find 1

✗ I'd like to find why nobody likes me.
✓ **I'd like to find out why nobody likes me.**
✗ The doctors are trying to find what is wrong with him.
✓ **The doctors are trying to find out what is wrong with him.**

find = discover something by chance or by looking for it: 'Did you ever find the sunglasses you lost?' 'I can't find my comb. Have you seen it anywhere?'
find out = get information about something that you want to know: 'He's gone to find out which gate the plane leaves from.' 'I think we should find out exactly what's missing before we start accusing people.'

2

✗ Nurses find very difficult to start a family while they are working.
✓ **Nurses find it very difficult to start a family while they are working.**

find + it + easy/difficult/impossible to do sth: 'I find it hard to concentrate when I'm hungry.' 'You might find it interesting to spend a few hours at the museum.'

find out

✗ Looking through the magazine, I found out several interesting articles.
✓ **Looking through the magazine, I came across several interesting articles.**
✗ If you find out her address, would you please send it to me?
✓ **If you come across her address, would you please send it to me?**

find out = see note at FIND 1
come across = find or meet someone or something by chance: 'While cleaning out the drawers I came across my old school tie.' 'You'll never guess who I came across in the high street today.'

fine

✗ 'Hello, John. How are you?' 'Very fine, thank you.'
✓ **'Hello, John. How are you?' 'Fine, thank you.'**
When **fine** means 'very well', it is not used with **very** or **extremely**. See note at VERY 2

fire 1

✗ If there is a gas leak, the house could go on fire.
✓ **If there is a gas leak, the house could catch fire.**
✗ One of the curtains became on fire.
✓ **One of the curtains caught fire.**
catch fire: 'One of the engines had overheated and caught fire.'

2

✗ Eventually, the fire went off and the room got colder.
✓ **Eventually, the fire went out and the room got colder.**
go out = (of a coal fire, cigarette, candle etc) stop burning: 'The problem with cigars is that they keep going out.'

first

✗ At first, I would like to introduce myself.
✓ **First of all, I would like to introduce myself.**
✗ There are four points that I would like to make about the college. At first, there are not enough club activities...
✓ **There are four points that I would like to make about the college. Firstly, there are not enough club activities...**
See Language Note opposite

FIRST • FIRST OF ALL • AT FIRST • IN/AT THE BEGINNING

first, firstly and first of all	**first** First, **firstly** and **first of all** introduce the first item in a list or sequence. The next item is normally introduced by **then** or **first of all second/secondly**: 'First, open all the windows. Then turn off the gas and, if necessary, call an ambulance.' 'These new computers have several advantages. First of all, they're faster than the older machines. Secondly, they're far easier to use. And thirdly, they're more reliable.' **at first** At first introduces a situation which is in contrast with a later situation (after a change has taken place): 'At first I didn't like the climate, but after two years I got used to it.'
in the beginning	Like **at first**, **in the beginning** introduces a situation which is in contrast with a later situation. However, **in the beginning** is less common and suggests that the speaker is looking a long way back into the past to the period of time immediately after something began: 'In the beginning, when the first settlers arrived, law and order didn't exist.'
at the beginning	**At the beginning** refers to (1) the point in time when something begins: 'At the beginning of each lesson there is usually a revision exercise.' (2) the place where something begins: 'At the beginning of the novel there is a long description of the farm where Daniel was born and grew up.' Unlike **in the beginning,** at the beginning is usually followed by **of**: 'at the beginning of the week/holiday/film'. See also Language Note at END

firstly

✗ I went and sat next to him. Firstly, I didn't speak. I just sat there wondering what I could say. Then I said, 'Nice day, isn't it?'
✓ **I went and sat next to him. At first, I didn't speak. I just sat there wondering what I could say. Then I said, 'Nice day, isn't it?'**
✗ Firstly, I couldn't understand the local people at all.
✓ **At first, I couldn't understand the local people at all.**
See Language Note above

fish

✗ I had never seen such brightly coloured fishes before.
✓ **I had never seen such brightly coloured fish before.**
The plural form of **fish** is usually **fish**: 'Did you catch any fish?' 'The fish in the market are always fresh.'
The plural form **fishes** is used mainly in stories for small children and in scientific or technical styles (to refer to different species of fish).

fit 1

✗ You should see a doctor or specialist to find out which type of diet will fit you.
✓ **You should see a doctor or specialist to find out which type of diet will suit you.**