These differences occur primarily in slow, deliberate speech. In rapid speech, the differences tend to disappear.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. I <i>called</i> up the stairs. | I called <i>up</i> my niece. |
| 2. She <i>ran</i> into the room. | She ran <i>into</i> her friend. |
| 3. We <i>looked</i> up the street. | We looked <i>up</i> the words. |
| 4. They <i>turned</i> on the highway. | They turned <i>on</i> the street lights. |
| 5. We <i>turned</i> off the road. | We'll turn <i>off</i> the lamp. |
| 6. She <i>waited</i> on the porch. | She's waiting <i>on</i> the guests. |