Unit **132**

Verb + preposition 1 **to** and **at**

A *verb* + **to**

talk / **speak TO** somebody (**talk**/**speak with** is also possible)
- Who were you **talking to**?

listen TO ...
- When I'm driving, I like to **listen to** the radio. (*not* listen the radio)

apologise TO somebody (for ...)
- They **apologised to me** for their mistake. (*not* 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 **phone** somebody, **ask** somebody etc. (*without* **to**)

phone / **call** / **email** / **text** somebody
- I **called the airline** to cancel my flight. (*not* called to the airline)

But we say '**write** (a letter) **to** somebody'.

answer somebody/something
- You didn't **answer my email**. (*not* answer to my email)

But we say **reply to** (an email / a letter etc.).

ask somebody (a question)
- If there's anything you want to know, you can **ask me**. (*not* ask to me)

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

C *verb* + **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 or aggressive)
- 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 (to hit them)
- Somebody **threw** an egg **at** the politician.

throw something **TO** somebody (for somebody to catch)
- Lisa shouted 'Catch!' and **threw** the keys **to** me from the window.

» Verb + preposition 2–5 ➜ **Units 133–136** **ask for ➜ Unit 133B**
apologise for / **thank somebody for ➜ Unit 135B** Other verbs + **to ➜ Unit 136D**

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Exercises

132.1 **Which is correct?**

1 a Can you explain this word to me? (a *is correct*)
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 We live in the same building, but we've never ..... one another.
4 Be careful with those scissors! Don't ..... them ..... me!
5 You shouldn't ..... directly ..... the sun. You'll damage your eyes.
6 Please ..... me! I've got something important to tell you.
7 Don't ..... stones ..... the birds!
8 If you don't want that sandwich, ... it ..... the birds. They'll eat it.
9 I tried to contact Tina, but she didn't ..... my emails.

132.3 **Put in to or at.**

1 They apologised *to* me for what happened.
2 I glanced ..... my watch to see what time it was.
3 Please don't shout ..... me! Try to calm down.
4 I saw Lisa and shouted ..... her, but she didn't hear me.
5 Don't listen ..... what he says. He doesn't know what he's talking about.
6 What's so funny? What are you laughing ..... ?
7 Is it all right if I have a look ..... your magazine?
8 I'm lonely. I need somebody to talk ..... .
9 She was so angry she threw a book ..... the wall.
10 The woman sitting opposite me on the train kept staring ..... me.
11 Do you have a moment? I need to speak ..... you.

→ **Additional exercise 36** (page 323)

LIVEWORKSHEETS