

## USEFUL AND FREQUENT IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS USING “RUN”

- (1) **run** (v./trans): **operate, manage**

### Examples -

run a company  
run an economy  
run a department

Sue **ran the billing department** for ten years before she retired.  
They are good salesmen, but they have no idea how to **run the company**.

- (2) **run** (v./intrans): **function**

### Examples -

**My car isn't running** very well.  
**Things aren't running** as well as we'd expected.

- (3) **run into**:<sup>1</sup> encounter or meet, usually **unexpectedly**

### Examples -

run into a problem  
run into a situation  
run into some information  
run into a friend  
run into your boss

**Note** You can only “run into” someone you already know.  
When you make someone’s acquaintance for the first time, use “meet.”

### Examples –

I <b>met</b> my best friend over 20 years ago.	<b>First-time meeting</b>
I <b>ran into</b> my best friend downtown the other day.	<b>Unplanned meeting</b>
I'm <b>meeting</b> my best friend for lunch tomorrow at noon.	<b>Planned meeting</b>

<sup>1</sup> “**Run into**” is a **phrasal verb** – an idiomatic expression. Remember to **stress the preposition** [particle] in a phrasal verb. The preposition or particle in *run into* is “*into*.” With **ordinary verbs** – such as *run* - **stress the verb** itself. For example: “He **ran** for half an hour to get some exercise.” **BUT** “He ran **into** an old friend while he was visiting L.A.”

(4) **run out of:**<sup>2</sup> deplete, finish a supply

**Examples -**

run out of ideas  
run out of solutions  
run out of time  
run out of money  
run out of gas  
run out of paper

- I had hoped to explain the proposal in more detail, but **we ran out of time**. We'll have to provide the details at the next meeting.
- I was copying the article when the copy machine **ran out of paper**. What an inconvenience!

(5) in the short run - short-term  
in the long run - long term

**Examples -**

**In the short run** my English will be good enough.

**In the long run**, however, I'll really need to improve if I want to get where I'd like to go.

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<sup>2</sup> “**Run out of**” is a phrasal verb with **two prepositions** [particles]. When a phrasal verb has two prepositions, **stress the first one**.

Two other common *three-word* phrasal verbs are: (i) *talk out of* and (ii) *look down on*. **Talk out of** means to convince someone to refrain from acting, or to convince someone *not to take an action*. **For example:** “I was thinking about buying a new laptop, but my friend talked me out of it. He told me I should wait because the prices would be coming down soon. I took his advice, and decided to wait a few more months until prices drop.” **Look down on** means to consider oneself superior. It has a very unpleasant connotation. **For example:** “John is an educational snob. He *looks down on* anyone who hasn't spent many years in well-known universities.” Another example: “Mary made a lot of money in the stock market and has become a ridiculous snob. Now she *looks down on* people without a lot of money.”

In each of the above three-word phrasal verbs, stress the *first* of the two prepositions. Stress **out** in the expression ***talk out of***. Stress **down** in the expression ***look down on***.