

PSLE Cloze Top 300 Phrases Master List

300 high-frequency phrasal verbs and collocations with PSLE-friendly sample sentences

A

1. aim at

Meaning: to intend to achieve something

Sample sentence: The programme aims at helping weaker pupils improve their reading skills.

2. arrive at

Meaning: to reach a place or conclusion

Sample sentence: After a short discussion, the group arrived at the right answer.

3. ask around

Meaning: to ask several people for information

Sample sentence: We asked around to find the owner of the lost puppy.

4. ask for

Meaning: to request something

Sample sentence: The boy asked for help when he could not open the jar.

B

5. back away

Meaning: to move backwards because of fear or danger

Sample sentence: The little girl backed away when the dog began to bark loudly.

6. back down

Meaning: to stop arguing or admit defeat

Sample sentence: After hearing the evidence, the bully finally backed down.

7. back off

Meaning: to move away or stop bothering someone

Sample sentence: The prefect told the rude boys to back off and leave the smaller child alone.

8. back up

Meaning: to support something with proof

Sample sentence: She backed up her answer with details from the passage.

9. barge in

Meaning: to enter rudely without waiting

Sample sentence: My brother barged in while I was doing my homework.

10. beat up

Meaning: to attack someone violently

Sample sentence: The gang threatened to beat up the weaker boy after school.

11. beef up

Meaning: to make something stronger

Sample sentence: The school beefed up security during the examination period.

12. black out

Meaning: to become unconscious

Sample sentence: He felt dizzy after the fall and blacked out for a moment.

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13. blow away

Meaning: to be carried off by the wind

Sample sentence: A strong gust of wind blew away the worksheets on the table.

Meaning: to feel overwhelmed, amazed, shocked or emotional by something

Sample sentence: When I heard that song for the first time, it just blew me away.

14. blow off

Meaning: to remove something with a burst of air or wind

Sample sentence: The storm blew off part of the roof.

Meaning: to remove and destroy something by shooting it or making it explode

Sample sentence: An explosion blew one of the wings off the plane.

15. blow out

Meaning: to extinguish with a puff of air, such as breath or wind

Sample sentence: She leaned forward to blow out the candles on her birthday cake.

16. blow up

Meaning: to explode or become very angry

Sample sentence: Dad blew up when he discovered that I had lied to him.

Meaning: to make something explode

Sample sentence: A nuclear bomb has the power to blow up a whole country.

Meaning: to make something seem more important, negative or significant than it really is

Sample sentence: The whole matter was blown up out of proportion.

Meaning: to make a photograph, document or picture bigger

Sample sentence: Can you blow up this picture of my dog?

17. bow down

Meaning: to give in completely to someone in power

Sample sentence: The villagers refused to bow down to the greedy landlord.

18. break a record

Meaning: to do better than anyone has done before

Sample sentence: She broke a record when she completed the race in the fastest time.

19. break down

Meaning: to stop working or lose control of one's feelings

Sample sentence: Our van broke down on the way to the campsite.

Meaning: to stop being successful

Sample sentence: At one point, the talks broke down completely.

Meaning: to separate into the parts that something is made up of.

Sample sentence: The substance is easily broken down by bacteria.

Meaning: to start crying, especially in public: Sample sentence.

Evelyn broke down when she heard the sad news.

Meaning: to hit something very hard so that it falls down.

Sample sentence: Firefighters had to break down the door to get into the flat.

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Meaning: to explain something step by step

Sample sentence: Please break the process down into simple terms so everyone can understand it.

20. break in

Meaning: to enter a place illegally by force

Sample sentence: Someone tried to break in through the kitchen window last night.

21. break off

Meaning: to separate a piece from something

Sample sentence: He broke off a piece of bread and fed the birds.

22. break out

Meaning: to start suddenly

Sample sentence: A quarrel broke out during the football match.

Meaning: to escape from a prison:

Sample sentence: They broke out of prison and fled the country.

Meaning: to escape from a situation or way of life:

Sample sentence: Lisa had been wanting to break out of her boring routine for some time, so she enrolled in a cooking class.

Meaning: to suddenly begin to have spots on the skin:

Sample sentence: Sweat was beginning to break out on his forehead.

23. break the rules

Meaning: to disobey the rules

Sample sentence: Anyone who breaks the rules will lose points for the class.

24. break through

Meaning: to force a way through something

Sample sentence: The rescue team broke through the locked door.

25. break up

Meaning: to separate into smaller pieces or stop a fight

Sample sentence: The teacher stepped in to break up the fight.

Meaning: to break something into smaller pieces:

Sample sentence: Can you break up the ice into smaller pieces?

Meaning: to end a romantic relationship

Sample sentence: Dianna broke up with her boy friend last week.

26. bring about change

Meaning: to cause change to happen

Sample sentence: The new reading programme brought about change in the pupils' attitudes.

27. bring back

Meaning: to cause someone to remember something

Sample sentence: The smell of fresh bread brought back happy memories.

28. bring down

Meaning: to reduce something

Sample sentence: The new rule helped bring down the noise level in class.

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29. bring good luck

Meaning: to cause good fortune

Sample sentence: Many people believe that a four-leaf clover brings good luck.

30. bring out

Meaning: to make something easier to notice

Sample sentence: The red frame brought out the bright colours in the painting.

31. bring up

Meaning: to mention a topic or raise a child

Sample sentence: She did not want to bring up the mistake again.

32. brush off

Meaning: to refuse to listen to someone or treat something as unimportant

Sample sentence: He brushed off my warning and went skating in the rain.

Meaning: to remove something (dust particle, insect etc.) with your hand

Sample sentence: Judy brushed the spider off her shoulder without a flinch.

33. brush up

Meaning: to improve a skill by practising

Sample sentence: I need to brush up on my grammar before the exam.

34. build a reputation

Meaning: to become known for something

Sample sentence: The restaurant built a reputation for serving fresh seafood.

35. build confidence

Meaning: to make someone feel more confident

Sample sentence: Small successes helped the shy boy build confidence.

36. bump into

Meaning: to meet someone unexpectedly

Sample sentence: I bumped into my old classmate at the library.

Meaning: to accidentally hit against something

Sample sentence: As I turned around, I bumped into the cabinet.

37. burn down

Meaning: to be destroyed by fire

Sample sentence: The wooden shed burnt down in the middle of the night.

38. burn out

Meaning: to stop burning or become exhausted

Sample sentence: The candle burnt out before we finished the story.

39. burn up

Meaning: to be destroyed by fire or extreme heat

Sample sentence: The dry leaves burnt up within minutes.

40. butt in

Meaning: to interrupt rudely

Sample sentence: It is impolite to butt in when adults are talking.

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C

41. call a meeting

Meaning: to arrange for people to meet officially

Sample sentence: The principal called a meeting to discuss school safety.

42. call attention to

Meaning: to make people notice something

Sample sentence: The speaker called attention to the importance of regular reading.

43. call for

Meaning: to require or publicly ask for something

Sample sentence: This difficult situation calls for patience and teamwork.

Meaning: to make something necessary or suitable:

Sample sentence: The present crisis calls for mature judgment on the part of our leaders.

44. call off

Meaning: to cancel something

Sample sentence: The coach called off practice because of the heavy rain.

45. calm down

Meaning: to become less angry or excited

Sample sentence: Please calm down and explain what happened clearly.

46. care for

Meaning: to look after someone or like something

Sample sentence: She stayed home to care for her sick grandmother.

47. carry away

Meaning: to make someone overly excited

Sample sentence: Do not get carried away if you win the first round.

48. carry on

Meaning: to continue doing something

Sample sentence: Despite the noise outside, the class carried on with the test.

49. carry out

Meaning: to perform or complete a task

Sample sentence: The pupils carried out a simple experiment in the science lab.

50. catch a cold

Meaning: to become ill with a cold

Sample sentence: Wear a jacket, or you may catch a cold in the rain.

51. catch fire

Meaning: to start burning

Sample sentence: The dry grass caught fire after the lightning strike.

52. catch on

Meaning: to understand or become popular

Sample sentence: It took him a while to catch on to the new method.

Meaning: to understand:

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Sample sentence: Marilyn finally caught on to what Mr. Tan was telling her.

53. cave in

Meaning: to collapse into a hollow area below

Sample sentence: Part of the tunnel caved in after the earthquake.

Meaning: to submit or yield to someone or something:

Sample sentence: Under the threat of a strike, the management caved in and agreed to increase the pay of all workers.

54. check in

Meaning: officially confirm one's arrival at a certain place where one is expected, such as a hotel

Sample sentence: We checked in at the hotel before going out for dinner.

Meaning: to communicate with someone at certain intervals of time so as to provide or ask about an update in status:

Sample sentence: I'm just checking in to see if you're feeling better.

55. check out

Meaning: to examine someone or something in order to be certain that everything is correct, true or satisfactory

Sample sentence: The mechanic checked out the engine before the journey.

Meaning: to leave a hotel or other forms of accommodation after a stay:

Sample sentence: Hotel guests usually have to check out by 2 p.m.

Meaning: The inspectors are checking out the infrastructure of the building to ensure that they meet the guidelines.

Sample sentence: to pay for items before leaving a store: I had already checked out when I remembered that we were out of milk.

56. clear up

Meaning: to solve a problem or become fine

Sample sentence: I hope the misunderstanding can be cleared up soon.

57. close down

Meaning: to stop operating permanently

Sample sentence: The old bookshop closed down last month.

58. come about

Meaning: to happen

Sample sentence: No one knew how the strange accident had come about.

59. come across

Meaning: to find or meet by chance

Sample sentence: I came across an interesting article about whales.

Meaning: to form a particular opinion of someone

Sample sentence: Bernice comes across as a very confident person.

60. come along

Meaning: to accompany someone

Sample sentence: Why don't you come along with us to the museum?

61. come back

Meaning: to return

Sample sentence: Please come back before it gets dark.

62. come forward

Meaning: to volunteer information or help

Sample sentence: A witness came forward after seeing the accident.

63. come into

Meaning: to receive something such as money or property

Sample sentence: She came into some money when her aunt passed away.

64. come out

Meaning: to become known or be published

Sample sentence: The truth finally came out after a long investigation.

65. come to a decision

Meaning: to make a final choice

Sample sentence: After a long discussion, the team came to a decision.

66. come to an end

Meaning: to finish

Sample sentence: The concert came to an end with a loud cheer.

67. come to life

Meaning: to become lively or active

Sample sentence: The playground came to life during recess.

68. come to mind

Meaning: to be remembered or thought of

Sample sentence: Her name was the first one that came to mind.

69. come to terms with

Meaning: to accept a difficult situation

Sample sentence: It took him time to come to terms with the loss of his pet.

70. come up

Meaning: to arise or be mentioned

Sample sentence: A problem came up while we were revising the plan.

71. come up with

Meaning: to think of an idea or answer

Sample sentence: The group came up with a clever solution.

72. count on

Meaning: to rely on someone or something

Sample sentence: You can always count on Mei Lin to be honest.

73. cover up

Meaning: to hide the truth

Sample sentence: The boys tried to cover up their mistake.

74. crack down

Meaning: to deal with something more strictly

Sample sentence: The school is cracking down on late-coming.

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75. cross off

Meaning: to remove by drawing a line through

Sample sentence: She crossed off the items she had already bought.

76. cut back

Meaning: to reduce spending or use

Sample sentence: We need to cut back on electricity to save money.

77. cut down

Meaning: to reduce the amount of something

Sample sentence: The doctor told him to cut down on sugary drinks.

D**78. decide on**

Meaning: to choose something after thinking

Sample sentence: We decided on a simple design for the poster.

79. depend on

Meaning: to rely on someone or something

Sample sentence: Young children depend on adults for guidance.

80. do one's best

Meaning: to try as hard as possible

Sample sentence: Even if the questions are hard, always do your best.

81. doze off

Meaning: to fall asleep unintentionally

Sample sentence: Grandpa dozed off while watching the news.

82. draw a conclusion

Meaning: to decide something after thinking about the facts

Sample sentence: From the clues, the detective drew a conclusion.

83. draw attention to

Meaning: to make people notice something

Sample sentence: The bright poster drew attention to the charity event.

84. draw in

Meaning: to attract people

Sample sentence: The puppet show drew in a large crowd.

85. drive at

Meaning: to mean or suggest something indirectly

Sample sentence: What are you driving at with that question?

86. drive out

Meaning: to force someone or something to leave

Sample sentence: The villagers drove out the wild boar from the garden.

87. drop in

Meaning: to visit briefly without planning

Sample sentence: My aunt dropped in for tea on Sunday.

88. drop out

Meaning: to leave school or an activity before finishing

Sample sentence: He dropped out of the race after hurting his ankle.

E

89. end up

Meaning: to finally be in a particular situation

Sample sentence: If you waste time now, you may end up rushing later.

90. express concern

Meaning: to show worry about something

Sample sentence: Parents expressed concern about the poor lighting on the road.

91. express gratitude

Meaning: to show thanks

Sample sentence: She wrote a note to express gratitude for their kindness.

92. express interest

Meaning: to show that you want to know more

Sample sentence: Several pupils expressed interest in joining the robotics club.

F

93. fall apart

Meaning: to break into pieces or lose control emotionally

Sample sentence: The old suitcase fell apart as soon as I lifted it.

94. fall behind

Meaning: to fail to keep up

Sample sentence: You will fall behind if you do not revise regularly.

95. fall for

Meaning: to be attracted by something or someone

Sample sentence: Did sleeping beauty fall for the prince the first time she saw him?

Meaning: to believe that a trick or a joke is true

Sample sentence: Do not fall for online scams.

96. fall out

Meaning: to quarrel and stop being friendly

Sample sentence: The two brothers fell out over a toy.

97. fall through

Meaning: to fail to happen

Sample sentence: Our picnic plans fell through because of the storm.

98. figure out

Meaning: to understand or solve something

Sample sentence: After discussing the clues, the pupils figured out the answer.

99. fill in

Meaning: to complete missing information

Sample sentence: Please fill in your name and class on the form.

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100. fill up

Meaning: to become full

Sample sentence: The hall filled up quickly before the concert began.

101. find out

Meaning: to discover information

Sample sentence: We were shocked to find out that the shop had closed.

102. finish off

Meaning: to complete the last part of something

Sample sentence: She finished off her essay before dinner.

103. follow up

Meaning: to do more in order to check or complete something

Sample sentence: The teacher followed up on the missing homework.

G**104. gain confidence**

Meaning: to become more confident

Sample sentence: Practice helped the timid speaker gain confidence.

105. gain experience

Meaning: to learn through doing something

Sample sentence: Volunteering allowed the pupils to gain experience in teamwork.

106. get ahead

Meaning: to become successful

Sample sentence: He works hard because he wants to get ahead in life.

107. get along

Meaning: to have a friendly relationship

Sample sentence: The twins get along well most of the time.

108. get around to

Meaning: to finally do something you have intended to do

Sample sentence: I will get around to cleaning my desk this weekend.

109. get away

Meaning: to escape

Sample sentence: The thief nearly got away, but a guard caught him.

Meaning: to go somewhere to have a rest or a holiday

Sample sentence: Let's get away for the weekend.

110. get back to

Meaning: to reply or return to something later

Sample sentence: I will get back to you after I check the facts.

111. get by

Meaning: to manage with what you have

Sample sentence: The family managed to get by on a small income.

112. get into trouble

Meaning: to be punished for doing something wrong

Sample sentence: You will get into trouble if you copy your friend's work.

113. get off

Meaning: to leave a bus, train, or bicycle

Sample sentence: We got off the bus near the community centre.

Meaning: to leave the place where you work at the end of the day

Sample sentence: What time do you usually get off work?

114. get over

Meaning: to recover from something

Sample sentence: It took her a week to get over the flu.

Meaning: to stop feeling bad or stop thinking about something:

Sample sentence: It will take him a long time to get over the death of his father.

115. give a call

Meaning: to phone someone

Sample sentence: Please give me a call when you arrive safely.

116. give a hand

Meaning: to help someone

Sample sentence: Can you give me a hand with these heavy boxes?

117. give a smile

Meaning: to smile at someone

Sample sentence: The nurse gave the frightened child a smile.

118. give a speech

Meaning: to speak formally to an audience

Sample sentence: The head prefect was chosen to give a speech on Founder's Day.

119. give a warning

Meaning: to tell someone about danger or trouble ahead

Sample sentence: The lifeguard gave a warning when the waves grew stronger.

120. give advice

Meaning: to suggest what someone should do

Sample sentence: My mother gave me useful advice before the exam.

121. give in

Meaning: to stop resisting

Sample sentence: After arguing for an hour, he finally gave in.

122. give permission

Meaning: to allow something

Sample sentence: My parents gave permission for me to join the trip.

123. give support

Meaning: to help or encourage someone

Sample sentence: Her friends gave support when she felt discouraged.

124. give up

Meaning: to stop trying

Sample sentence: Do not give up just because the first question is hard.

125. go about

Meaning: to begin doing something in a particular way

Sample sentence: How should we go about solving this puzzle?

Meaning: to do something in the way that you usually do

Sample sentence: The villagers went about their business as usual.

126. go after

Meaning: to chase something

Sample sentence: The cat went after the butterfly.

Meaning: to do your best to get something no matter how difficult it is

Sample sentence: Daniel trained hard every day because he was going after the gold medal.

127. go ahead

Meaning: to proceed

Sample sentence: If you are ready, go ahead and start.

128. go along with

Meaning: to agree with or accept

Sample sentence: I did not fully agree, but I went along with the plan.

129. go back

Meaning: to return

Sample sentence: He went back to the shop to look for his wallet.

130. go for

Meaning: to choose or try to get something

Sample sentence: If you want the lead role, go for it.

131. go off

Meaning: to make a sudden noise

Sample sentence: The alarm went off at six in the morning.

Meaning: to explode or fire

Sample sentence: The bomb went off this morning.

Meaning: to stop working or being available:

Sample sentence: All the lights in the building suddenly went off.

132. go over

Meaning: to review carefully

Sample sentence: Please go over your answers before handing in the paper.

Meaning: to explain something:

Sample sentence: Let me go over the details again so you'll understand.

133. go through

Meaning: to experience or examine carefully

Sample sentence: We went through the answers together after the test.

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H

134. hand in

Meaning: to submit something

Sample sentence: All pupils must hand in their projects by Friday.

135. hand out

Meaning: to distribute

Sample sentence: The teacher handed out the worksheets.

136. hand over

Meaning: to give something to another person

Sample sentence: The robber demanded that the cashier hand over the money.

Meaning: to transfer control over something or someone to another person.

Sample sentence: The team was handed over to the assistant coach after the head coach retired.

137. hang around

Meaning: to spend time idly in a place

Sample sentence: Teenagers were hanging around outside the shopping mall.

138. hang on

Meaning: to hold tightly

Sample sentence: Hang on to the railing while climbing the stairs.

Meaning: to wait for a short time:

Sample sentence: The phone operator told Tom to hang on while she searched for his record.

139. hang out

Meaning: to spend time relaxing with others

Sample sentence: We sometimes hang out at the park after school.

Meaning: to hang something to dry

Sample sentence: After the clothes are washed, hang them out to dry as soon as possible.

140. hang up

Meaning: to end a phone call or place something on a hook

Sample sentence: He hung up before I could reply.

Meaning: to hang clothes or an object on a hook, hanger or rod

Sample sentence: Please hang up your coat.

141. have a break

Meaning: to rest for a short time

Sample sentence: Let's have a break before we continue revising.

142. have a chance

Meaning: to have an opportunity

Sample sentence: You will have a chance to ask questions later.

143. have a discussion

Meaning: to talk about something carefully

Sample sentence: The class had a discussion about online safety.

144. have a good time

Meaning: to enjoy yourself

Sample sentence: We had a good time at the school carnival.

145. have a look

Meaning: to look at something

Sample sentence: Come and have a look at my model volcano.

146. have a meeting

Meaning: to gather for discussion

Sample sentence: The teachers had a meeting after school.

147. have a problem

Meaning: to face difficulty

Sample sentence: Please tell me if you have a problem with the task.

148. have a rest

Meaning: to stop and relax for a while

Sample sentence: After the long hike, we stopped to have a rest.

149. have an idea

Meaning: to think of something

Sample sentence: I have an idea for our group poster.

150. have difficulty

Meaning: to find something hard to do

Sample sentence: Some pupils have difficulty spelling long words.

151. head for

Meaning: to move towards a place

Sample sentence: Dark clouds gathered as we headed for home.

152. hold against

Meaning: to stay angry about something

Sample sentence: Please do not hold my mistake against me.

153. hold back

Meaning: to stop yourself from doing or feeling something

Sample sentence: She tried to hold back her tears.

154. hold off

Meaning: to delay something

Sample sentence: Let's hold off making a decision until everyone arrives.

Meaning: to prevent something or someone from doing something

Sample sentence: The men were not successful in holding off their enemies with bows and arrows.

155. hold on

Meaning: to wait a moment or grip tightly

Sample sentence: Hold on while I look for your file.

Meaning: to hold something tightly

Sample sentence: Hold on to my hand and you won't fall!

156. hold out

Meaning: to last or survive in a difficult situation

Sample sentence: The trapped hikers held out until help arrived.

J

157. join in

Meaning: to take part with others

Sample sentence: Everyone was invited to join in the games.

K

158. keep a promise

Meaning: to do what you said you would do

Sample sentence: She kept her promise and returned the book on time.

159. keep a secret

Meaning: to not tell others something private

Sample sentence: Can you keep a secret about the surprise party?

160. keep away

Meaning: to stay far from

Sample sentence: Please keep away from the edge of the cliff.

161. keep down

Meaning: to prevent something from increasing

Sample sentence: Regular exercise helps keep stress down.

162. keep from

Meaning: to prevent someone from doing something

Sample sentence: The loud music kept me from sleeping.

163. keep in touch

Meaning: to continue contacting someone

Sample sentence: We still keep in touch after moving to different schools.

164. keep off

Meaning: to avoid touching or going on something

Sample sentence: The sign warned visitors to keep off the grass.

165. keep on

Meaning: to continue

Sample sentence: He kept on practising until he got it right.

166. keep to

Meaning: to follow or stay within limits

Sample sentence: We must keep to the school rules.

Meaning: to follow a rule or do what you have promised or planned to do

Sample sentence: I think we should keep to our original plan.

167. keep track of

Meaning: to stay informed about something

Sample sentence: Use a notebook to keep track of your homework.