

AVerb + **to**

talk / speak TO somebody (**with** is also possible but less usual)

- ☐ Who was that man you were **talking to**?

listen TO ...

- ☐ We spent the evening **listening to** music. (*not* listening music)

apologise TO somebody (for ...)

- ☐ They **apologised to me** for what happened. (*not* They apologised me)

explain something **TO** somebody

- ☐ Can you **explain** this word **to me**? (*not* explain me this word)

explain / describe (to) somebody what/how/why ...

- ☐ I **explained to them** why I was worried. (*not* I explained them)
☐ Let me **describe to you** what I saw. (*not* Let me describe you)

B

We do not use **to** with these verbs:

phone / call / email / text somebody

- ☐ I **called the airline** to cancel my flight. (*not* called to the airline)

but write (a letter) **to** somebody

answer somebody/something

- ☐ He refused to **answer my question**. (*not* answer to my question)

but reply to an email / a letter etc.

ask somebody

- ☐ Can I **ask you** a question? (*not* ask to you)

thank somebody (for something)

- ☐ He **thanked me** for helping him. (*not* He thanked to me)

CVerb + **at**

look / stare / glance AT ... , **have a look / take a look AT** ...

- ☐ Why are you **looking at** me like that?

laugh AT ...

- ☐ I look stupid with this haircut. Everybody will **laugh at** me.

aim / point (something) **AT** ... , **shoot / fire** (a gun) **AT** ...

- ☐ Don't **point** that knife **at** me. It's dangerous.
☐ We saw someone with a gun **shooting at** birds, but he didn't hit any.

D

Some verbs can be followed by **at** or **to**, with a difference in meaning. For example:

shout AT somebody (when you are angry)

- ☐ He got very angry and started **shouting at** me.

shout TO somebody (so that they can hear you)

- ☐ He **shouted to** me from the other side of the street.

throw something **AT** somebody/something (in order to hit them)

- ☐ Somebody **threw** an egg **at** the minister.

throw something **TO** somebody (for somebody to catch)

- ☐ Lisa shouted 'Catch!' and **threw** the keys **to** me from the window.

132.1 Which is correct?

- 1 a Can you explain this word to me? ☒
b Can you explain me this word? ☐
- 2 a I got angry with Mark. Afterwards, I apologised to him. ☐
b I got angry with Mark. Afterwards I apologised him. ☐
- 3 a Amy won't be able to help you. There's no point in asking to her. ☐
b Amy won't be able to help you. There's no point in asking her. ☐
- 4 a I need somebody to explain me what I have to do. ☐
b I need somebody to explain to me what I have to do. ☐
- 5 a They didn't understand the system, so I explained it to them. ☐
b They didn't understand the system, so I explained it them. ☐
- 6 a I like to sit on the beach and listen to the sound of the sea. ☐
b I like to sit on the beach and listen the sound of the sea. ☐
- 7 a I asked them to describe me exactly what happened. ☐
b I asked them to describe to me exactly what happened. ☐
- 8 a We'd better phone the restaurant to reserve a table. ☐
b We'd better phone to the restaurant to reserve a table. ☐
- 9 a It was a difficult question. I couldn't answer to it. ☐
b It was a difficult question. I couldn't answer it. ☐
- 10 a I explained everybody the reasons for my decision. ☐
b I explained to everybody the reasons for my decision. ☐
- 11 a I thanked everybody for all the help they had given me. ☐
b I thanked to everybody for all the help they had given me. ☐
- 12 a My friend texted to me to let me know she was going to be late. ☐
b My friend texted me to let me know she was going to be late. ☐

132.2 Complete the sentences. Use these verbs + the correct preposition:

~~explain~~ ~~laugh~~ listen look point reply speak throw throw

- 1 I look stupid with this haircut. Everybody will laugh at me.
- 2 I don't understand this. Can you explain it to me?
- 3 Sue and Kevin had an argument and now they're refusing to listen each other.
- 4 Be careful with those scissors! Don't look them point me!
- 5 I'm not sure where we are. I'll have to ask the map.
- 6 Please speak me! I've got something important to tell you.
- 7 Don't throw stones at the birds! It's cruel.
- 8 If you don't want that sandwich, throw it at the birds. They'll eat it.
- 9 I tried to contact Tina, but she didn't reply my emails.

132.3 Put in to or at.

- 1 They apologised to me for what happened.
- 2 I glanced at my watch to see what time it was.
- 3 Please don't shout at me! Try to calm down.
- 4 I saw Sue as I was cycling along the road. I shouted at her, but she didn't hear me.
- 5 Don't listen to what he says. He doesn't know what he's talking about.
- 6 What's so funny? What are you laughing at?
- 7 Could I have a look at your magazine, please?
- 8 I'm lonely. I need somebody to talk to.
- 9 She was so angry she threw a book at the wall.
- 10 The woman sitting opposite me on the train kept staring at me.
- 11 Can I speak to you a moment? There's something I want to ask you.