

10 Literal and idiomatic meanings

Phrasal verbs sometimes have a literal meaning, and sometimes an idiomatic meaning:



Literal

- 1 Complete the sentences with a particle from the box. Some are used more than once.

away	on	off	back	out	down	in
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- 1 The dentist said my tooth was bad. He had to pull it _____.
- 2 Don't run _____! Come here! I want to talk to you.
- 3 My aunt fell _____ the stairs and broke her leg.
- 4 I fell _____ my horse!
- 5 When the sun went _____, it was really cold.
- 6 A button has come _____ my shirt. Could you sew it back _____ for me?
- 7 I don't feel like cooking tonight. Shall we eat _____ instead?
- 8 I'm going to the library to take _____ the books I've finished.
- 9 I've just hung the washing out, and it's starting to rain. Can you help me to bring it _____?
- 10 Don't throw the box _____. I'm sure I can use it for something.

Literal or idiomatic?

- 2 Complete the pairs of sentences with the same phrasal verb from the box in the correct form.

take off pick up sort out put up stand up hold on

- 1 ☐ I'm coming to London for an interview next week – can you _____ me _____ for the night?
- ☐ _____ your hand if you know the answer.
- 2 ☐ I _____ all my clothes drawers today, so now I know where everything is.
- ☐ We've got a problem here, but if we try hard, I'm sure we can _____ it _____ .
- 3 ☐ When I was at school, we had to _____ when the teacher came in the room.

- ☐ You shouldn't let your sister tell you what to do all the time.
You should _____ for yourself more, and say what you think.
- 4 ☐ It's too warm to be wearing a jumper. Why don't you
_____ it _____ ?
- ☐ After a slow start, my business finally started to _____ .
- 5 ☐ I was never taught how to cook. I just _____ it
_____ from my mother.
- ☐ Can you please _____ the chocolate wrapper you have
just dropped!
- 6 ☐ A Can I speak to Kate, please?
B _____ . I'll just get her.
- ☐ When you're riding on the back of a motorbike, you have to
_____ tight.