

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.

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.