

Phrasal verbs with “fall” (*fall/fell/fallen*)

1) The verb “**fall**” in English describes an action due to gravity – an object goes from a higher to a lower place. For example:

- The leaves **fall** from the trees in the autumn.
- Last month, a large meteor **fell** in Arizona.
- Rain **falls** every day in some parts of the Amazon.

2) The verb can also describe non-physical things (similar to “decrease”). For example:

- The price **fell** when the new model was launched.
- The exchange rate of the real against the dollar **has fallen** recently.
- Interest in the game **fell** significantly from one year to the next.

3) When we use the verb “**fall**”, we describe an object which moves through the air until it makes contact with the ground. However, when an object previously had contact with something else, we can use the following phrasal verbs:

- fall away = to separate
- fall apart = to break into many pieces
- fall down = to fall from a standing position
- fall over = to fall from a standing position
- fall in/into = to fall and end up inside something
- fall off = to fall from a fixed place or surface
- fall out of = to fall from the inside of something

Examples:

- The paint **fell away** from the wall because of the humidity.
- My Rubik’s cube **fell apart** when it hit the ground.
- Many trees **fell down** during the storm.
- Bob **fell over** because he was dizzy.
- The cat **fell into** the swimming pool.
- The book **fell off** the table.
- His false teeth **fell out of** his mouth when he sneezed.

4) There are some other phrasal verbs which do not have literal meanings. For example:

- fall back = to retreat
- fall back on = to use (as an alternative)
- fall behind (with) = to be late (with)
- fall for = to be fooled by
- fall in (with) = to agree (with)
- fall out (with) = to disagree (with)
- fall into = to belong to
- fall through = to fail

Examples:

- The group **fell back** when the enemy advanced.
- When there is no electricity we have to **fall back on** pen and paper.
- Johnny **fell behind** with his rent because he had lost his job.
- Jane **fell for** his charm and later discovered how dishonest he was.
- Steven **fell for** the con and lost \$100.
- Bob **fell in with** the consensus of opinion.
- Steve **fell out with** his boss when they talked about a pay raise.
- This book **falls into** the “Science Fiction” category.
- He waited two months to sign the contract, and then discovered that the sale had **fallen through**.

5) There are also some expressions which use the verb "fall". For example:

- fall in love (with) = to become passionate (for somebody)
- fall for = to become passionate (for somebody)
- fall about laughing = to laugh exaggeratedly
- fall flat = to fail (a joke)
- fall flat on your face = to fall over unexpectedly
- fall guy = scapegoat
- fall asleep = to start to sleep
- fall to bits = to break into many pieces

Examples:

- Suzy **fell in love with** John as soon as she met him. It was love at first sight!
- Suzy **fell for** John as soon as she met him.
- After telling the joke, the audience **fell about laughing**. It was his best joke.
- The joke **fell flat**, because nobody laughed. It was his worst joke.
- Peter **fell flat on his face** when he didn't see the hole in the pavement.
- The Finance Minister was fired, but I think that he was the **fall guy** for a corrupt regime.
- The airplane **fell to bits** when the bomb exploded.

Exercise. Choose an appropriate phrasal verb or expression to complete these sentences:

1. Our big oak tree _____ yesterday during the storm.
2. When you have too many tasks to do, it's easy to _____ them.
3. I'm a terrible joke-teller, my jokes always _____.
4. Tree ferns _____ the classification of vascular plants.
5. My old car _____ when I skidded off the road and hit a tree.
6. I _____ my wife when we talked about possible vacation destinations.
7. I'm always the _____ - it's always me who gets the blame!
8. The project _____ due to insufficient funds.
9. My son often _____ fake news stories – he is so gullible.
10. When the dog _____, it _____ the sofa! We all _____!