EPISODE 006

Learn Phrasal Verbs with a Story

Common Phrasal Verbs with Turn

Full transcript · speaking practice · vocabulary review

Hi everybody! This is the Speak English Now Podcast.

Today, we're going to practice some **common phrasal verbs** with the verb *turn*.

Phrasal verbs can feel **overwhelming**.

You know the verb, but then you add a small word, and suddenly the meaning changes.

And sometimes the same phrasal verb has more than one meaning.

So, how can you learn all of them?

Well, you don't have to.

You don't need to **figure out** hundreds of phrasal verbs at the same time.

A better idea is to learn the most useful ones in **context**.

That means you hear them inside real sentences and simple situations.

So today, we'll **prioritize** just a few common phrasal verbs with *turn*.

We'll keep the lesson **manageable**.

And later, you'll hear them again in a Mini-Story.

Let's start with *turn on*.

Turn on means to start a device, a light, or something similar.

For example:

Can you turn on the TV?
I want to watch the news.

It's dark in here.
Please turn on the light.

Now let's look at the opposite: *turn off*.

Turn off means to stop a device or light.

Please turn off the TV.
I'm trying to sleep.

Don't forget to turn off the light before you leave.

Now let's look at *turn up*.

Turn up can mean to increase the volume, heat, or another setting.

For example:

I can't hear the movie.
Can you turn it up?

It's cold in here.
Can you turn up the heat?

And the opposite is *turn down*.

If the music is too loud, you can say:

Please turn it down.

Turn down also has another useful meaning.

It can mean to **reject** or refuse an offer or invitation.

For example:

They offered me the job, but I turned it down.

The important idea is that the person said no.

Before you turn down an offer, you may want to **consider** it carefully.

And finally, we have *turn out*.

We often use *turn out* when we discover the real situation or when something ends in a certain way.

Very often, the result is **unexpected**.

For example:

I thought the movie would be boring, but it turned out to be funny.

Or:

We thought the restaurant was closed, but it turned out to be open.

The **outcome** was different from what we expected.

Mini-Story

Speaking Practice

Don't try to memorize every sentence.

And don't **rely on** translation alone.

Listen to the situation and notice what is happening.

A Mini-Story can make these expressions more **memorable** because you hear them again and again while answering easy questions.

One thing to **keep in mind**:

You don't need long answers.

Short and quick answers are better.

Try to answer before I give you the answer.

Ready?

Let's go!

Alex is at home on a rainy evening.

He wants to relax and watch TV.

So, he turns the TV on.

Does Alex want to go outside?

No. He doesn't want to go outside.

Does he want to watch TV?

Yes. He wants to watch TV.

What does Alex turn on?

The TV. Alex turns on the TV.

Does he turn on the radio?

No. He doesn't turn on the radio.

He turns on the TV.

The TV is on, but the volume is very low.

Can Alex hear the TV well?
No. The volume is too low.

Does Alex turn the volume down?
No. He doesn't turn it down.

He turns it up.

What does Alex turn up?
The volume.

He turns the volume up so he can hear better.

Now Alex can hear the news.

The first story is about a woman named Emma.

Is the story about Alex?
No. It's about Emma.

Who is it about?
Emma.

Emma owns a very small house shaped like a teapot.

Is her house shaped like a shoe?
No. Not a shoe.

It's shaped like a teapot.

Is the house enormous?
No. It's very small.

A hotel company wants to buy Emma's little house.

Does the company want to buy the house?
Yes. It wants to buy it.

Does the company offer Emma fifty dollars?
No. Fifty dollars would be a terrible offer!

The company offers her two hundred thousand dollars.

Does Emma accept the offer?
No. She doesn't.

She turns it down.

What does Emma turn down?
The offer.

She turns down the company's offer.

Does turn down mean she makes the volume lower here?
No.

Here, turn down means to refuse an offer.

So, Emma says no.

Alex is surprised.

He thinks two hundred thousand dollars is a lot of money.

Does Alex understand Emma's decision immediately?

No. He's surprised.

Then the reporter explains the story.

It turns out that Emma's grandfather built the house many years ago.

Did Emma buy the house last week?

No.

Her grandfather built it many years ago.

Who built the house?

Emma's grandfather.

It turns out that the house is very special to Emma.

Is the house special because it has a huge swimming pool?

No!

It's special because her grandfather built it.

Does turn out mean someone turns off the house?

No.

Here, it means we discover the real situation.

What turns out to be true?

That Emma's grandfather built the house.

And the house is very special to her.

Now Alex understands why Emma turned down the offer.

Did she reject the offer because she hates money?

No.

She turned it down because the house means a lot to her.

The news continues.

But the next story is about a very long meeting at city hall.

After a few minutes, Alex gets sleepy.

Is Alex becoming more excited?

No. He's getting sleepy.

Does he turn the volume up again?

No.

This time, he turns it down.

Why does he turn it down?

Because he's tired and the story is boring.

Alex closes his eyes.

A few minutes later, he's almost asleep.

So, what does he do?

He turns the TV off.

Does he leave it on all night?

No.

He turns it off.

Then Alex goes to bed.

Very good!

That's the end of the Mini-Story.

Today you heard *turn on*, *turn off*, *turn up*, *turn down*, and *turn out* many times.

And you heard them inside a simple story.

When you meet a phrasal verb inside a clear situation, you don't always need a long definition.

You start to understand it from what is happening.

And when you hear it again and again, it becomes easier to recognize.

So listen to this episode again.

Answer the questions again.

You may notice that your answers come a little faster the second or third time.

If you enjoy this type of practice, you can find more Mini-Stories and repeated listening practice in my Premium Courses. Visit: SpeakEnglishPodcast.com/courses to learn more about the courses. And if you have any questions use the contact page on my website. I promise to answer personally as soon as possible.

Thanks for listening.

And I'll see you in the next episode.

Review

Vocabulary from This Episode

Review the most useful words and expressions before listening again.

01 **overwhelming** feeling like something is too much to manage.	07 **consider** think carefully about something.
02 **figure out** understand something or find the answer.	08 **unexpected** surprising because you didn't think it would happen.
03 **context** the situation around a word or idea that helps you understand it.	09 **outcome** the final result of a situation.
04 **prioritize** decide what is most important.	10 **rely on** depend on something or someone.
05 **manageable** not too difficult or too much to handle.	11 **memorable** easy to remember.
06 **reject** say no to an offer or idea.	12 **keep in mind** remember something important while thinking or making a decision.

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