

POWER OF ENGLISH PHRASAL VERBS



By Robby Kukurs & David García

Copyright © 2011 – All rights reserved

<http://englishharmony.com/>

<http://learnenglishfromhome.blogspot.com/>

CONTENTS

Purpose of this e-book.....	3
Part 1: Why Using Phrasal Verbs Is Crucial For Fluent English	4
Part 2: Learn English Phrasal Verbs Using 6 Powerful Tips.....	7
Part 3: Top 40 Most Common English Phrasal Verbs	10
Authors	14
Disclaimer	15

PURPOSE OF THIS E-BOOK

Have you ever wondered why every English teacher loves speaking about the **Phrasal Verbs**? Well, the answer is pretty clear; they are KEY to progress on your level of English once you have reached certain point. Phrasal Verbs are a must-have in your set of English skills if you ever want to become fluent in English.

The main goal of this e-book is to explain what a phrasal verb is and why they are so important for your English. This e-book also shows 6 must-know tips to learn phrasal verbs along with a list of 40 most commonly used phrasal verbs in English.

We really hope that you find useful the contents of this e-book and like going through it. It was a pleasure for us to write it!



PART 1: WHY USING PHRASAL VERBS IS CRUCIAL FOR FLUENT ENGLISH

English phrasal verbs consist of a simple verb combined with a short word called **particle** – such as ‘on’, ‘up’, ‘down’ and similar. Typical examples of English phrasal verbs are ‘to put down’, ‘to find out’, and ‘to come back’ and as you can see the meanings of these simple phrasal verbs are self-explanatory. Obviously ‘to put down’ something indeed means that you have to put the respective object down, and you don’t have to be a genius to figure out that ‘to come back’ means exactly what it is – ‘to come back’!



Not on all occasions, though, a phrasal verb has a direct meaning. Let’s look at a phrasal verb ‘to look forward to’. If we take this phrase literally, it would mean ‘to look straight ahead’. However, in this case you have to think of yourself looking ahead into the future awaiting on an important event. OK, I have to admit that it is actually possible to guess its meaning. Even if you didn’t know the meaning of ‘to look forward to’ before, you’d still probably understand if someone told you: “All right, I have to go now. I’ll be really looking forward on meeting you again!”

But what if I told you: “I think we’ll have to put it off”? Would you still guess that the phrasal verb ‘to put off’ means ‘to postpone’? I think you have to agree that it’s not that easy, and here we’ve arrived at the vast amount of different English phrasal verbs that you have to learn before you can understand their meanings and start using them in your daily conversations. ‘To get by’, ‘to get along’, ‘to call off’, ‘to run out’ – all these seemingly simple yet so distinct phrasal verbs have meanings you’d never think of yourself!

‘I’m making enough money to get by’ means that I have just enough money to afford the basic things.

If I’m asking you: “How are you getting along with your new co-workers?” I want to find out if there’s a friendly atmosphere among you and your new colleagues.

And if you just used up the last sheet in the printer, you can tell your team-leader: “I just ran out of paper, can I get some please?”

So as you can see, you need to know meanings of these exact phrasal verbs to understand them even within context and also to be able to use them! Taking into account that there are hundreds of phrasal verbs in English language used in every possible life situation, you simply can’t ignore them!

You’re probably thinking – “Phrasal verbs? All right, it sounds useful, but is it really that necessary? If I haven’t paid much attention to them by now, surely I can do without them in the future!” Well, I have to tell you that you’re not entirely right in saying that. Of course, you can do without them, but you’ll miss out on so many benefits that the phrasal verbs can give you that it just wouldn’t be wise. And by the way – did you notice that I used two phrasal verbs in the previous sentence – ‘to do without’ and ‘to miss out’?

So here’s why phrasal verbs are actually crucial for any English learner!

First of all, you have to become aware of the fact **that spoken English is literally packed with phrasal verbs**. And as you definitely want to learn efficient English communication, it’s important that you learn to speak

fluently and easily. So while there's nothing wrong with using formal words like 'to extinguish' and 'to dismantle', using their phrasal verb versions 'to put out' and 'to take apart' is so much easier in a conversation!

Traditionally English is studied using textbooks that are written using quite formal language, and that can be one of the reasons why foreigners struggle with effective English communication. You see – English language you've used to read and write doesn't always follow the same patterns as spoken English. I'm not saying that normal English grammar doesn't apply when speaking. Nonetheless, phrasal verbs definitely change the language and make it more friendly, easy-to-understand and easy-flowing.

To clearly see my point, let's compare two sentences – one in formal, written English and the other – spoken English.



Let's say, this is what it says on your work contract: 'Company's employees are required to inform the management about taking the annual leave at least sixty days in advance.' And this is what your new manager tells you on the induction day: "You have to hand in a holiday request at least sixty days in advance." Do you see how a formal request is being paraphrased in conversational English using the phrasal verb 'to hand in'? And mind this – it's not only about informal conversations!

Phrasal verbs are being used all across the board starting from chatting with your friends during a lunch break and ending with company meetings! Imagine yourself asking your boss: "Would you like me to break down the first quarter's sales figures as well?" The same question can be asked this way: "Would you like me to calculate regional sales figures for the first quarter as well?"

Now pronounce those two sentences. Don't you agree the first one is easier to pronounce and it kind of 'flows' out of your mouth easier? It's all because the phrasal verb 'to break down' consists of simple English words and eliminates the need to use a whole string of words 'to calculate regional sales figures'!

And if this still hasn't convinced you that phrasal verbs are a must-have for any English learner, here's the second aspect.

As you saw in the example with the phrasal verb 'to break down', you can easily substitute a string of long words with a single phrasal verb. That makes the English conversation natural and fluent, and you have to agree that spoken English fluency is one of your English language study's main goals!

Until now you've probably held the opinion that the bigger your English vocabulary becomes, the more fluent you're automatically going to become. Most likely you've just focused on working with textbooks and using other techniques to memorize as much English as possible. While technically it is true and you can't speak English without vocabulary, you also need to be selective as to what vocabulary you use in your spoken English.

What I'm trying to say is that on many occasions it will be much easier for you to speak English if you go for more natural, friendly means of expression, and phrasal verbs provide you with exactly that!

And by the way – phrasal verbs make your English speech sound more like that of a native English speaker. While there's nothing wrong being a foreigner and you should never be ashamed of your origins, speaking in a native manner definitely makes your speech more understandable and it's only a bonus.

So if you learn at least the most commonly used English phrasal verbs, you'll definitely increase your overall English fluency and understanding. If you can say a sentence like: "You can end up being broke if you carry on gambling" you're going to sound more native and easy-going than if you said: "You risk eventually becoming broke if you continue gambling".

And here's another **great benefit to using and knowing English phrasal words. You can start speaking fluent English much sooner if you learn phrasal verbs as they consist of simple verbs that you're already familiar with.** Majority of English phrasal verbs are formed using basic verbs like 'to get', 'to take', 'to make', 'to look', 'to bring', 'to give' and similar. So instead of learning and memorizing plenty of new formal English words you can use your existing basic English vocabulary wisely and form dozens upon dozens phrasal verbs. This way you can start speaking fluently much faster and work on building up your formal English vocabulary afterwards!

PART 2: LEARN ENGLISH PHRASAL VERBS USING 6 POWERFUL TIPS

Quite often foreign English speakers have tendency of creating complicated, unnatural English sentences when speaking. While it's acceptable and even necessary (to develop English writing skills and learn to express yourself) when writing, in spoken English it can lead to situations when English learners struggle to explain themselves and hesitate when speaking. That's when phrasal verbs come into action and facilitate spoken English fluency and therefore they're really beneficial in order to increase foreign English speakers' confidence!

But if you're having an impression that phrasal verbs are used only as slang phrases and educated, intelligent people don't use them – you'd better think twice! While there's indeed a great number of very informal phrasal verbs like 'to stick up for' which means 'to defend someone when they're being criticized' or 'fire away!' meaning 'start speaking!', it's very handy being able to use them as well. If you're on a night out with English speaking folks, you'll be able to communicate with ease as informal chat mostly consists of such phrasal verbs.

Have I finally managed to persuade you to start learning English phrasal verbs? Then let's get down to the business!



Tip #1. While there are plenty of English textbooks dedicated to phrasal verbs, there's no real need to get a hold of one. You don't need to stuff your brain with hundreds of phrasal verbs at once because you'll simply start mixing them up! Of course, it never hurts to have one for reference, but I'd suggest you go for freely available online resources.

While there are many English learning websites where you can find lists of phrasal verbs, you need to find one where the phrasal verbs come with example sentences. You need to see in what context a phrasal verb is used to get it right!

Here's a [great website with thousands of phrasal verbs with examples](#). You can use it when picking new phrasal verbs to learn and also to look up meanings of new phrasal verbs you come across when learning English.

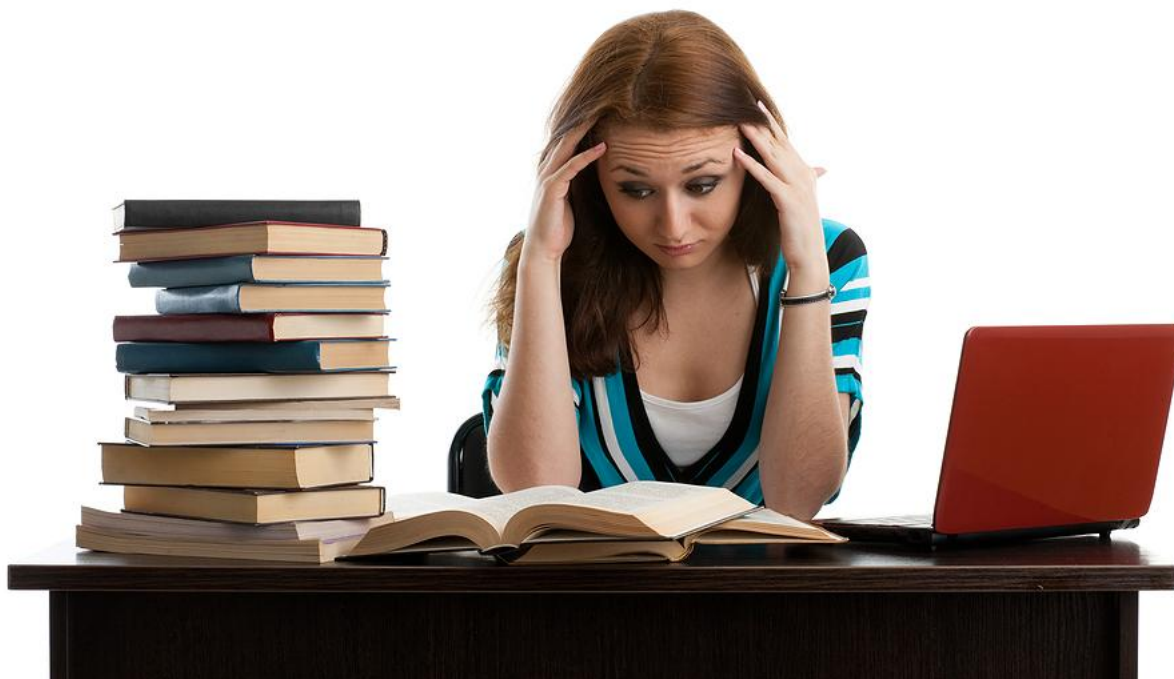
Tip #2. When choosing which phrasal verbs to learn, go for the most commonly used first! Here's a [list of the essential English phrasal verbs](#), and even if you learn only half of them, your spoken English will definitely become more fluent!

Learning English is often not so much about quantity as quality. You see – any person has active and passive vocabularies. Your active English vocabulary contains all the English words you can actually use when speaking, but passive is all the English words you recognize but can't really use when speaking. So while it's definitely useful to recognize meanings of plenty of phrasal verbs, you can add only a limited number of phrasal verbs to your active vocabulary in a given period of time.

That's why it's crucial to pick out the most commonly used ones and start using them when speaking English!

Tip #3. Pick a few phrasal verbs – one to three every day – and write them in your pocket dictionary. Memorize them by repeating a good number of times until the phrasal verb settles in your mind.

IMPORTANT! Always learn phrasal verbs within context! Don't memorize a single phrasal verb, instead repeat and memorize a phrase that contains it!



So instead of memorizing only 'to pass around' learn the whole phrase 'to pass test papers around'. By memorizing phrasal verbs this way you'll make sure you can use them in real English conversations later on. If, on the other hand, you memorize only the exact phrasal verbs, you might struggle using them when speaking.

You'll be forced to constantly kind of look them up from your inner dictionary and it will hamper your English fluency. But if you have them imprinted in your mind as part of natural English phraseology, you'll be able to use them automatically.

Of course, it's important that you pick relevant phrases. Don't learn a phrasal verb phrase 'to get away with stealing a million'. Are you really going to talk about stealing a million on a regular basis? Use your judgment and learn a phrase that is meaningful and would be used regularly, like 'to get away with being late'. Just think of similar situations in your daily life and pick expressions that you would use!

Tip #4. Don't translate phrasal verbs into your language when writing them into your pocket dictionary! Use other English words to explain them!

If you learn new phrasal verbs through your native language, you won't get out of the translation mode when speaking English. It's when you build a sentence in your native language in your head first, and then translate it into English. This advice is actually relevant when learning any new English words, so once you've acquired the basic English vocabulary, you'd better stop using your native language as reference.

You can always explain a new phrasal verb using very simple, basic English words and that way you'll facilitate thinking in English which is crucial for your English fluency.

For example, a phrasal verb you're learning is 'to keep up'. Write it into your dictionary as part of a phrase 'keep up with me' and explain it using simple English – 'to stay at the same level as me when walking or doing something.'

Tip #5. To choose which phrasal verbs to learn, you can simply start with a [list of most commonly used ones](#). You can also look out for phrasal verbs in textbooks or other English texts you read and you'll also definitely hear them in English songs, films and of course – newspapers. If you come across the same phrasal verb a number of times, it's a pretty good indicator that it's often used and therefore worth memorizing.

Also – when choosing in what context to learn a particular phrasal verb, go for a phrase you've heard in real life or read in newspaper. So for instance, if you hear someone saying: "Look who's decided to turn up!", you can learn the phrasal verb 'to turn up' in exactly this context because this phrase is usually used as a friendly joke when someone arrives later than expected.

Tip #6. Don't start learning all phrasal verbs that are formed using a particular verb at once!

You'll realize that every simple English verb can form plenty of phrasal verbs like 'to get ahead', 'to get along', 'to get at', 'to get by', 'and to get down to'. If you try to learn them all one after another, you'll definitely start mixing them up!

Although it may seem as a pretty good idea to learn all related phrasal verbs together, in reality it doesn't work.

Instead go for phrasal verb selection based on what you hear in real life. And if you choose them from a list, pick random ones that aren't grouped together by the main verb!

If you follow these tips and learn at least a couple of dozen of the most commonly used English phrasal verbs, you'll definitely notice a significant increase of your spoken English fluency. That in turn will provide you with additional motivation to add even more of these multi-word verbs to your active English vocabulary!

PART 3: TOP 40 MOST COMMON ENGLISH PHRASAL VERBS



TOP 40 MOST COMMON ENGLISH PHRASAL VERBS

You can radically improve your English fluency in a short time if you learn the most commonly used English phrasal verbs and start using them in your English conversations. And of course, the same applies on written communication! If you're able to use phrasal verbs in your e-mails, for example, they'll be much easier to read and understand!

So without a further ado, let's get down to the business!

Bring up – means to mention something. You can tell your colleague, for example: "They didn't bring up any of our suggestions in the meeting".

Carry on – this phrasal verb is very similar to "go on". Just like "go on" it means "to continue" but it's usually used in phrases like "Let's carry on" or "You can carry on without me".

Chase up – a very handy way of saying "to find, to seek out". For instance, you've been assigned a particular task, but some necessary files are missing. You can say "I'll chase up those files" meaning you'll go and see where those files are. You can also chase up a person – "I'll chase up Frank because I need his help with homework and no-one else has an idea how to do it!"

Come across – to find something by chance or to encounter something unexpectedly. If you found an interesting article online and you're telling your friend about it, you can say: "You know, I came across this article online where they've done research on..."

Come up with – this is a very useful phrasal verb if you usually find it hard to describe the fact when someone has told you about a new plan or a good idea. You might be struggling with phrases like – "He created a good plan" or "She produced a brand new solution" or even – "I devised a new idea on how to..." Native English speakers would simply say "She came up with a brand new solution" so you can start using this phrasal verb!

Fall apart – describes when something falls into pieces. Let's say you're wrapping an awkward package and you're struggling with it. You can say "The whole thing just keeps falling apart, I can't wrap it; can you help me?" This is another phrasal verb foreigners don't normally use and if you start using it on similar occasions you'll find it much easier to describe the situation!

Get along – means to have a good relationship with someone. You can say "Do you get along with Mary from the accounting?" if you want to ask that person if he/she is in good terms with Mary. Another sample sentence - "I don't get along with Mark, I didn't like him from the very first day I met him!"

Get away with – means to avoid being punished for not having done something or for breaching rules. A typical phrase you can start using right away is “Did you think you can get away with this?” if you’ve caught someone having done something you’re very unhappy about.

Get back to – this phrasal verb is used a lot in daily conversations, particularly at work. Whenever you’re unable to provide an immediate answer on some request, you can tell that person that you’ll get back to them later on when you have an answer. “I still haven’t heard from the technical team, I’ll try to get through to them and then I’ll get back to you, is that all right?”

Get over – if you can’t accept something that’s happened in your life and you can’t stop thinking about it, you can say - “It’s very hard for me to get over it.” And if you want to lift someone’s spirits and say that it’s not such a big deal after all, you can say: “Common, get over it, it’s not as bad as it looks!”

Get through – you’ll use this phrasal verb a lot if you spend plenty of time on the phone; it means you are connected to the person you’re calling. This is also the typical phrasal verb used when you’re explaining that you failed to talk to someone on the phone – “Sorry, but I couldn’t get through to her, I’ll try in ten minutes again!”

Give up – use this phrasal verb when speaking about resolution you’ve stopped pursuing or expectations that are most likely to remain unfulfilled. “I gave up my New Year’s diet; I just couldn’t stick to it.” “I’ve given up hope of getting a better job.”

Go on! – This is a typical way of telling someone to begin a particular action or resume doing something. If you can’t wait on someone to start telling an interesting story, you’d exclaim in excitement – “Go on, go on!” You can also use “go on” if you, for instance, are writing down figures your co-worker is calling out for you. Every time you’re ready to put the next figure down you can use the phrasal verb “go on” to let your partner know that he can call out the next figure.

Hold on! – Literally “hold on” means to hold on to something. Most common use of this phrasal verb, however, is when you want to tell someone to stop doing something or to wait until you’re ready to proceed with the initial action. Foreigners usually use “Stop!” and “Wait!” instead; “hold on” is more natural in spoken English.

Look after – means “to take care of” and is used a lot in communications between supervisors and employees at work. Typically your boss would ask you “Can you look after this order for me?” So if you want to sound more natural and friendly, don’t say things like “I’m responsible for this customer”. “I’m looking after this customer” is the best way of putting it.

Look into – means to examine a particular issue. If you’re asked to explain why something hasn’t been done as expected or why a mistake was made, you can reply with: “I’ll look into it right away and come back to you as soon as possible!”

Look up – to find something in a phone book, on the Internet or any other reference media. This is a very handy phrasal verb to use in sentences like “Can you look up their address on the Net?”

Make out – to recognize, to distinguish details of something. “I just couldn’t make out what she was saying!” – you can say a phrase like this if the person in question spoke too fast, or with a distinct accent, or too quiet. Another sample sentence – “I can’t make out these details; can you help me with this, please?”

Point out – means to tell someone a fact that they aren’t aware of or something that they have neglected. “She pointed out to me that I hadn’t visited her for two weeks.” You can also use this phrasal verb to simply emphasize something; it doesn’t necessarily have to be something the other person has forgotten – “Mark pointed out that their department hadn’t done early shifts for a good while, and it’s a fair point!”

Pull over – if you drive a car, you can use this phrasal verb to describe an action of driving to the side of the road in order to stop. Typical application of this phrasal verb – “Can you pull over at the next petrol station?” Foreigners would most likely say “to stop at...” so if you start using “pull over” you’ll sound more natural when speaking English!

Put down – simply means “to write down.” “Hold on, I’ll put it down, let me just find a piece of paper!”

Put forward – to propose an idea. “Can I put forward something?” – would be a typical way of asking if it’s OK to voice your idea for resolving the issue or problem.

Put off – this is an informal way of saying “to postpone”, “to do later”. “I don’t want to clean my house today, I’ll put it off till tomorrow” would be a perfect example of this phrasal verb in use.

Put through – a very simple and friendly way of asking a person on the other end of the line to connect you to another person or department. “Can you put me through to the sales department, please?”

Run out – to find yourself in a situation when there is none left of something that you need. This phrasal verb is usually used when ordering some sort of office or manufacturing supplies. “We just ran out of red paint, can you order some more, please?”

Run off – simply means to print several copies of a document, label or just about anything else that can be printed or copied. “Can you run off a few more survey sheets, please?” – that’s how you’d ask your colleague to print the particular document for you.

Set up – this phrasal verb has a number of meanings. First of all, it can be used when you talk about starting your own business, or some sort of an organization – “I’ve always dreamt of setting up my own business!” You can also set up actual things, devices or machinery – in this case this phrasal verb means “to assemble”. For instance, you just bought a new piece of ready-to-assemble furniture and it looks quite easy to put together. So you can say – “This one should be pretty easy to set up.” Lastly, this phrasal verb means to put someone in a dangerous or compromising situation without that person being aware of it. “It’s not my fault, I was set up by someone, I don’t know how this item got into my baggage!”

Show off – to draw attention to oneself by behaving in an exaggerated manner. “Michael always likes showing off in front of girls, that’s the way he is!”

Show up – means to arrive when people are waiting on you. Usually used when you arrive late – “Well, well, look who decided to show up!” or “He showed up late, and the game had already started without him.”

Sort out – to resolve a problem. When someone asks you to find a solution to a particular issue, you can say – “I’ll sort it out, no problems!”

Stand for – to mean in an acronym. You would ask: “What does AWOL stand for?” if you wanted to find out what those letters in the acronym represent. You can also use this phrasal verb to ask what a person’s full name is – “What does J.K. stand for in J.K. Rowling’s name?”

Stand up for – to defend your rights to something. “I’ll definitely stand up for my rights to take summer holidays this year as I haven’t had them for four years!” You can also use this phrasal verb to describe that some person is being defended – “I’ll stand up for you in the meeting, don’t worry!”

Stay on – means to stay longer than you’d normally be expected. Typically used when doing overtime at work – “Are you staying on today as well?”

Stick together – when two or more people stick together, they support each other and look after each other. “We should stick together, you know, it’ll be much easier as everyone else seems to be on their own!”

Take over – to start doing something that someone else was doing before you. You can take over someone else’s duties at work by your manager’s request, or your co-worker can ask you to take over his job while he’s away for a launch break.

Talk down to – speak to someone in a very arrogant manner, to make someone feel inferior to you. If a manager is very “bossy”, you can say about him that he talks down to people.

Turn down – to reject something – be it a request, or an offer, or a gift. “I’ll never forget how she turned down my invitation!”

Turn up – means to arrive. You can inquire about your friend by asking “Has Michael turned up today?” if you haven’t seen him and you’re wondering if he’s come to work or school today at all.

Turn out – to find that something is different than you expected or just to find out a certain thing. “It turned out that I actually knew that guy from my college years, he’s just changed a lot!” This phrasal verb also means simply to end in a particular way – “Eventually the party turned out just great, I was pleasantly surprised!”

Watch out! – you can use this phrasal verb if something endangers someone else’s safety and you want to bring that person’s attention to that object or activity. Foreigners usually use unarticulated sounds instead – like “Ahh!” or “Ohh!” simply because on occasions when a super-fast reaction is needed they can’t think of a fitting word or phrase to say.

AUTHORS

This e-book has been written by Robby Kukurs and David García.



Robby is Author of [English Harmony System 2.0](#) and he writes about improving spoken English on his blog [EnglishHarmony.com](#). It is a website dedicated to those foreign English speakers who have already achieved decent level of English but are still struggling with occasional severe drops in spoken English fluency. Robby also regularly posts videos about improving English fluency on his [YouTube channel](#).



David collaborates on [Learn English Online](#). [Learn English Online](#) is a website where you'll find hundreds of online resources to learn English for free. These resources will help you improving all your English skills like listening, writing, speaking, vocabulary or grammar. There are also [learning guides](#) to help you make the most of these resources.

You'll also find more great free e-books and reports on the [following link](#).

DISCLAIMER

“Power of English Phrasal Verbs” is Copyright of Robby Kukurs & David García © 2011 – All Rights Reserved

Any redistribution or reproduction of part or all of the contents in any form is prohibited other than the following:

You may print or download extracts (or the complete document) to a local hard disk for your personal and non-commercial use only;

You may copy the content to individual third parties for their personal use, but only if you acknowledge <http://englishharmony.com> and <http://learnenglishfromhome.blogspot.com> websites as the source of the material;

You may not commercially exploit the content nor may you transmit it or store it in any other website or other form of electronic retrieval system.