Unit 132 Verb + preposition 1 **to** and **at**

A *Verb* + **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)

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)
- 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.

Verb + preposition 2–5 ➜ Units 133–136 **Ask for** ➜ Unit 133B
Apologise for / **thank somebody for** ➜ Unit 135B Other verbs + **to** ➜ Unit 136

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Exercises

Unit 132

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 ..... each other.
4 Be careful with those scissors! Don't ..... them ..... me!
5 I'm not sure where we are. I'll have to ..... the map.
6 Please ..... me! I've got something important to tell you.
7 Don't ..... stones ..... the birds! It's cruel.
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 Sue as I was cycling along the road. I 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 Could I have a look ..... your magazine, please?
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 Can I speak ..... you a moment? There's something I want to ask you.

→ Additional exercise 36 (page 323)

LIVEWORKSHEETS