

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.

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.