

A PRACTICAL VOCABULARY COURSE

# English Collocations in Use

*Learn the words that go together —  
and start to sound natural*

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52 teaching units · with exercises & answer key  
Levels B1–C1 · Intermediate to Advanced

**WORDCRAFT EDITIONS**

## **English Collocations in Use**

A self-study and classroom course in English collocations.

First edition.

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# Welcome

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Ask any advanced learner what stands between them and truly natural English, and the honest answer is rarely grammar. It is collocation — knowing that rain is *heavy* and not *strong*, that you *make* a decision but *take* a risk, that bad news leaves you *deeply* shocked rather than *very* shocked. These partnerships cannot be reasoned out. They have to be met, noticed and practised.

That is what this book is for. It gathers the collocations that matter most for everyday life, study and work, and presents them in a way designed to stick: in context, in clear patterns, and with plenty of practice.

## Who the book is for

It is written for intermediate to advanced learners (roughly CEFR B1 to C1), whether you are studying alone or with a teacher. It is equally useful if you are preparing for an exam such as IELTS, TOEFL or a Cambridge qualification, where natural collocation is directly rewarded.

## What is inside

- **52 units** grouped into five parts, from the foundations to topic vocabulary and questions of style.
- **Clear explanations** with example sentences and reference tables.
- **Tip and common-mistake boxes** that target the errors learners really make.
- **Two exercise sets in every unit**, with a complete answer key at the back.
- **An index of collocations** so you can find any phrase in seconds.

# How to use this book

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You do not have to work through the units in order — but if collocation is a new idea to you, read Part A first. After that, follow your needs and your interests.

## A simple routine for each unit

- **Read** the lettered sections slowly. Say the example sentences aloud; collocation lives partly in the ear.
- **Test yourself** on the tables by covering the right-hand column and recalling the examples.
- **Do the exercises** in writing, then check them against the key.
- **Note** the collocations you got wrong, and use five of them in sentences about your own life before you move on.

## Make it a habit

Little and often beats long and rare. Ten focused minutes a day, with regular review of earlier units, will do more than a single long session once a week. Above all, start *using* the collocations you meet here. A phrase you have spoken or written even once is far more likely to stay with you than one you have only read.

**A note on the highlighting:** throughout the book, collocations are shown like **this** in the text, and the key word of each pair is shown in **bold** inside the tables. The symbol *like this* marks an expression to avoid.

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PART A

# Foundations

*Before the collocations themselves: what they are, why they matter, and a method for learning them that actually works.*

UNITS 1-4

## 1 What is a collocation?

A collocation is a pair or group of words that habitually go together because they sound natural to a native speaker. Learning English word by word will only take you so far; learning it chunk by chunk is what makes you sound fluent.

### A Words that expect each other

Some words simply prefer certain partners. We say **heavy rain**, not *strong rain*; we make a **quick decision**, not *a fast decision*. Both alternatives are grammatically perfect, yet only one is the natural choice. That predictable partnership is a collocation.

NATURAL COLLOCATION	UNNATURAL (BUT GRAMMATICAL)
a heavy smoker	a strong smoker
make a mistake	do a mistake
fast food	quick food
highly likely	strongly likely
a warm welcome	a hot welcome

### B Why collocations matter

Using the right collocation does three things for you. It makes you **sound natural**, so listeners focus on your message rather than your mistakes. It makes you **more precise**, because a good collocation often carries shades of meaning a single word cannot. And it makes you **more fluent**, because storing whole chunks in memory means you build sentences faster, with less effort.

Examiners in tests such as IELTS, TOEFL and Cambridge exams reward exactly this. A candidate who writes a **deep concern** or **raise awareness** shows control that a list of memorised single words can never reveal.

### C Collocation is about probability, not rules

There is rarely a logical reason why one word chosen another. You cannot work collocations out from grammar; you meet them, notice them, and remember them. This book is built to help you do exactly that, topic by topic and pattern by pattern.

WE SAY ...	... AND THE MEANING IS
do your homework	complete schoolwork at home
make your bed	tidy the sheets and covers
take a photo	use a camera to record an image
catch a cold	become ill with a cold

**Remember:** a collocation is not right because of a rule — it is right because that is what fluent speakers actually say. Train your ear, not just your grammar.

## Exercises

**1.1** Underline the more natural collocation in each pair.

- heavy rain / strong rain
- make a mistake / do a mistake
- a quick decision / a fast decision
- highly likely / strongly likely
- a warm welcome / a hot welcome
- take a photo / make a photo

**1.2** Decide whether each phrase is a natural collocation (write OK) or not (write X and correct it).

- a heavy smoker
- do a mistake
- catch a cold
- a fast decision
- raise awareness
- a strong welcome

## 2 Types of collocation

Collocations come in a small number of recognisable patterns. Once you can spot the pattern, every new collocation is easier to file away and recall.

### A Grammatical and lexical collocations

A **grammatical collocation** joins a content word to a grammar word, usually a preposition: **depend on**, **afraid of**, **a reason for**. A **lexical collocation** joins two content words: **make a decision** (verb + noun), **heavy traffic** (adjective + noun), **strongly recommend** (adverb + verb).

PATTERN	EXAMPLE
verb + preposition	rely <b>on</b> a friend
adjective + preposition	+ <b>keen on</b> sport
verb + noun	<b>take</b> a risk
adjective + noun	a <b>narrow</b> escape
adverb + adjective	<b>bitterly</b> disappointed
verb + adverb	whisper <b>softly</b>

## B Strong and weak collocations

In a **strong collocation**, the words are tightly bound and few substitutes are allowed: you can **shrug your shoulders** but nothing else. In a **weak collocation**, a word combines freely with many partners: **a good** idea, day, friend, meal, reason. Strong collocations are the ones worth memorising as whole units, because you cannot guess them.

STRONG (FIXED)	WEAK (FLEXIBLE)
foot the bill	a <b>big</b> house / car / problem
auburn hair	a <b>nice</b> day / meal / person
idle gossip	start a job / car / project

## C How many words?

Most collocations are two words, but longer chunks behave the same way: **make a quick decision**, **a strong sense of duty**, **take something into account**. Treat the whole chunk as one item of vocabulary.

**Tip:** when you meet a new word, ask not only “what does it mean?” but “what words come before and after it?” That second question is what builds real fluency.

### Exercises

**2.1** Label each collocation: G (grammatical) or L (lexical).

1. depend on
2. heavy traffic
3. afraid of
4. make a decision
5. a reason for
6. strongly recommend

**2.2** Decide whether each is a strong (S) or weak (W) collocation.

1. foot the bill
2. a big house
3. shrug your shoulders
4. a nice day
5. auburn hair
6. start a job

## A Notice them everywhere

The single most useful habit is to **pay attention** to which words travel together whenever you read or listen. When you meet *pollution*, notice that writers **tackle pollution**, **reduce pollution** and worry about **air pollution**. Collect the partners, not just the headword.

## B Record them in a useful way

Keep a vocabulary notebook organised by **key word** or by topic, not alphabetically. Write the collocation inside a short example sentence so you remember how it is used, and mark the stress or the preposition that learners often get wrong.

DON'T JUST WRITE	WRITE INSTEAD
decision	<b>make a decision</b> – It took weeks to make a decision.
interested	<b>interested in</b> – She's interested <u>in</u> art.
rain	<b>heavy rain</b> – The match was stopped because of heavy rain.

## C Learn in word families and opposites

Group collocations that share a verb (**make** an effort / a profit / a promise) or that contrast (**a heavy** smoker vs **a light** sleeper). Linking new chunks to ones you already know **strengthens the memory**.

## D Recycle and reuse

Memory fades without use. **Review regularly**, and force yourself to put new collocations into your own speaking and writing within a day or two. A collocation you have used once is far more likely to stay than one you have only read.

**Tip:** revise little and often. Five minutes a day reviewing yesterday's collocations beats an hour once a week.

## 3 How to learn collocations

*You cannot learn collocations by reading lists alone. You learn them by noticing, recording, and reusing them until they become automatic. This unit gives you a practical method.*

## Exercises

**3.1** Complete the verb that collocates with all three nouns.

1. \_\_\_ an effort / a profit / a promise
2. \_\_\_ a risk / a photo / a break
3. \_\_\_ advice / a hand / a speech
4. \_\_\_ a cold / a bus / a ball
5. \_\_\_ a meeting / your breath / a party
6. \_\_\_ a decision / progress / a noise

**3.2** Rewrite each weak notebook entry as a better one by adding a typical collocation.

1. mistake (verb + noun)
2. interested (+ preposition)
3. traffic (adjective + noun)
4. recommend (adverb + verb)
5. rain (adjective + noun)
6. decision (verb + noun)

## 4 Using this book and a collocations dictionary

*This unit shows you how to get the most from the book in your hands and from the reference tools that support it.*

### A How the book is organised

The book is divided into five parts. **Part A** explains what collocations are and how to learn them. **Part B** covers grammatical collocations – the prepositions and patterns that follow words. **Part C** covers the major lexical patterns, including the busy verbs *make*, *do*, *have* and *take*. **Part D** works through everyday topics, and **Part E** deals with style: academic writing, speaking, business and idioms.

### B How each unit works

Every unit presents collocations in short lettered sections with example sentences and tables, followed by exercises. Study the explanation first, then do the exercises and check them against the **answer key** at the back. Work through the book in any order, but do Part A first.

FEATURE	WHAT TO DO WITH IT
example tables	cover the right column and test yourself
<b>note</b> boxes	learn the common mistake or tip by heart
exercises	write full answers, then self-check
the index	look up any collocation quickly

## C Using a collocations dictionary

A good collocations dictionary lists, under each headword, the verbs, adjectives and nouns that **go together** with it. To find how to describe heavy rain, you **look up** *rain* and scan the adjectives. Make checking collocations a normal part of your writing process, just as you check spelling.

**Tip:** when you finish a unit, choose five collocations you didn't know and use each one in a sentence about your own life. That is where real learning happens.

## Exercises

**4.1** Which part of the book (A–E) would help most with each need?

1. You keep confusing *make* and *do*.
2. You want collocations for an essay about the environment.
3. You are not sure which preposition follows *afraid*.
4. You want to sound more natural in conversation.
5. You don't understand what a collocation actually is.
6. You are writing a formal business email.

**4.2** Put these study steps in a sensible order (1–6).

1. Check your answers in the key.
2. Read the explanation sections.
3. Use five new collocations in your own sentences.
4. Do the exercises.
5. Choose a unit.
6. Note down the collocations you got wrong.

PART B

# Grammatical collocations

*The prepositions and patterns that follow words — the small joints that hold English together and that learners most often get wrong.*

UNITS 5–10

## 5 Verb + preposition

Many English verbs are followed by a fixed preposition. The preposition rarely translates word-for-word from other languages, so it is best learned together with the verb as a single chunk.

### A Verbs that depend on a particular preposition

Some verbs almost always take the same preposition. We say that we **depend on** something, **rely on** someone, and **apologise for** a mistake. Changing the preposition usually sounds wrong to a native speaker, so try to fix the pairing in your memory.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
depend on something	Whether we go ahead <b>depends on</b> the budget.
rely on someone	You can <b>rely on</b> her to finish on time.
apologise for something	He <b>apologised for</b> arriving so late.
deal with a problem	Our team will <b>deal with</b> your complaint today.
consist of parts	The course <b>consists of</b> ten short modules.
belong to someone	This jacket <b>belongs to</b> one of the guests.

### B Verbs with *to*, *about* and *with*

A second group of common verbs takes **to**, **about** or **with**. Notice that we **agree with** a person but **agree to** a plan, and that we **complain about** a thing but **complain to** a person.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
belong to / refer to	The figures <b>refer to</b> last year's sales.
complain about something	Guests often <b>complain about</b> the slow lifts.
worry about something	Try not to <b>worry about</b> the exam.
agree with someone	I completely <b>agree with</b> you on this.
deal with / cope with	She copes <b>with</b> stress remarkably well.
apply for a job	I'm going to <b>apply for</b> the manager's post.

### C Verbs that combine with two objects

Some verbs link a person and a thing with a preposition. We **blame someone for** a problem, **thank someone for** help, and **spend money on** something. The order is normally verb + person + preposition + thing.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
blame someone for something	Don't <b>blame me for</b> the delay.
thank someone for something	I'd like to <b>thank you all for</b> coming.
spend money on something	They <b>spend</b> a fortune <b>on</b> advertising.
congratulate someone on something	We <b>congratulated</b> her <b>on</b> her promotion.
remind someone of something	This song <b>reminds me of</b> my childhood.

**Common mistake:** say *discuss the plan*, not *discuss about the plan*. The verbs *discuss*, *enter* and *marry* take no preposition.

### Exercises

**5.1** Complete each sentence with the correct preposition.

1. It all depends \_\_\_ the weather.
2. She apologised \_\_\_ forgetting his name.
3. This umbrella belongs \_\_\_ my sister.
4. I really must congratulate you \_\_\_ your exam results.
5. Customers keep complaining \_\_\_ the noise.
6. The kit consists \_\_\_ three separate tools.
7. We spend too much money \_\_\_ takeaways.
8. Don't blame him \_\_\_ something he didn't do.

**5.2** Correct the error in each sentence. One sentence is already correct.

1. You can rely in me to keep the secret.
2. The manager will deal to your refund this afternoon.
3. We need to discuss about the new schedule.
4. Thank you for your quick reply.
5. I agree to you that the price is too high.
6. She applied to a scholarship last month.
7. This photo reminds me about our trip to Rome.
8. Try not to worry for the results.

## 6 Adjective + preposition

Adjectives are often followed by a fixed preposition before a noun or an *-ing* form. This unit groups the most useful adjective + preposition pairs so you can use them naturally.

### A Feelings and reactions

When we describe how we feel about something, the adjective decides the preposition. We are **afraid of** spiders, **keen on** jazz, **proud of** our work and **worried about** the future. After the preposition we use a noun or an *-ing* form, never a to-infinitive.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
afraid of something	She's <b>afraid of</b> flying in small planes.
keen on something	I'm not very <b>keen on</b> spicy food.
proud of someone	His parents are <b>proud of</b> everything he's done.
worried about something	We're <b>worried about</b> the rising costs.
excited about something	The kids are <b>excited about</b> the trip.
fond of someone	He's grown very <b>fond of</b> his new colleagues.

### B Knowledge, ability and responsibility

A second important group describes what we know or can do. We are **aware of** a fact, **capable of** great things, **good at** languages and **responsible for** a department.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
aware of something	Were you <b>aware of</b> the new rules?
capable of something	The engine is <b>capable of</b> huge speeds.
good at something	She's really <b>good at</b> solving puzzles.
responsible for something	Who is <b>responsible for</b> locking up?
familiar with something	I'm not <b>familiar with</b> this software.

### C Similar, different and dependent

Some adjectives describe a relationship between two things. Note that we say **similar to** but **different from**, and **interested in** rather than *interested for*.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
similar to something	Your phone is <b>similar to</b> mine.
different from something	City life is <b>different from</b> village life.
interested in something	Are you <b>interested in</b> joining the club?
full of something	The report is <b>full of</b> useful detail.
famous for something	The town is <b>famous for</b> its cheese.

**Common mistake:** say *good at maths*, not *good in maths*. Also remember *interested in*, not *interested on*.

### Exercises

**6.1** Choose the correct preposition: *of, in, for, at, about, to* or *from*.

- I've never been very good \_\_\_\_ remembering names.
- Are you aware \_\_\_\_ the deadline next week?
- My brother is really keen \_\_\_\_ photography.
- This model is quite different \_\_\_\_ the older one.
- Everyone was excited \_\_\_\_ the announcement.
- She's responsible \_\_\_\_ the whole marketing team.
- Are you interested \_\_\_\_ classical music?
- The region is famous \_\_\_\_ its beaches.

**6.2** Match each sentence half on the left with the correct ending on the right.

- The dog is afraid
- I'm not familiar
- He's very proud
- This drink is similar
- The machine is capable
- We're a little worried
- The basket was full
- a with this part of town.
- b of his daughter's success.
- c of loud thunder.
- d of fresh fruit.
- e to lemonade but less sweet.
- f about the test results.
- g of running all night.

## 7 Noun + preposition

Just like verbs and adjectives, many nouns are followed by a particular preposition. The right preposition often differs

from the verb form, so it pays to learn the noun pairing separately.

### A Cause, reason and result

Several common nouns describe why something happens or what follows from it. We talk about the **reason for** a decision, the **cause of** an accident, and the **effect on** the environment. Notice that *reason* takes *for* but *cause* takes *of*.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
reason for something	What's the <b>reason for</b> the change of plan?
cause of something	Faulty wiring was the <b>cause of</b> the fire.
effect on something	The new law had a big <b>effect on</b> small firms.
solution to a problem	There's no easy <b>solution to</b> this problem.
need for something	There is a real <b>need for</b> more nurses.

### B Change, increase and decrease

When we describe numbers going up or down, the noun takes **in**. We speak of an **increase in** prices, a **fall in** demand and a **rise in** temperature. To name the size of the change, we add *of*: *an increase of 5%*.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
increase in something	There's been a sharp <b>increase in</b> rent.
fall in something	We saw a steady <b>fall in</b> sales last year.
demand for something	The <b>demand for</b> electric cars keeps growing.
change in something	There's been a slight <b>change in</b> the timetable.
lack of something	The project failed through a <b>lack of</b> funding.

### C Relationships and connections

Some nouns describe how two things connect. We talk about a **relationship with** a partner, the **difference between** two options, and a person's **attitude to** work (also *attitude towards*).

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
relationship with someone	She has a close <b>relationship with</b> her team.
difference between things	What's the <b>difference between</b> these two plans?
attitude to / towards something	His <b>attitude to</b> deadlines is very relaxed.
connection with something	The report found no <b>connection with</b> the virus.
interest in something	She has a deep <b>interest in</b> ancient history.

**Common mistake:** say *a solution to the problem*, not *a solution of the problem*; and *the difference between A and B*, not *the difference of A and B*.

#### Exercises

**7.1** Complete each sentence with the correct preposition.

- Nobody knows the real reason \_\_\_ his sudden departure.
- Scientists are studying the effect \_\_\_ sugar on the brain.
- There has been a big increase \_\_\_ online shopping.
- We finally found a solution \_\_\_ the parking problem.
- Can you explain the difference \_\_\_ the two models?
- There is growing demand \_\_\_ affordable housing.
- The accident was caused by a lack \_\_\_ attention.
- She has a very positive attitude \_\_\_ change.

**7.2** Choose the correct word to complete the noun phrase.

- The (cause / reason) for the meeting was never explained.
- Heavy rain was the (cause / solution) of the flooding.
- There's been a steady (fall / lack) in unemployment.
- The company has a strong (relationship / difference) with its suppliers.
- We must find a (need / solution) to this delay.
- There is a clear (need / effect) for better training.
- The medicine had no (effect / increase) on the pain.
- What's the (connection / increase) between these two events?

## 8 Prepositional phrases

English has many fixed phrases that begin with a preposition such as *on*, *in*, *at*, *by* or *under*. These work as ready-made expressions, so learn them whole rather than building them word by word.

### A Phrases with *on* and *in*

Some of the most frequent phrases start with **on** or **in**. We do something **on purpose** (deliberately), arrive **in time** (early enough), book a ticket **in advance**, or pay **in cash**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
on purpose	I'm sure she didn't spill it <b>on purpose</b> .
on time	The train left exactly <b>on time</b> .
in time (for)	We got there just <b>in time</b> for the start.
in advance	Please book your seat <b>in advance</b> .
in cash	Can I pay <b>in cash</b> instead of by card?
in general	<b>In general</b> , the feedback was positive.

Note the difference: **on time** means punctually, at the planned moment, while **in time** means with enough time to spare.

### B Phrases with *at* and *under*

Several phrases describe a state or situation. Something can be **at risk**, a person can be **under pressure** or **under control**, and a price can be **at least** a certain figure.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
at risk	Thousands of jobs are now <b>at risk</b> .
at least	It will take <b>at least</b> an hour.
under pressure	He works well even <b>under pressure</b> .
under control	Don't worry, the situation is <b>under control</b> .
at first	<b>At first</b> I didn't recognise her.

### C Phrases with *by* and *out of*

The preposition **by** appears in many idiomatic phrases about manner and chance. We meet someone **by chance**, do something **by mistake**, or learn a poem **by heart**. With **out of** we describe a thing that has run out or stopped working.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
by chance	We met completely <b>by chance</b> at the airport.
by mistake	I took your umbrella <b>by mistake</b> .
by heart	She knows the whole speech <b>by heart</b> .
out of order	The lift is <b>out of order</b> again.
out of date	This map is completely <b>out of date</b> .

**Common mistake:** say *in time* for the meeting when you mean early enough, but *on time* when you mean punctual. Mixing them changes the meaning.

### Exercises

**8.1** Complete each sentence with the missing preposition: *on*, *in*, *at*, *by* or *under*.

- You should always book \_\_\_ advance during the holidays.
- I bumped into an old friend \_\_\_ chance yesterday.
- With three deadlines today, she's really \_\_\_ pressure.
- The waiter brought the wrong dish \_\_\_ mistake.
- Hundreds of homes are \_\_\_ risk of flooding.
- I don't think she broke it \_\_\_ purpose; it was an accident.
- The escalator is \_\_\_ of order, so use the stairs.
- The actor learned every line \_\_\_ heart.

**8.2** Choose the correct phrase to complete each sentence.

- Hurry up or we won't get there (on time / in time) for the film.
- The buses here almost never run (on time / in time).
- (At first / At least) the job seemed easy, but it wasn't.
- It will cost (at first / at least) two hundred pounds.
- Relax — everything is (under control / under pressure).
- This timetable is (out of date / out of order); they changed it last week.
- Can I pay (in cash / in general)?
- (In general / In advance), I prefer working from home.

## 9 Verb -ing forms and to-patterns: infinitives

When one verb follows another, the first verb decides the form of the second: an *-ing* form, a *to*-infinitive, or sometimes either. Learning which verb takes which pattern helps you sound natural and avoid common errors.

### A Verbs followed by an *-ing* form

Many common verbs are followed by the *-ing* form. We **avoid doing** something, **enjoy doing** something, **keep doing** something, and we usually **finish doing** a task before moving on. After these verbs a *to*-infinitive would sound wrong.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
avoid doing something	Try to <b>avoid making</b> the same mistake twice.
enjoy doing something	I really <b>enjoy cooking</b> at the weekend.
keep doing something	She <b>keeps forgetting</b> her password.
finish doing something	Have you <b>finished writing</b> the report?
suggest doing something	He <b>suggested taking</b> the early train.
mind doing something	Would you <b>mind closing</b> the window?

### B Verbs followed by a *to*-infinitive

A second large group is followed by a *to*-infinitive. We **manage to do** something difficult, **decide to do** something, **offer to do** a favour, or **refuse to do** what we dislike.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
manage to do something	We <b>managed to finish</b> just in time.
decide to do something	They <b>decided to move</b> to the coast.
offer to do something	He kindly <b>offered to help</b> us pack.
refuse to do something	She <b>refused to sign</b> the contract.
promise to do something	I <b>promise to call</b> you tomorrow.

### C Verbs and phrases with *to* + *-ing*

Watch out for expressions where *to* is a preposition, not part of an infinitive. After these, use the *-ing* form. We **look forward to doing** something, are **used to doing** something, and **object to doing** something.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
look forward to doing something	I'm <b>looking forward to seeing</b> you again.
be used to doing something	She's <b>used to working</b> long hours.
object to doing something	They <b>objected to paying</b> the extra fee.
get round to doing something	I never <b>got round to fixing</b> the gate.
be committed to doing something	We're <b>committed to reducing</b> waste.

**Common mistake:** say *I look forward to hearing from you*, not *I look forward to hear from you*. Here *to* is a preposition, so it needs the *-ing* form.

### Exercises

**9.1** Put the verb in brackets into the correct form (*-ing* or *to* + infinitive).

- We finally managed \_\_\_\_ (book) a table for tonight.
- Would you mind \_\_\_\_ (wait) here for a moment?
- I'm really looking forward to \_\_\_\_ (meet) your family.
- He refused \_\_\_\_ (answer) any more questions.
- Try to avoid \_\_\_\_ (eat) so late at night.
- She's not used to \_\_\_\_ (drive) on the left.
- They decided \_\_\_\_ (cancel) the trip.
- Have you finished \_\_\_\_ (clean) the kitchen?

**9.2** Correct the error in each sentence. One sentence is already correct.

- I look forward to hear from you soon.
- He offered helping me with the move.
- We enjoy to walk along the river.
- She promised to send the documents today.
- They keep to arrive late to every meeting.
- I'm used to get up early now.
- Do you mind to open the door?
- He suggested to take a different route.

## 10 Verbs with objects and that-clauses

Some verbs are used with a personal object and a preposition, while others introduce a whole clause beginning with *that*. This unit shows the common patterns so you can report and describe what people say and feel.

### A Verb + person + of / for

A number of verbs link a person to a thing with a fixed preposition. We **remind someone of** something, **accuse someone of** wrongdoing, **warn someone about** a danger, and **forgive someone for** a mistake.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
remind someone of something	You <b>remind</b> me <b>of</b> my old teacher.
accuse someone of something	They <b>accused</b> him <b>of</b> stealing the files.
warn someone about something	I <b>warned</b> her <b>about</b> the icy roads.
forgive someone for something	She never <b>forgave</b> him <b>for</b> lying.
provide someone with something	The hotel <b>provides</b> guests <b>with</b> towels.

Be careful: **remind someone of** means 'make someone think of', while *remind someone to do something* means 'help them remember a task'.

### B Verbs followed by a that-clause

Many reporting verbs are followed by a *that*-clause. We can **suggest that** something happens, **admit that** we were wrong, or **explain that** there was a delay. The word *that* can often be left out in informal speech.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
suggest that	I <b>suggest that</b> we meet on Friday.
admit that	He <b>admitted that</b> he had been wrong.
explain that	She <b>explained that</b> the flight was delayed.
realise that	I suddenly <b>realised that</b> I'd left my keys inside.
doubt that	I <b>doubt that</b> they'll arrive on time.

### C Verb + person + that-clause

Some verbs take a personal object before the *that*-clause. We **tell someone that**, **remind someone that**, **warn someone that**, and **convince someone that**. Note that *say* does not take a personal object: we say *tell someone something* but *say something to someone*.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
tell someone that	She <b>told</b> me <b>that</b> the shop was closed.
remind someone that	Please <b>remind</b> him <b>that</b> the bill is due.
warn someone that	They <b>warned</b> us <b>that</b> the path was steep.
convince someone that	He <b>convinced</b> me <b>that</b> it was a good deal.
promise someone that	I <b>promise</b> you <b>that</b> it won't happen again.

**Common mistake:** say *She told me that...*, not *She said me that...* Use *tell* + person, but *say* + (to person).

### Exercises

**10.1** Complete each sentence with the correct preposition (*of, for, about, with*) where one is needed. Write *&ndash;* if no preposition is needed.

- This street reminds me \_\_\_ the town where I grew up.
- The police accused the driver \_\_\_ speeding.
- I'd like to warn you \_\_\_ the broken step.
- She finally forgave her brother \_\_\_ the argument.
- The school provides every pupil \_\_\_ a laptop.
- He admitted \_\_\_ that the plan had failed.
- Can you remind me \_\_\_ to lock the back door?
- Nobody could explain \_\_\_ why the system crashed.

**10.2** Choose the correct verb: *say* or *tell*.

- She \_\_\_ me that the meeting had moved to Tuesday.
- He \_\_\_ that he was feeling much better.
- Could you \_\_\_ them to wait outside?
- The manager \_\_\_ to us that the office would close early.
- Don't \_\_\_ anyone about the surprise party.
- I \_\_\_ you the truth, I promise.
- What did she \_\_\_ when you asked her?
- They \_\_\_ us that the road was blocked.

PART C

# Lexical collocation types

*The great combining engines of English: make, do, have and take, the intensifying adverbs, and the adjective–noun pairs that carry real meaning.*

UNITS 11–20

## 11 make and do

Few pairs of verbs cause learners more trouble than **make** and **do**. Both can be translated by a single word in many languages, but in English each one teams up with its own set of nouns. As a rough guide, **make** often suggests creating or producing something, while **do** tends to refer to activities, tasks and work in general. The safest approach, though, is to learn the collocations as whole chunks.

### A make: producing and creating

We use **make** when we bring something new into existence, whether it is a physical object or something more abstract such as a sound or a plan.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
make a decision	We need to <b>make a decision</b> before the end of the week.
make a mistake	Everyone <b>makes mistakes</b> when they are learning.
make a mess	The children <b>made a terrible mess</b> in the kitchen.
make a noise	Try not to <b>make a noise</b> when you come in late.
make a plan	Let's <b>make a plan</b> for the weekend.
make a suggestion	Can I <b>make a suggestion</b> about the design?

### B make: effort, money and relationships

Several very common expressions with **make** deal with effort, success and human interaction.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
make an effort	She <b>made an effort</b> to be friendly to the new colleague.
make progress	He is finally <b>making progress</b> with his thesis.
make money	The shop barely <b>makes any money</b> in winter.
make friends	Children usually <b>make friends</b> very quickly.
make an appointment	I'd like to <b>make an appointment</b> with the dentist.

### C do: tasks, work and activities

We generally use **do** for jobs, duties and unspecified activities. It is also the verb we reach for when we talk about work and study.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
do the housework	We share the cooking, but I usually <b>do the housework</b> .
do business	Our firm <b>does business</b> with several Asian companies.
do research	She is <b>doing research</b> into childhood memory.
do your homework	Have you <b>done your homework</b> yet?
do an exercise	Please <b>do the exercises</b> on page twelve.
do a favour	Could you <b>do me a favour</b> and lock up?
do your best	I can't promise success, but I'll <b>do my best</b> .

**Common mistake:** Learners often say *make a mistake* correctly but then say *do a mistake* by analogy. Remember: you **make a mistake**, never *do a mistake*. Likewise you **do the washing-up**, not *make the washing-up*.

### Exercises

**11.1** Complete each sentence with the correct form of *make* or *do*.

- You'll have to \_\_\_\_\_ a decision sooner or later.
- I need to \_\_\_\_\_ some research before I write the report.
- Could you \_\_\_\_\_ me a favour and post this letter?
- The toddlers \_\_\_\_\_ a real mess with their paints.
- He's \_\_\_\_\_ good progress in his English lessons.
- We \_\_\_\_\_ business with that supplier for over a decade.
- Stop \_\_\_\_\_ such a noise; the baby is asleep.
- I'll \_\_\_\_\_ my best to finish it by Friday.

**11.2** Each sentence contains one wrong verb (*make* / *do*). Correct it.

- Don't worry if you do a mistake during the test.
- She made the housework before going to work.
- I really should make my homework tonight.
- It's hard to do friends when you move to a new city.
- Can I do a suggestion about the menu?
- He hopes to make a lot of research next year.
- They want to make an appointment for Tuesday.
- We must make the washing-up after dinner.

## 12 have and take

The verbs **have** and **take** appear in a huge number of everyday collocations. Often they go with the same kind of noun – an action or an experience – and sometimes either verb is possible (*have a look / take a look*). In many cases, though, only one of them sounds natural, so it pays to notice the partnerships.

### A have: experiences and activities

We often use **have** with nouns that describe experiences, especially eating, resting and social events.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
have a break	Let's <b>have a break</b> and get some coffee.
have a go	It looks difficult, but I'll <b>have a go</b> .
have an argument	They <b>had a silly argument</b> about money.
have a rest	You look exhausted; you should <b>have a rest</b> .
have a chat	We <b>had a long chat</b> about old times.
have a party	They're <b>having a party</b> to celebrate the move.

### B take: deliberate actions

We tend to use **take** when someone makes a conscious choice to do something, often something that requires courage or responsibility.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
take a risk	Starting a business means <b>taking a risk</b> .
take responsibility	She <b>took full responsibility</b> for the error.
take a decision	The board <b>took the decision</b> to relocate.
take action	The government must <b>take action</b> on pollution.
take a chance	He <b>took a chance</b> and invested his savings.
take control	A new manager <b>took control</b> of the team.

### C take: time, looks and breaks

Many short, everyday actions go with **take**, particularly when we look at, photograph or pause for something.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
take a look	Could you <b>take a look</b> at my essay?
take a photo	Tourists were <b>taking photos</b> of the cathedral.
take a seat	Please <b>take a seat</b> ; the doctor won't be long.
take your time	There's no rush, so <b>take your time</b> .
take a break	Let's <b>take a break</b> for ten minutes.

**Tip:** With breaks and looks, both verbs often work: you can **have a break** or **take a break**, **have a look** or **take a look**. But with risk, responsibility and action, only **take** is correct – never *have a risk*.

### Exercises

**12.1** Complete each sentence with the correct form of *have* or *take*. (Where both are possible, either is accepted.)

- You should \_\_\_\_\_ a risk now and then.
- We \_\_\_\_\_ a huge argument last night about politics.
- Who is going to \_\_\_\_\_ responsibility for the mistake?
- Let's \_\_\_\_\_ a short break before the next session.
- The committee \_\_\_\_\_ action immediately after the report.
- Would you like to \_\_\_\_\_ a go at the quiz?
- Please \_\_\_\_\_ a seat while you wait.
- They're \_\_\_\_\_ a party for her birthday on Saturday.

**12.2** Match the beginning (1–6) with the best ending (a–f).

- The board took the
- We had an
- She took full
- Let me have a
- A new boss took
- The tourists took a

a. argument about the bill.    b. chat with my old friend.    c. decision to expand.    d. responsibility for the failure.    e. control of the department.    f. photo of the harbour.

## 13 get and give

In a sense, *get* and *give* are opposites: one is about receiving or obtaining, the other about offering or handing over. Both are extremely productive in collocations, and many of these expressions are slightly informal, which makes them very common in spoken English.

### A get: receiving and obtaining

We use **get** to talk about receiving information, opportunities and impressions, as well as obtaining things in general.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
get the impression	I <b>got the impression</b> that he wasn't really listening.
get a chance	If I <b>get a chance</b> , I'll call you this afternoon.
get a job	She finally <b>got a job</b> at the museum.
get a reply	I sent the email but never <b>got a reply</b> .
get the message	After three reminders, he finally <b>got the message</b> .
get permission	You'll need to <b>get permission</b> from the owner.

### B give: offering help and words

We use **give** when we offer help, advice or information to other people.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
give advice	My grandmother loves to <b>give advice</b> about marriage.
give a hand	Could you <b>give me a hand</b> with these boxes?
give a speech	The director <b>gave a moving speech</b> at the ceremony.
give an example	Can you <b>give an example</b> of what you mean?
give details	The website <b>gives full details</b> of the course.
give a reason	He left without <b>giving a reason</b> .

## C give: reactions and signals

A whole group of expressions uses **give** for sounds, gestures and reactions that come out of us.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
give a smile	She <b>gave a shy smile</b> and looked away.
give a shout	If you need anything, just <b>give a shout</b> .
give someone a call	I'll <b>give you a call</b> when I land.
give a warning	The teacher <b>gave a final warning</b> to the class.
give someone a lift	Can you <b>give me a lift</b> to the station?

**Tip:** Notice that with **give** we very often have two objects: *give someone a hand / a call / a lift / a warning*. The person comes first, then the thing. Keep that word order and the phrase will sound natural.

### Exercises

**13.1** Complete each sentence with the correct form of *get* or *give*.

- I \_\_\_\_\_ the impression that she was bored.
- Could you \_\_\_\_\_ me a hand with the cooking?
- If I \_\_\_\_\_ a chance tomorrow, I'll visit you.
- The CEO will \_\_\_\_\_ a speech at the conference.
- I emailed them twice but never \_\_\_\_\_ a reply.
- Let me \_\_\_\_\_ you an example to make it clear.
- You must \_\_\_\_\_ permission before taking photos.
- She \_\_\_\_\_ me a lift home after the party.

**13.2** Choose the correct verb in each sentence: *get* or *give*.

- He left the meeting without (getting / giving) a reason.
- After several hints, she finally (got / gave) the message.
- My uncle is always happy to (get / give) advice.
- I hope I (get / give) the job I applied for.
- Just (get / give) me a shout if you're stuck.
- The website (gets / gives) all the details you need.
- Did you (get / give) a reply from the landlord?
- I'll (get / give) you a call this evening.

## 14 go, come and keep

The verbs *go*, *come* and *keep* are not only verbs of movement. In collocations they often describe how a situation changes (*go bankrupt*), how something turns out (*come true*) or how a state continues (*keep calm*). Learning these chunks will make your English sound far more idiomatic.

### A go: changes, usually for the worse

We often use **go** + adjective to describe a change of state, frequently a negative one.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
go bankrupt	The airline <b>went bankrupt</b> during the crisis.
go missing	Several documents <b>went missing</b> from the office.
go wrong	Almost everything that could <b>go wrong</b> did.
go grey	His hair <b>went grey</b> in his early forties.
go off	The milk has <b>gone off</b> ; don't drink it.
go quiet	The room suddenly <b>went quiet</b> when she entered.

### B come: results and positions

We use **come** when something reaches a result, becomes real, or finishes in a particular position.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
come true	Her childhood dream finally <b>came true</b> .
come first	Our team <b>came first</b> in the regional final.
come to an end	All good things must <b>come to an end</b> .
come into fashion	Wide trousers have <b>come back into fashion</b> .
come as a surprise	The decision <b>came as a surprise</b> to everyone.

### C keep: continuing and maintaining

We use **keep** to talk about continuing a state or maintaining a relationship or promise.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
keep a promise	He always <b>keeps his promises</b> , however small.
keep calm	Please <b>keep calm</b> and follow the staff.
keep in touch	Let's <b>keep in touch</b> after the course ends.
keep a secret	Can you <b>keep a secret</b> ?
keep an eye on	Could you <b>keep an eye on</b> my bag for a minute?
keep a record	I <b>keep a record</b> of everything I spend.

**Common mistake:** Use **come true**, not *become true*, when you talk about dreams and wishes: *My dream came true* (NOT *My dream became true*). Also remember it is **go bankrupt**, not *become bankrupt*, in everyday English.

### Exercises

**14.1** Complete each sentence with the correct form of *go*, *come* or *keep*.

- If you \_\_\_\_\_ your promise, people will trust you.
- The factory \_\_\_\_\_ bankrupt last year.
- My phone has \_\_\_\_\_ missing again.
- I hope all your dreams \_\_\_\_\_ true.
- Try to \_\_\_\_\_ calm during the interview.
- Our school team \_\_\_\_\_ first in the competition.
- Let's \_\_\_\_\_ in touch by email.
- Something has \_\_\_\_\_ wrong with the printer.

**14.2** Correct the verb error in each sentence.

- I never thought my dream would become true.
- The old company became bankrupt overnight.
- She always holds her promises.
- Please stay an eye on the children near the pool.
- Two paintings have gone away from the gallery.
- The news went as a surprise to all of us.
- Our holiday came to a finish far too quickly.
- Could you make an eye on my coffee while I'm gone?

## 15 Other common verbs: pay, save, spend, run, hold, break, catch

Beyond *make*, *do*, *have* and *take*, a handful of other verbs form a remarkable number of fixed expressions. Below are seven of the most useful: **pay**, **save**, **spend**, **run**, **hold**, **break** and **catch**. Learn the partnerships as units and they will come to you automatically when you need them.

### A pay, save and spend

These three verbs cluster around money, time and attention. Note that we can **save** and **spend** both money and time.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
pay attention	Please <b>pay attention</b> to the safety instructions.
pay a compliment	He <b>paid her a lovely compliment</b> about her work.
pay a fine	I had to <b>pay a fine</b> for parking illegally.
save time	Booking online will <b>save you time</b> at the airport.
save money	We're trying to <b>save money</b> for a deposit.
spend time	I love <b>spending time</b> with my nieces.

### B run and hold

We use **run** for managing or operating things, and **hold** for organising events and for various positions and beliefs.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
run a business	She <b>runs a small business</b> from home.
run a risk	You <b>run the risk</b> of losing your deposit.
run late	Sorry, the meeting is <b>running late</b> .
hold a meeting	We <b>held a meeting</b> to discuss the budget.
hold an election	The country will <b>hold an election</b> in spring.
hold your breath	She <b>held her breath</b> and dived in.

### C break and catch

We use **break** for rules, records and promises, and **catch** for illnesses, transport and attention.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
break the law	They didn't realise they were <b>breaking the law</b> .
break a record	She <b>broke the world record</b> for the marathon.
break a promise	He <b>broke his promise</b> to call.
catch a cold	Wrap up warm or you'll <b>catch a cold</b> .
catch a train	I need to <b>catch the early train</b> tomorrow.
catch sight of	I <b>caught sight of</b> her in the crowd.

**Tip:** Be careful with **pay attention** – it takes *to*, not *at* or *on*: *pay attention to the teacher*. And we say **catch a cold**, not **take a cold** or **get a cold ill**.

### Exercises

**15.1** Complete each sentence with the correct verb: *pay, save, spend, run, hold, break* or *catch*.

- You should \_\_\_\_\_ attention to the road signs.
- Cycling to work helps me \_\_\_\_\_ money on petrol.
- My parents \_\_\_\_\_ a restaurant in the old town.
- The school will \_\_\_\_\_ a meeting for parents next week.
- Speeding drivers \_\_\_\_\_ the law every day.
- Put on a coat or you'll \_\_\_\_\_ a cold.
- I like to \_\_\_\_\_ time reading at the weekend.
- If we leave now, we can \_\_\_\_\_ the 9 o'clock train.

**15.2** One word is wrong in each sentence. Write the correct collocation.

- The runner did a new world record yesterday.
- Please make attention to what I'm saying.
- She takes a small bakery near the station.
- I had to give a fine for parking on the pavement.
- They are going to make an election in the autumn.
- I can't believe he did a promise to his own children.
- Online shopping can win you a lot of time.
- Don't get the law just to save a few minutes.

## 16 Strong adjective + noun collocations

*English often prefers one particular adjective with a particular noun, even when other adjectives seem to mean the same thing. We say **heavy rain**, not "strong rain", and **strong coffee**, not "heavy coffee". These pairings sound natural to fluent speakers and odd when you change them, so the safest approach is to learn the adjective and the noun together as a single chunk.*

### A Heavy and strong

Both **heavy** and **strong** can suggest a large amount or a high degree, but they are not interchangeable. **Heavy** often goes with weather, traffic and habits, while **strong** often describes taste, feelings and influence.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
heavy rain	We drove home through <b>heavy rain</b> and could barely see the road.
heavy traffic	I was an hour late because of <b>heavy traffic</b> on the motorway.
a heavy smoker	Her father was <b>a heavy smoker</b> and finally gave up at sixty.
strong coffee	I need a cup of <b>strong coffee</b> to wake me up in the morning.
a strong accent	He speaks with <b>a strong accent</b> that tells you exactly where he grew up.

### B Deep and great

We use **deep** with sleep, feelings and certain physical states, and **great** to add weight to nouns about importance, quantity or emotion.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
a deep sleep	She fell into <b>a deep sleep</b> the moment her head touched the pillow.
deep trouble	If the bank finds out, we will be in <b>deep trouble</b> .
great importance	The committee attaches <b>great importance</b> to honest feedback.
a great deal	We learned <b>a great deal</b> from working with such an experienced team.
great care	The documents were handled with <b>great care</b> and never left the office.

### C Narrow, key and bitter

Some strong adjectives are tied to just a few nouns. **Narrow** pairs with escape and majority; **key** means crucial; and **bitter** describes harsh disappointment or conflict.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
a narrow escape	The climbers had <b>a narrow escape</b> when the rope nearly snapped.
a key role	Teachers play <b>a key role</b> in shaping how children see the world.
a key factor	Cost was <b>a key factor</b> in our decision to move abroad.
a bitter disappointment	Losing the final was <b>a bitter disappointment</b> for the whole town.
a bitter argument	They had <b>a bitter argument</b> and did not speak for years.

**Common mistake:** Do not translate "strong" directly for every intense thing. We say **heavy rain** (not "strong rain"), **a heavy smoker** (not "a strong smoker"), and **strong coffee** (not "hard" or "thick coffee"). Learn each pair as a fixed unit.

## Exercises

**16.1** Choose the correct adjective.

- We sat in (heavy / strong) traffic for almost two hours.
- I can't drink coffee that (deep / strong) so late at night.
- The driver had a (narrow / thin) escape on the icy bridge.
- After the long walk she fell into a (deep / heavy) sleep.
- His grandmother was a (strong / heavy) smoker for forty years.
- The minister plays a (key / main) role in the negotiations.
- Failing the exam was a (bitter / sour) disappointment.
- We were caught in (strong / heavy) rain on the way to the airport.

**16.2** Complete each sentence with one word from the box: *deal, factor, care, accent, trouble, importance, argument, role*.

- The teacher attaches great \_\_\_\_\_ to good handwriting.
- We learned a great \_\_\_\_\_ during our first month here.
- You can tell from his strong \_\_\_\_\_ that he is from Scotland.
- Price was the key \_\_\_\_\_ in choosing this supplier.
- The brothers had a bitter \_\_\_\_\_ about the inheritance.
- If we miss the deadline, we'll be in deep \_\_\_\_\_.
- The nurses handle the babies with great \_\_\_\_\_.
- Volunteers play a key \_\_\_\_\_ in running the festival.

## 17 Intensifying adverb + adjective

To make an adjective stronger, English speakers reach for far more than just *very*. We say **highly likely**, **bitterly disappointed** and **deeply concerned**, and each of these adverbs tends to attach to a particular family of adjectives. Choosing the right intensifier makes your English sound natural and shows real control of register.

### A Highly and fully

**Highly** combines with adjectives about probability, quality and respect. **Fully** means "completely" and goes with states of mind and readiness.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
highly likely	It is <b>highly likely</b> that prices will rise again next year.
highly unusual	Snow in June is <b>highly unusual</b> in this part of the country.
highly respected	She is a <b>highly respected</b> surgeon known across the region.
fully aware	I am <b>fully aware</b> of the risks, and I still want to go ahead.
fully booked	The hotel was <b>fully booked</b> weeks before the festival.

### B Bitterly and deeply

These two adverbs intensify emotions. **Bitterly** suggests pain or resentment; **deeply** suggests strong, sincere feeling.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
bitterly disappointed	The fans were <b>bitterly disappointed</b> by the team's defeat.
bitterly cold	It was <b>bitterly cold</b> on the platform as we waited for the train.
deeply concerned	Doctors are <b>deeply concerned</b> about the rise in childhood obesity.
deeply grateful	We are <b>deeply grateful</b> for all the help you gave us.
deeply offended	He was <b>deeply offended</b> by the joke and walked out of the room.

### C Perfectly and utterly

**Perfectly** stresses that something is completely acceptable or correct. **Utterly** is a strong, often negative intensifier meaning "totally".

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
perfectly normal	It is <b>perfectly normal</b> to feel nervous before an interview.
perfectly clear	The instructions were <b>perfectly clear</b> , so there was no excuse.
utterly ridiculous	The idea that he stole the money is <b>utterly ridiculous</b> .
utterly exhausted	After the night shift she felt <b>utterly exhausted</b> .
utterly impossible	Finishing the report by noon was <b>utterly impossible</b> .

**Common mistake:** Strong (non-gradable) adjectives don't take *very*. Don't say "very exhausted" or "very ridiculous"; say **utterly exhausted** and **utterly ridiculous**. Also note we say **highly likely**, not "highly possible".

### Exercises

**17.1** Choose the correct adverb.

1. It is (highly / deeply) likely that the flight will be delayed.
2. The supporters were (bitterly / fully) disappointed after the loss.
3. We are (deeply / perfectly) grateful for your generous donation.
4. His excuse was (utterly / highly) ridiculous and no one believed it.
5. I am (fully / bitterly) aware of how serious this problem is.
6. Feeling shy on the first day is (perfectly / utterly) normal.
7. It was (bitterly / highly) cold, so we lit a fire.
8. The scientist is (highly / deeply) respected by her colleagues.

**17.2** Match the adverb (1–8) with the most natural adjective (a–h).

1. highly (a) booked
2. bitterly (b) ridiculous
3. deeply (c) unusual
4. fully (d) disappointed
5. perfectly (e) concerned
6. utterly (f) clear
7. deeply (g) offended
8. fully (h) aware

## 18 Verb + adverb collocations

Many verbs are regularly paired with a particular adverb that strengthens or shapes their meaning. We **strongly recommend** a book, **flatly refuse** an offer, and **sincerely apologise** for a mistake. Using the expected adverb makes you sound fluent; using an unexpected one can sound strange even when the grammar is correct.

### A Adverbs that strengthen advice and feeling

**Strongly** is common with verbs of opinion and advice, while **sincerely** and **deeply** add genuine emotion.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
strongly recommend	I <b>strongly recommend</b> that you book your tickets early.
strongly believe	We <b>strongly believe</b> that education should be free for everyone.
sincerely apologise	We <b>sincerely apologise</b> for the delay to your order.
sincerely hope	I <b>sincerely hope</b> you can join us at the wedding.
deeply regret	The company <b>deeply regrets</b> any inconvenience caused.

### B Adverbs that mean "totally" or "firmly"

**Flatly** and **completely** express absolute, no-exceptions actions, especially with refusing and forgetting.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
flatly refuse	She <b>flatly refused</b> to apologise for what she had said.
flatly deny	The director <b>flatly denied</b> any knowledge of the missing funds.
completely forget	I <b>completely forgot</b> that today was your birthday.
completely ignore	He <b>completely ignored</b> my advice and did it his own way.
totally agree	I <b>totally agree</b> with everything you've just said.

### C Adverbs of degree and manner

**Vaguely** softens a verb, while **readily** and **badly** describe how willingly or how seriously something happens.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
vaguely remember	I <b>vaguely remember</b> meeting her at a conference years ago.
readily admit	He <b>readily admits</b> that he made a mistake.
badly need	This old kitchen <b>badly needs</b> redecorating.
firmly believe	They <b>firmly believe</b> that hard work always pays off.
fully understand	I <b>fully understand</b> why you are upset about the decision.

**Common mistake:** Choose the adverb that the verb expects. We say **strongly recommend** (not "hardly recommend"), **flatly refuse** (not "flat refuse"), and **badly need** (not "strongly need"). Also keep the *-ly* ending: *flatly*, not *flat*.

### Exercises

**18.1** Complete each sentence with the correct adverb: *strongly, flatly, sincerely, completely, vaguely, badly, readily, deeply*.

- I \_\_\_\_\_ recommend this restaurant to anyone visiting the city.
- He \_\_\_\_\_ refused to answer any of the reporter's questions.
- We \_\_\_\_\_ apologise for the mistake on your invoice.
- I'm sorry, I \_\_\_\_\_ forgot to call you back yesterday.
- I only \_\_\_\_\_ remember the film; it was years ago.
- The roof \_\_\_\_\_ needs repairing before the winter.
- She \_\_\_\_\_ admits that she still has a lot to learn.
- The whole team \_\_\_\_\_ regrets the way the project ended.

**18.2** Find and correct the wrong adverb in each sentence.

- I hardly recommend that you take the early train.
- The minister vaguely denied taking any bribes.
- I deeply forgot where I had parked the car.
- She flat refused to leave the building.
- We sincerely need more volunteers for the event.
- He vaguely admits that the figures were wrong.
- I completely hope you have a wonderful holiday.
- They readily believe that the law should be changed.

## 19 Noun + noun and compound collocations

*English builds a huge number of fixed expressions by putting two nouns together, where the first noun acts almost like an adjective describing the second. We talk about a **research project**, a **traffic jam** and **climate change**. These compounds are everywhere in news, study and everyday life, so learning them as whole units is essential.*

### A Study and work

Academic and working life is full of noun + noun pairs. The first noun tells you what kind of thing the second noun is.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
a research project	She is leading a <b>research project</b> on renewable energy.
a job interview	I've got a <b>job interview</b> at the bank on Friday morning.
a deadline extension	The students asked for a <b>deadline extension</b> after the power cut.
a team meeting	We discussed the budget at this morning's <b>team meeting</b> .
a skills shortage	The industry is facing a serious <b>skills shortage</b> .

### B Society and the news

Many social and political topics have a standard two-noun name that you will meet again and again in newspapers and reports.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
climate change	Governments met to discuss how to slow down <b>climate change</b> .
a crime wave	The city has seen a <b>crime wave</b> over the past few months.
a labour shortage	Farmers are worried about a <b>labour shortage</b> at harvest time.
a price increase	Customers complained about the sudden <b>price increase</b> .
a population boom	The town experienced a <b>population boom</b> after the factory opened.

### C Everyday life and travel

These common compounds describe situations you might mention any day of the week.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
a traffic jam	We sat in a <b>traffic jam</b> for an hour outside the city.
a power cut	The storm caused a <b>power cut</b> that lasted all evening.
a rush hour	Try to avoid travelling during <b>rush hour</b> if you can.
a credit card	I paid for the meal with my <b>credit card</b> .
a phone signal	There was no <b>phone signal</b> up in the mountains.

**Common mistake:** In noun + noun compounds the first noun is usually singular: a **research project** (not "researches project"), a **crime wave** (not "crimes wave"). Some are fixed differently, so learn each one: a **skills shortage** keeps the plural.

### Exercises

**19.1** Match the first noun (1–8) with the second noun (a–h) to make a common collocation.

1. traffic (a) change
2. climate (b) shortage
3. crime (c) jam
4. research (d) interview
5. labour (e) wave
6. job (f) cut
7. power (g) project
8. credit (h) card

**19.2** Complete each sentence with a compound from this unit.

1. Scientists warn that \_\_\_\_\_ is raising sea levels.
2. I was late because there was a terrible \_\_\_\_\_ on the bridge.
3. She is nervous about her \_\_\_\_\_ at the law firm tomorrow.
4. The lights went out during a \_\_\_\_\_ last night.
5. Restaurants are struggling because of a \_\_\_\_\_ of waiters.
6. Our university won funding for a new \_\_\_\_\_ on memory.
7. There was no \_\_\_\_\_, so I couldn't send the message.
8. Police are responding to a \_\_\_\_\_ in the north of the city.

## 20 Quantifying and partitive expressions

When we want to talk about amounts, English uses fixed quantifying phrases rather than single words. We say **a great deal of money**, **a wide range of products** and **a piece of advice**. These expressions often combine with particular nouns, and using the wrong one quickly sounds unnatural, so they are well worth learning as set phrases.

### A Talking about large amounts

These phrases describe big quantities. Notice which go with uncountable nouns and which suggest variety.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
a great deal of	The project required <b>a great deal of</b> time and patience.
a wide range of	The shop offers <b>a wide range of</b> organic vegetables.
a large amount of	They wasted <b>a large amount of</b> food at the party.
a growing number of	<b>A growing number of</b> people are working from home.
a vast majority of	<b>The vast majority of</b> students passed the exam.

### B Talking about small amounts and chances

To describe something small or unlikely, English uses adjectives like **slight** and **small** in fixed combinations.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
a slight chance	There is <b>a slight chance of</b> rain later this afternoon.
a slight improvement	The doctor noticed <b>a slight improvement in</b> his condition.
a small amount of	Add <b>a small amount of</b> salt to the boiling water.
a tiny fraction of	Only <b>a tiny fraction of</b> the budget was actually spent.
a handful of	Only <b>a handful of</b> guests turned up in the storm.

### C Partitives: making uncountable nouns countable

Uncountable nouns such as *advice*, *news* and *furniture* need a partitive phrase like **a piece of** before they can be counted.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
a piece of advice	Let me give you <b>a piece of advice</b> about job interviews.
a piece of news	I have <b>a piece of news</b> that will surprise you.
a piece of furniture	That old desk is my favourite <b>piece of furniture</b> .
a heavy burden	Caring for the whole family was <b>a heavy burden</b> for her.
a bit of luck	With <b>a bit of luck</b> , we'll catch the last train home.

**Common mistake:** Uncountable nouns can't be made plural. Say **a piece of advice** and "two pieces of advice" (not "an advice" or "advices"). Likewise "a piece of news" and "a piece of furniture", never "a news" or "furnitures".

### Exercises

#### 20.1 Choose the correct quantifying expression.

1. The library has a (wide / large) range of books on history.
2. We spent a great (deal / number) of money on the wedding.
3. There's only a (slight / small) chance that the deal will go through.
4. A (growing / wide) number of customers are paying by phone.
5. Can I give you a (bit / piece) of advice before you decide?
6. Add a small (amount / range) of sugar to the mixture.
7. Looking after both parents became a (heavy / wide) burden.
8. Only a (handful / deal) of people came to the early show.

#### 20.2 Correct the mistake in each sentence.

1. She gave me a very useful advice about saving money.
2. I heard a good news on the radio this morning.
3. We bought several new furnitures for the office.
4. There is a slight possibility chance of snow tonight.
5. A great number of time was wasted in the meeting.
6. With a bit of lucks, we'll arrive before dark.
7. The shop sells a large range of furniture and a wide amount of toys.
8. Only a small fraction percent of the money was returned.

PART D

# Collocations by topic

*Twenty-four everyday subjects, each with the word partnerships you need to speak and write about it with confidence.*

UNITS 21–44

## 21 Work and careers

When we talk about jobs and careers in English, certain words naturally go together. This unit shows you how to describe finding work, doing your job well, and moving on to something new.

### A Getting a job

When you see a position you like, you **apply for a job** by sending in your CV and a covering letter. If the employer is interested, they will **invite you for an interview** and eventually **offer you a position**. Many people **look for work** for weeks before they finally **land a job** that suits them.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
apply for a job	She <b>applied for a job</b> at a software company in the city.
land a job	He was thrilled to <b>land a job</b> straight after graduating.
offer a position	They <b>offered her the position</b> the day after the interview.
look for work	I've been <b>looking for work</b> since the factory closed.
fill a vacancy	The company struggled to <b>fill the vacancy</b> for months.

### B Doing the job

Once you start, you have to **meet a deadline** and gradually **take on responsibility**. A **demanding job** can leave you exhausted, especially if you regularly **work long hours** or have to **work under pressure**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
meet a deadline	We worked late to <b>meet the deadline</b> .
take on responsibility	As team leader, she <b>took on more responsibility</b> last year.
a demanding job	Nursing is a <b>demanding job</b> , both physically and emotionally.
work under pressure	Journalists often have to <b>work under pressure</b> .
work long hours	Junior doctors frequently <b>work long hours</b> .

### C Moving up and moving on

Ambitious people want to **climb the career ladder** and **get a promotion**. Others decide it is time for a change, so they **hand in their notice** and **leave the company** to **pursue a career** elsewhere.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
climb the career ladder	She <b>climbed the career ladder</b> quickly in banking.
get a promotion	He <b>got a promotion</b> to senior manager in May.
hand in your notice	I <b>handed in my notice</b> after finding a better job.
pursue a career	She left teaching to <b>pursue a career</b> in publishing.

**Tip:** Notice that we *hand in* our notice but *take on* responsibility. These phrasal-verb collocations are fixed, so learn the verb and particle together as one chunk.

### Exercises

**21.1** Complete each sentence with the correct verb: *apply, meet, hand, climb, take, land*.

- I decided to \_\_\_\_\_ for the job I saw advertised online.
- If we don't \_\_\_\_\_ this deadline, the client will be furious.
- She wants to \_\_\_\_\_ on more responsibility at work.
- After ten years he finally \_\_\_\_\_ed a job at his dream company.
- He plans to \_\_\_\_\_ in his notice at the end of the month.
- You have to work hard if you want to \_\_\_\_\_ the career ladder.

**21.2** Each sentence has one wrong word. Find it and correct it.

- Being a surgeon is a demanded job that requires great focus.
- She got a promote after only six months in the role.
- They finally filled the vacant after a long search.
- He left the firm to pursue a carrier in journalism.
- Reporters often have to work below pressure to finish stories.
- I've been searching for work since I made redundant.

## 22 Business and the workplace

This unit looks at the language of running a business: bringing products to market, working with colleagues,

negotiating deals, and keeping a company healthy and profitable.

### A Products and the market

Before a company can sell anything, it has to **launch a product**. To succeed, it must **meet customer demand** and try to **gain market share** from its rivals. A company with a strong, growing business is often described as a **thriving business**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
launch a product	The firm will <b>launch a new product</b> in the spring.
gain market share	The brand <b>gained market share</b> by lowering its prices.
a thriving business	She turned a small shop into a <b>thriving business</b> .
meet demand	The factory expanded to <b>meet demand</b> for the new model.
target a market	The campaign <b>targets a younger market</b> .

### B Meetings and decisions

Colleagues regularly **hold a meeting** to discuss plans. They **raise an issue**, **make a decision** together, and ideally **reach an agreement** that everyone supports. Sometimes they need to **set an agenda** in advance.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
hold a meeting	We <b>hold a meeting</b> every Monday morning.
reach an agreement	After hours of talks, they finally <b>reached an agreement</b> .
make a decision	The board will <b>make a decision</b> by Friday.
raise an issue	She <b>raised an important issue</b> during the discussion.
set an agenda	Please <b>set the agenda</b> before the meeting starts.

### C Money and performance

To stay profitable, businesses try to **cut costs** and **boost sales**. A well-run company can **make a profit**, while one in trouble may **run at a loss** and need to **raise capital**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
cut costs	The airline <b>cut costs</b> by reducing the number of flights.
boost sales	The discount helped <b>boost sales</b> over the holidays.
make a profit	The startup <b>made a profit</b> for the first time this year.
run at a loss	The shop <b>ran at a loss</b> for two years before closing.
raise capital	They <b>raised capital</b> from investors to expand abroad.

**Tip:** We *hold* a meeting (not "do" or "make"), and we *reach* an agreement (not "arrive" or "get"). Choosing the right verb is the heart of using collocations naturally.

#### Exercises

**22.1** Choose the correct verb in each sentence.

- The company hopes to (launch / open) a new product next month.
- After long negotiations, both sides (reached / arrived) an agreement.
- We (hold / make) a team meeting every Friday.
- To survive the downturn, the firm had to (cut / break) costs.
- The advertising campaign really helped (rise / boost) sales.
- The new manager wants to (win / gain) market share from competitors.

**22.2** Match the two halves of each collocation.

- make    a) market share
- raise    b) at a loss
- a thriving    c) a decision
- run    d) an issue
- set    e) business
- gain    f) the agenda

## 23 Money and personal finance

*Managing money has its own vocabulary. This unit covers banking, borrowing, debt, saving, and living within your means, with the natural word partnerships English speakers use every day.*

## A Banks and borrowing

The first step in managing your money is to **open an account** at a bank. If you need extra money, you can **take out a loan** or apply for a credit card, but remember that you will pay **interest rates** on what you borrow. Always check the **interest rate** before you sign.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
open an account	I <b>opened a savings account</b> when I started my first job.
take out a loan	They <b>took out a loan</b> to buy their first home.
interest rates	The bank raised its <b>interest rates</b> last month.
pay a bill	I always <b>pay my bills</b> at the end of the month.
withdraw money	She <b>withdrew money</b> from the cash machine.

## B Debt and difficulty

If you spend more than you earn, you may **be in debt** and struggle to **make ends meet**. People living on a **tight budget** often have to **cut back on** spending and avoid **running up debts**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
be in debt	Many students <b>are in debt</b> by the time they graduate.
make ends meet	On one salary, it's hard to <b>make ends meet</b> .
a tight budget	We're on a <b>tight budget</b> this month after the holiday.
cut back on	I've had to <b>cut back on</b> eating out to save money.
run up debts	He <b>ran up debts</b> on three different credit cards.

## C Saving for the future

Sensible people **save up** for big purchases and try to **put money aside** each month. Over time you can **build up savings** and even **earn interest** on the money in your account.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
save up	We're <b>saving up</b> for a deposit on a flat.
put money aside	She <b>puts money aside</b> every payday.
build up savings	It took years to <b>build up savings</b> for a rainy day.
earn interest	This account lets your money <b>earn interest</b> over time.

**Tip:** *Make ends meet* is a fixed idiom — never say "make the ends meet" or "make ends to meet". Learn the whole phrase exactly as it is.

## Exercises

**23.1** Complete the collocations with one word.

- You need to \_\_\_\_\_ out a loan if you can't pay in cash.
- On a tight \_\_\_\_\_, we couldn't afford a holiday this year.
- After losing his job, he found it hard to make ends \_\_\_\_\_.
- We're saving \_\_\_\_\_ for a new car.
- The bank lowered its interest \_\_\_\_\_ last week.
- I'd like to \_\_\_\_\_ an account at your branch, please.

**23.2** Fill each gap with a phrase from the box: *in debt, cut back on, put money aside, earn interest, run up, a tight budget*.

- Since the rent went up, we've had to \_\_\_\_\_ luxuries.
- It's easy to \_\_\_\_\_ debts when you shop online too often.
- Leaving your money here means it will \_\_\_\_\_ each year.
- By the end of university, she was deeply \_\_\_\_\_.
- Try to \_\_\_\_\_ a little every month for emergencies.
- Students often live on \_\_\_\_\_ during term time.

## 24 Education and studying

*From sitting exams to earning a degree, study has its own set of collocations. This unit gives you the natural language to talk about learning, assessment, and academic success.*

### A In the classroom

During a lesson, good students **take notes** and **pay attention** to the teacher. To keep up, you also need to **do your homework** and **revise for a test** at home.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
take notes	I always <b>take notes</b> during lectures so I remember key points.
pay attention	Please <b>pay attention</b> while I explain the task.
do your homework	He never forgets to <b>do his homework</b> before class.
revise for a test	She spent the weekend <b>revising for the test</b> .
ask a question	Don't be afraid to <b>ask a question</b> if you're unsure.

## B Exams and qualifications

At the end of a course, students **sit an exam**, and if they study hard they may **pass with flying colours**. To get into university you usually have to **meet the requirements** and then **do a degree** over several years.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
sit an exam	We <b>sit our final exams</b> in June.
pass with flying colours	She <b>passed with flying colours</b> and topped the class.
meet the requirements	You must <b>meet the requirements</b> to apply for the course.
do a degree	He's <b>doing a degree</b> in mechanical engineering.
fail an exam	If you <b>fail the exam</b> , you can resit it in autumn.

## C The learning experience

Some subjects involve a **steep learning curve**, meaning you have to learn a lot quickly. With effort you can **make progress**, **broaden your knowledge**, and eventually **master a skill**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
a steep learning curve	Starting the new software was a <b>steep learning curve</b> .
make progress	She's <b>making good progress</b> with her Spanish.
broaden your knowledge	Reading widely helps you <b>broaden your knowledge</b> .
master a skill	It takes years to <b>master a skill</b> like the violin.

**Tip:** In British English we *sit* an exam; in American English people *take* an exam. Both are correct — just be consistent within one piece of writing.

## Exercises

**24.1** Complete each sentence with the missing verb.

- Students will \_\_\_\_\_ their final exams next week.
- Remember to \_\_\_\_\_ notes so you don't forget the details.
- She wants to \_\_\_\_\_ a degree in psychology.
- You have to \_\_\_\_\_ the requirements to join the programme.
- With practice you can \_\_\_\_\_ progress very quickly.
- It can take a lifetime to \_\_\_\_\_ a skill completely.

**24.2** Complete the collocation at the end of each sentence.

- She studied all night and passed with flying \_\_\_\_\_.
- Learning to code was a steep learning \_\_\_\_\_ at first.
- Travelling abroad really helped me broaden my \_\_\_\_\_.
- Please pay \_\_\_\_\_ when I'm explaining the homework.
- He didn't revise and ended up failing the \_\_\_\_\_.
- Don't be shy — just ask a \_\_\_\_\_ if you're confused.

## 25 Shopping and consumerism

*Whether you love it or hate it, shopping is part of daily life. This unit gives you the natural collocations for buying things, finding good deals, spending wisely, and getting your money back.*

### A Everyday shopping

Most people **do the shopping** once a week and **go shopping** for clothes less often. At the till you **pay in cash** or by card, and a busy store may be **spoilt for choice** with products.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
do the shopping	I usually <b>do the shopping</b> on Saturday mornings.
go shopping	We're going to <b>go shopping</b> for a birthday present.
pay in cash	The market stall only lets you <b>pay in cash</b> .
browse the shelves	I love to <b>browse the shelves</b> in a good bookshop.
queue at the till	We had to <b>queue at the till</b> for twenty minutes.

## B Prices and bargains

Careful shoppers look for a **bargain** and check whether something offers good **value for money**. During the sales, products are often **on special offer** at a **reduced price**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
a bargain	These shoes were a <b>real bargain</b> at half price.
value for money	The set menu is excellent <b>value for money</b> .
on special offer	Coffee is <b>on special offer</b> this week.
a reduced price	I bought the jacket at a <b>reduced price</b> in the sale.
haggle over the price	At the market you can <b>haggle over the price</b> .

## C Spending and returning

Sometimes we make an **impulse buy** we later regret. Luckily, if something is faulty you can usually **get a refund** or **exchange an item**, as long as you **keep the receipt**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
an impulse buy	The chocolate by the till was an <b>impulse buy</b> .
get a refund	I returned the kettle and <b>got a refund</b> .
exchange an item	You can <b>exchange the item</b> for a different size.
keep the receipt	Always <b>keep the receipt</b> in case you need to return it.

**Tip:** Note the difference between *do the shopping* (buy food and essentials for the home) and *go shopping* (go out, often for pleasure, to buy clothes or gifts).

## Exercises

**25.1** Choose the correct word to complete each collocation.

- This phone is great (value / price) for money.
- The dress was (on / in) special offer, so I bought it.
- I didn't plan to buy it — it was an impulse (buy / shop).
- Take it back to the shop and get a (return / refund).
- At only five pounds, that umbrella was a real (deal / bargain).
- Make sure you (keep / hold) the receipt in case it breaks.

**25.2** Most sentences contain one wrong word. Correct it, or write 'correct' if there is no error.

- I make the shopping every Friday after work.
- The laptop offers excellent value of money.
- Could I change this shirt for a larger size, please?
- Everything in the shop is on special order this weekend.
- If you have the receipt, you can win a refund.
- We went shopping for a present and got a great deal.

## 26 Health and illness

*When we talk about being unwell, English uses fixed pairings of verbs and nouns that learners often get wrong. This unit groups the most useful ones around three situations: getting ill, feeling symptoms, and being treated.*

### A Getting ill

You do not "get" an illness in every case. In cold weather people **catch a cold**, and when a virus is going round the office, several colleagues may **come down with the flu** in the same week. If an illness is serious or unexpected, we say someone has **fallen ill**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
catch a cold	I always <b>catch a cold</b> when the weather turns damp.
come down with the flu	Half the team <b>came down with the flu</b> just before the deadline.
fall ill	She <b>fell ill</b> during the trip and had to fly home early.
pick up a bug	The children <b>picked up a bug</b> at nursery and passed it to us.
feel under the weather	I've been <b>feeling under the weather</b> all morning.

## B Describing symptoms

Symptoms have their own partners. A very painful headache is a **splitting headache**, while a mild one is just a slight headache. People **run a temperature** when they have a fever, and a sore throat or a blocked nose often comes with a cold.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
a splitting headache	I went to bed early with a <b>splitting headache</b> .
run a temperature	The baby was <b>running a temperature</b> , so we called the doctor.
a sore throat	A <b>sore throat</b> is usually the first sign that I'm getting ill.
a blocked nose	I could hardly breathe because of my <b>blocked nose</b> .
feel dizzy	She stood up too quickly and suddenly <b>felt dizzy</b> .

## C Treatment and getting better

To treat an illness you **take medicine** (or take a tablet), and the doctor may **prescribe antibiotics**. Strong drugs can have unpleasant **side effects**. With rest, most people **make a full recovery**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
take medicine	Remember to <b>take your medicine</b> twice a day with food.
prescribe antibiotics	The doctor <b>prescribed antibiotics</b> for the infection.
side effects	The tablets work well but have a few <b>side effects</b> .
make a full recovery	He <b>made a full recovery</b> within a month of the operation.
get over an illness	It took her two weeks to <b>get over the illness</b> .

**Tip:** Notice that we *catch* a cold but *come down with* the flu. We also *take* medicine (not "drink" or "eat" it), and a doctor *prescribes* medicine while a pharmacist *dispenses* it.

## Exercises

**26.1** Complete each sentence with the correct verb: *catch, come, take, run, make, fall, pick*.

- You'll \_\_\_\_\_ a cold if you go out with wet hair.
- Three students \_\_\_\_\_ down with the flu last week.
- Don't forget to \_\_\_\_\_ your medicine before bed.
- The child was \_\_\_\_\_ a temperature of 39 degrees.
- After the surgery he \_\_\_\_\_ a full recovery.
- She \_\_\_\_\_ ill suddenly and was taken to hospital.
- We always \_\_\_\_\_ up a bug when we travel by plane.

**26.2** Choose the collocation that best fits the meaning in brackets.

- I've got (a splitting headache / a splitting head) and can't concentrate. (*very painful*)
- These pills can cause unpleasant (side effects / side results). (*unwanted reactions*)
- I'm (under the weather / below the weather) today. (*slightly unwell*)
- The doctor decided to (prescribe / describe) antibiotics. (*order medicine*)
- It took him ages to (get over / get off) the illness. (*recover from*)
- I've got a (blocked nose / closed nose) and can't smell anything. (*congested*)
- She felt (dizzy / dizzily) and had to sit down. (*unsteady*)

## 27 The body and physical movement

We use our bodies to communicate and to react, and English describes these movements with fixed verb + body-part pairings. This unit covers gestures we make on purpose, automatic reactions, and movements that help us relax or get ready.

## A Greetings and gestures

When you meet someone formally, you **shake hands** with them. To show agreement you **nod your head**, and to disagree you **shake your head**. To attract attention from a distance, you **wave your hand**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
shake hands	The two leaders <b>shook hands</b> in front of the cameras.
nod your head	She <b>nodded her head</b> to show she understood.
shake your head	He <b>shook his head</b> and refused to answer.
wave your hand	I <b>waved my hand</b> until the taxi finally stopped.
point your finger	It's rude to <b>point your finger</b> at strangers.

## B Reactions and emotions

Some movements happen almost without thinking. You **raise your eyebrows** when you are surprised, **clench your fists** when you are angry or tense, and **bite your nails** when you are nervous. You might also **shrug your shoulders** when you don't know or don't care.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
raise your eyebrows	He <b>raised his eyebrows</b> at the size of the bill.
clench your fists	She <b>clenched her fists</b> to stop herself shouting.
bite your nails	Stop <b>biting your nails</b> – it's a bad habit.
shrug your shoulders	When I asked why, he just <b>shrugged his shoulders</b> .
hold your breath	We <b>held our breath</b> as the results were read out.

## C Relaxing and preparing

Before doing something difficult, people often **take a deep breath** to calm down. After sitting for a long time, it feels good to **stretch your legs**. You might also **crack your knuckles** or **roll your shoulders** to loosen up.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
take a deep breath	<b>Take a deep breath</b> and start again from the beginning.
stretch your legs	Let's stop at the next services and <b>stretch our legs</b> .
roll your shoulders	She <b>rolled her shoulders</b> to ease the tension.
cross your arms	He sat there with his <b>arms crossed</b> , looking annoyed.
tap your foot	She <b>tapped her foot</b> impatiently while she waited.

**Tip:** Most of these expressions use a possessive adjective before the body part: *nod **your** head*, *clench **your** fists*. An exception is *shake hands*, which has no possessive and uses the plural.

### Exercises

**27.1** Match each verb to the correct body part to make a collocation.

- raise your \_\_\_\_\_
- clench your \_\_\_\_\_
- shake \_\_\_\_\_ (greeting)
- nod your \_\_\_\_\_
- stretch your \_\_\_\_\_
- take a deep \_\_\_\_\_
- shrug your \_\_\_\_\_

**27.2** Complete each sentence with a suitable collocation from the unit.

- Before the interview I \_\_\_\_\_ to calm my nerves.
- We've been driving for hours; let's stop and \_\_\_\_\_.
- When the price was announced, she \_\_\_\_\_ in surprise.
- The two managers \_\_\_\_\_ and sat down to negotiate.
- He was so angry that he \_\_\_\_\_ under the table.
- I asked where he'd been, but he just \_\_\_\_\_ and said nothing.
- The audience \_\_\_\_\_ as the gymnast began her final move.

## 28 Travel and transport

*Getting from place to place involves a surprising number of fixed expressions. This unit organises them by mode of*

transport: trains and buses, the roads, and air travel. Using the right verb makes your English sound far more natural.

### A Trains and buses

If you arrive at the platform in time, you **catch a train**; if you are too late, you **miss the bus**. On a busy service you may have to **change trains** halfway, and at rush hour it can be hard to **get a seat**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
catch a train	I need to <b>catch the 8:15 train</b> to make my meeting.
miss the bus	We overslept and <b>missed the bus</b> to school.
change trains	You'll have to <b>change trains</b> at the next station.
get a seat	The carriage was packed and I couldn't <b>get a seat</b> .
buy a return ticket	It's cheaper to <b>buy a return ticket</b> than two singles.

### B On the road

Driving in cities means dealing with **heavy traffic**. When everything stops, you **get stuck in a jam** and may **hit rush hour**. To avoid delays, some drivers **take a shortcut** or **pull over** for a break.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
heavy traffic	There was <b>heavy traffic</b> on the motorway this morning.
get stuck in a jam	We <b>got stuck in a jam</b> for over an hour.
hit rush hour	Leave early so you don't <b>hit rush hour</b> .
take a shortcut	He <b>took a shortcut</b> through the back streets.
pull over	The driver <b>pulled over</b> to check the map.

### C Air travel

At the airport you **check in** your luggage, then **board a plane** when your row is called. Long journeys often involve a **connecting flight**, and bad weather can mean your flight is **delayed** or even **cancelled**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
board a plane	Passengers can <b>board the plane</b> from gate 12.
a connecting flight	We had only forty minutes to catch our <b>connecting flight</b> .
check in (luggage)	You should <b>check in</b> at least two hours before departure.
a flight is delayed	Our <b>flight was delayed</b> by three hours because of fog.
go through security	It took ages to <b>go through security</b> at the airport.

**Tip:** We *catch* or *miss* public transport (a train, a bus, a flight), but we *board* a plane, train or ship when we physically get on it. We *get on* and *get off* a bus or train, but *get in* and *get out* of a car.

### Exercises

**28.1** Complete each sentence with the correct verb: *catch, miss, board, get, take, change, hit*.

- Hurry up or we'll \_\_\_\_\_ the train!
- We \_\_\_\_\_ stuck in a jam on the way to the airport.
- Passengers will \_\_\_\_\_ the plane in about ten minutes.
- If we leave now, we won't \_\_\_\_\_ rush hour.
- You have to \_\_\_\_\_ trains at the central station.
- I overslept and \_\_\_\_\_ the early bus.
- Let's \_\_\_\_\_ a shortcut through the park.

**28.2** Correct the wrong word in each collocation.

- There was *strong* traffic on the ring road. (\_\_\_\_\_)
- We nearly missed our *joining* flight. (\_\_\_\_\_)
- The flight was *late* by two hours. (*use the verb form*) (\_\_\_\_\_)
- I couldn't *find* a seat on the crowded train. (\_\_\_\_\_)
- You should *sign* in two hours before the flight. (\_\_\_\_\_)
- The driver *pulled out* to look at the map. (\_\_\_\_\_)
- It took ages to go *across* security. (\_\_\_\_\_)

## 29 Holidays and tourism

Talking about holidays uses a rich set of collocations, from planning a trip to describing what you do once you arrive. This unit is organised around booking and arranging, things you do at a destination, and the kind of holiday you choose.

## A Planning and booking

Before you travel, you **book a hotel** and perhaps **book a flight** online. Many people prefer to **go on a package holiday**, where travel and accommodation are arranged together. It's wise to **take out travel insurance** in case something goes wrong.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
book a hotel	We <b>booked a hotel</b> near the beach for a week.
a package holiday	They went on a <b>package holiday</b> to Spain.
take out travel insurance	Always <b>take out travel insurance</b> before a long trip.
pack your bags	I <b>packed my bags</b> the night before we left.
check into a hotel	We <b>checked into the hotel</b> just after midday.

## B At the destination

Once you arrive, you might **go sightseeing** in the old town or join **a guided tour** of the castle. On a beach holiday, many people just want to **soak up the sun** and relax. Don't forget to **take photos** of the views.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
go sightseeing	We spent the first day <b>going sightseeing</b> in the capital.
a guided tour	We took a <b>guided tour</b> of the cathedral.
soak up the sun	She lay on the beach, <b>soaking up the sun</b> .
take photos	I <b>took loads of photos</b> from the top of the tower.
try the local food	You really should <b>try the local food</b> while you're here.

## C Types of holiday and travel style

Some travellers like the comfort of resorts; others prefer to get **off the beaten track** and explore quiet places. You might **go backpacking** across a region or take **a city break** for a long weekend.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
off the beaten track	We found a lovely village <b>off the beaten track</b> .
go backpacking	They went <b>backpacking</b> around South America for a year.
a city break	We're taking a <b>city break</b> in Vienna next month.
a self-catering apartment	We rented a <b>self-catering apartment</b> to save money.
see the sights	There wasn't time to <b>see all the sights</b> in one day.

**Tip:** Be careful with *go sightseeing* and *see the sights*: both are correct, but *sightseeing* is an uncountable activity (no article), while *sights* are the individual places you visit (*see the sights*).

## Exercises

**29.1** Complete each sentence with one word to finish the collocation.

- We went \_\_\_\_\_ in the museum quarter all afternoon.
- They booked a \_\_\_\_\_ holiday so everything was arranged for them.
- I love lying on the beach and soaking up the \_\_\_\_\_.
- We joined a \_\_\_\_\_ tour of the ancient ruins.
- This little café is well off the beaten \_\_\_\_\_.
- Remember to take out travel \_\_\_\_\_ before you fly.
- We \_\_\_\_\_ into the hotel and went straight to our room.

**29.2** Choose the correct option in each pair.

- They went (backpacking / back-walking) around Asia.
- Let's (book / order) a hotel before they fill up.
- We took a (city break / town break) in Prague.
- You should really (try / taste out) the local food.
- We took a (guided / guiding) tour of the palace.
- We rented a (self-catering / self-cooking) apartment.
- I (packed / filled) my bags the night before the flight.

## 30 Food, cooking and eating out

*Food is everywhere in everyday conversation, and English uses many fixed phrases to talk about it. This unit groups them into healthy eating, cooking and storing food, and going out for a meal.*

## A Healthy and everyday eating

Doctors recommend that we **eat a balanced diet** with plenty of vegetables. When you're in a hurry, you might just **grab a bite** between meetings, or **have a snack** instead of a full meal. Some people **skip breakfast**, though it isn't a good habit.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
a balanced diet	A <b>balanced diet</b> keeps your energy levels steady.
grab a bite	Let's <b>grab a bite</b> before the film starts.
have a snack	I usually <b>have a snack</b> in the afternoon.
skip breakfast	I often <b>skip breakfast</b> when I'm running late.
cut down on sugar	The doctor told me to <b>cut down on sugar</b> .

## B Cooking and storing food

At home you might **prepare a meal** from scratch or **follow a recipe** step by step. Fresh food doesn't last forever: if you leave milk too long, it **goes off**, and bread quickly **goes stale**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
food goes off	Throw the fish away – it has <b>gone off</b> .
go stale	The bread had <b>gone stale</b> after a few days.
follow a recipe	If you <b>follow the recipe</b> carefully, it always works.
prepare a meal	It took an hour to <b>prepare the meal</b> for our guests.
do the washing-up	You cooked, so I'll <b>do the washing-up</b> .

## C Eating out

When you don't want to cook, you can **eat out** at a restaurant. For a special occasion you might enjoy a **slap-up meal** with friends. At the end, you **ask for the bill** and, if the service was good, you **leave a tip**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
eat out	We <b>eat out</b> once a week as a treat.
a slap-up meal	We had a <b>slap-up meal</b> to celebrate her promotion.
the bill	Could we have <b>the bill</b> , please?
leave a tip	The service was great, so we <b>left a generous tip</b> .
book a table	We <b>booked a table</b> for four at eight o'clock.

**Tip:** In British English you ask for *the bill* at a restaurant; in American English you ask for *the check*. Note also that food *goes off* (becomes unsafe to eat) but bread *goes stale* (becomes hard and dry) – the two are not the same.

## Exercises

**30.1** Complete each sentence with the missing word.

- Let's grab a \_\_\_\_\_ before the meeting.
- A \_\_\_\_\_ diet should include fruit and vegetables.
- We don't cook on Fridays; we prefer to eat \_\_\_\_\_.
- The milk has gone \_\_\_\_\_; don't drink it.
- Could we have the \_\_\_\_\_, please?
- To celebrate, we had a \_\_\_\_\_ meal at a fancy restaurant.
- The service was excellent, so we left a \_\_\_\_\_.

**30.2** Rewrite each sentence using a collocation from the unit that means the same as the words in italics.

- I *didn't have any breakfast* this morning. (\_\_\_\_\_)
- You should *eat less sugar*. (\_\_\_\_\_)
- The bread is *hard and dry* now. (\_\_\_\_\_)
- Shall we *reserve a table* for tonight? (\_\_\_\_\_)
- I'll *wash the dishes* after dinner. (\_\_\_\_\_)
- She *cooked dinner* for ten people. (\_\_\_\_\_)
- Just *do what the recipe says* and it'll be fine. (\_\_\_\_\_)

## 31 Relationships and family

*When we talk about people we love and live with, certain word partnerships come up again and again. This unit looks at the natural collocations English speakers use for forming, keeping and sometimes losing relationships.*

## A Getting close to people

The first stage of a relationship is often about connection. If you **get on well with** someone, you have a friendly, easy relationship with them. People who meet and quickly become a couple may **fall in love**, sometimes at first sight.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
get on well with	I <b>get on well with</b> my colleagues, so work feels relaxed.
fall in love	They <b>fell in love</b> during their first year at university.
build a relationship	It takes time and honesty to <b>build a strong relationship</b> .
have a lot in common	We <b>have a lot in common</b> , from music to politics.
keep in touch	We promised to <b>keep in touch</b> after she moved abroad.

## B Family life and commitment

When a couple decides to live a calmer, more permanent life together, we say they **settle down**. Many then choose to **start a family**, meaning they have their first child.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
settle down	After years of travelling, they finally <b>settled down</b> in a small town.
start a family	They waited until their thirties to <b>start a family</b> .
raise children	It isn't easy to <b>raise children</b> in a big city.
a close-knit family	We're a <b>close-knit family</b> and eat together every Sunday.
get married	They <b>got married</b> in a quiet ceremony by the sea.

## C When relationships change

Not all relationships last. Friends who slowly lose contact **drift apart**, often without any argument. A couple whose relationship ends may **break up**, and sometimes people **grow apart** over many years.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
drift apart	We were best friends at school but slowly <b>drifted apart</b> .
break up	They <b>broke up</b> after realising they wanted different things.
grow apart	The couple <b>grew apart</b> once the children left home.
lose touch	I <b>lost touch</b> with most of my old neighbours.

**Tip:** Be careful with *drift apart* and *break up*. *Drift apart* describes a slow, gradual loss of closeness (often friends), while *break up* usually means a clear, definite end to a romantic relationship.

## Exercises

**31.1** Complete each sentence with one collocation from the box. There are two extra options you will not need.

*get on well with* | *fall in love* | *start a family* | *close-knit family* | *drift apart* | *settle down* | *keep in touch* | *break up*

- After ten years of moving from city to city, Mark wanted to \_\_\_\_\_ and buy a house.
- They decided to \_\_\_\_\_ once they felt financially secure enough to have a baby.
- I really \_\_\_\_\_ my sister; we hardly ever argue.
- Coming from a \_\_\_\_\_, she calls her parents every single day.
- The two friends began to \_\_\_\_\_ after one of them moved overseas.
- It only took one summer for them to \_\_\_\_\_ and become inseparable.

**31.2** Choose the correct word to complete each collocation.

- We have a lot in (common / together) when it comes to films.
- They got (married / wedding) last spring.
- The couple grew (away / apart) after years of working long hours.
- It's hard to (raise / grow) children without a strong support network.
- Let's (keep / hold) in touch once the course finishes.
- It takes years to (build / make) a strong relationship.

## 32 Feelings and emotions

*Emotions are often described with fixed expressions rather than single words. This unit gives you the natural collocations for talking about strong feelings, controlling them, and the relief that comes afterwards.*

## A Strong reactions

When emotion overwhelms us suddenly, we often **burst into tears** or, in anger, **lose your temper**. These expressions describe a quick, intense reaction rather than a slow change of mood.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
burst into tears	She <b>burst into tears</b> the moment she heard the news.
lose your temper	He <b>lost his temper</b> when the printer jammed again.
jump for joy	The children <b>jumped for joy</b> when school was cancelled.
be scared stiff	I was <b>scared stiff</b> during the turbulence.
go bright red	He <b>went bright red</b> when everyone started clapping.

## B Complicated and mixed feelings

Not every emotion is simple. When you live far from home, you may **feel homesick**. And when something is both good and bad, you might **have mixed feelings** about it.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
feel homesick	During her first month abroad she really <b>felt homesick</b> .
have mixed feelings	I <b>have mixed feelings</b> about leaving my old job.
have second thoughts	She started to <b>have second thoughts</b> about the move.
be in two minds	I'm <b>in two minds</b> about accepting the offer.
feel under pressure	The team <b>felt under pressure</b> before the deadline.

## C Relief and calming down

Once a difficult moment passes, we often feel a **sense of relief**. We may need to **calm down** after being upset, and slowly **cheer up** when things improve.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
a sense of relief	There was a <b>huge sense of relief</b> when the exams ended.
calm down	Take a deep breath and try to <b>calm down</b> .
cheer up	A walk in the park always helps me <b>cheer up</b> .
breathe a sigh of relief	We <b>breathed a sigh of relief</b> when the plane landed safely.

**Tip:** Notice the prepositions: we feel *homesick* (no preposition), but we have mixed feelings *about* something and are in two minds *about* something. Learning the preposition as part of the collocation saves mistakes later.

## Exercises

**32.1** Complete each sentence with a suitable collocation. Use the correct form of the verb.

- When the results finally came through, the whole family \_\_\_\_\_ a sigh of relief.
- Please stop shouting and \_\_\_\_\_; we can sort this out together.
- He \_\_\_\_\_ his temper and slammed the door behind him.
- She \_\_\_\_\_ into tears during the goodbye speech.
- After three weeks alone in a new country, I started to \_\_\_\_\_ homesick.
- I \_\_\_\_\_ mixed feelings about selling the old house.

**32.2** Match the situation (1–6) with the correct collocation (a–f).

- You are both excited and sad about a change. (\_\_\_\_\_)
- You finally relax after a worrying time ends. (\_\_\_\_\_)
- You become extremely angry very quickly. (\_\_\_\_\_)
- You can't decide between two choices. (\_\_\_\_\_)
- You miss your home and family a lot. (\_\_\_\_\_)
- You suddenly start crying. (\_\_\_\_\_)

a) *lose your temper* b) *burst into tears* c) *have mixed feelings* d) *a sense of relief* e) *be in two minds* f) *feel homesick*

## 33 Personality and character

*Describing what people are like goes far beyond simple adjectives. English uses many ready-made phrases to capture someone's character. This unit covers the most useful collocations for talking about personality.*

## A Describing a strong character

Some people make a big impression. We say they have a **strong personality**, meaning they are confident and not easily influenced. Others are admired for a **good sense of humour**, the ability to make people laugh.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
a strong personality	Our new manager has a <b>strong personality</b> and clear opinions.
a good sense of humour	She has a <b>good sense of humour</b> and laughs at herself easily.
a heart of gold	He looks tough, but he has a <b>heart of gold</b> .
a sharp mind	Even at ninety, my grandfather still has a <b>sharp mind</b> .
a positive attitude	She keeps a <b>positive attitude</b> even in difficult times.

## B Sensible and practical people

Someone who is practical, realistic and not at all arrogant is **down to earth**. We often praise people for being modest and easy to talk to in this way.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
down to earth	Despite her fame, she's remarkably <b>down to earth</b> .
level-headed	We need a <b>level-headed</b> person to lead the project.
easy to get on with	My new flatmate is friendly and <b>easy to get on with</b> .
open-minded	Being <b>open-minded</b> , she happily tries new ideas.

## C Difficult traits

Not every trait is flattering. Someone who refuses to change their habits is **set in your ways**, and a person who gets angry easily is said to have a **quick temper**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
set in your ways	My uncle is so <b>set in his ways</b> that he won't try new food.
a quick temper	He has a <b>quick temper</b> and snaps when he's tired.
a short attention span	The puppy has a <b>short attention span</b> and gets bored fast.
set high standards	She <b>sets high standards</b> and expects a lot from her team.

**Tip:** Many character collocations use *have + a/an + adjective + noun*: *have a strong personality, have a good sense of humour, have a quick temper*. But *down to earth, level-headed* and *open-minded* follow *be*, not *have*.

## Exercises

**33.1** Complete each sentence with *have* or *be* in the correct form.

1. She \_\_\_\_\_ a good sense of humour and keeps everyone laughing.
2. He \_\_\_\_\_ very down to earth, despite all his success.
3. My grandmother \_\_\_\_\_ a quick temper when she's hungry.
4. The candidate we chose \_\_\_\_\_ level-headed and calm under pressure.
5. They \_\_\_\_\_ a strong personality, so meetings are never boring.
6. You need to \_\_\_\_\_ open-minded to enjoy travelling.

**33.2** Rewrite the underlined part using a collocation from this unit that means the same thing.

1. My father refuses to change his old habits. (He is very \_\_\_\_\_.)
2. She is realistic and not at all arrogant. (She is \_\_\_\_\_.)
3. He gets angry very easily. (He has \_\_\_\_\_.)
4. Despite his rough appearance, he is extremely kind. (He has \_\_\_\_\_.)
5. She is very intelligent and thinks clearly. (She has \_\_\_\_\_.)
6. Our coach always stays optimistic. (He has \_\_\_\_\_.)

34

## Communication and conversation

and

*Conversations follow patterns, and English has a rich set of collocations for managing them: making your meaning clear, steering the topic, and dealing with disagreement. This unit gives you the phrases you need to talk about talking.*

### A Getting your message across

When you want to express an idea clearly so people understand it, you **make a point**. If you say exactly what you think, even when it's uncomfortable, you **speak your mind**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
make a point	She <b>made a good point</b> about the cost of the project.
speak your mind	He always <b>speaks his mind</b> , even with the boss.
get your message across	Good slides help you <b>get your message across</b> .
raise an issue	I'd like to <b>raise an issue</b> at the next meeting.
make yourself clear	Let me <b>make myself clear</b> : this deadline is final.

## B Managing the flow of talk

In relaxed settings, people often just **have a chat**. If a topic becomes awkward, someone may quickly **change the subject** to move on.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
have a chat	We <b>had a quick chat</b> over coffee before work.
change the subject	He <b>changed the subject</b> the moment money came up.
break the ice	A simple joke can <b>break the ice</b> with strangers.
get a word in	She talked so much I couldn't <b>get a word in</b> .
follow the conversation	The accent was strong and hard to <b>follow the conversation</b> .

## C Misunderstandings and disagreement

Communication can go wrong. If you misunderstand something completely, you **get the wrong end of the stick**. And when a discussion turns angry, it becomes a **heated argument**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
get the wrong end of the stick	She <b>got the wrong end of the stick</b> and thought I was leaving.
a heated argument	They had a <b>heated argument</b> about politics at dinner.
have a misunderstanding	We <b>had a misunderstanding</b> about the meeting time.
agree to differ	In the end we decided to <b>agree to differ</b> .

**Tip:** *Make a point* has two meanings. *She made a good point* means she said something worth noting. But *make a point of doing something* means to do it deliberately, e.g. *He makes a point of arriving early*. Watch the grammar to tell them apart.

## Exercises

**34.1** Complete each sentence with one word.

- I think you've got the wrong \_\_\_\_\_ of the stick; I never said that.
- Let's have a quick \_\_\_\_\_ before the meeting starts.
- They had a \_\_\_\_\_ argument and didn't speak for days.
- She wasn't afraid to speak her \_\_\_\_\_ in front of everyone.
- He told a funny story to \_\_\_\_\_ the ice with the new team.
- You made a very good \_\_\_\_\_ about the budget.

**34.2** Choose the correct collocation (a or b) for each situation.

- Two people start shouting and disagreeing angrily.  
(a) have a chat (b) have a heated argument
- You understood the message wrongly. (a) get the wrong end of the stick (b) make yourself clear
- You move the talk to a different topic. (a) change the subject (b) raise an issue
- Someone dominates and you can't speak. (a) get a word in (b) break the ice
- You both accept you won't agree. (a) make a point (b) agree to differ
- You express your opinion honestly and directly.  
(a) speak your mind (b) follow the conversation

## 35 Technology and the internet

*Everyday digital life comes with its own set of word partnerships. From phones to websites, this unit covers the natural collocations you need to talk about technology confidently and accurately.*

### A Using your phone and apps

Most of us start the day on our phones. We **download an app** from a store, and when the battery is low we need to **charge your phone**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
download an app	I <b>downloaded an app</b> to track my running.
charge your phone	Don't forget to <b>charge your phone</b> before the trip.
install an update	The system asked me to <b>install an update</b> overnight.
run out of battery	My phone <b>ran out of battery</b> during the call.
turn on airplane mode	Please <b>turn on airplane mode</b> before take-off.

## B Getting online

To use the internet smoothly, you need a **strong signal** or a fast connection. Once connected, you can **browse the web** freely.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
a strong signal	There's a <b>strong signal</b> in the city but none in the hills.
browse the web	She likes to <b>browse the web</b> for recipes in the evening.
connect to Wi-Fi	You can <b>connect to the Wi-Fi</b> using the password on the door.
lose connection	We <b>lost connection</b> halfway through the video call.
stream a video	It's hard to <b>stream a video</b> with such a weak signal.

## C Content, data and safety

When content spreads very fast online, we say it goes **go viral**. To protect your work, you should **back up your files** regularly.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
go viral	The clip <b>went viral</b> and reached millions overnight.
back up your files	I <b>back up my files</b> to the cloud every Friday.
delete an account	He <b>deleted his account</b> after the data leak.
change your password	It's wise to <b>change your password</b> every few months.

**Tip:** Be careful with *charge*. *Charge your phone* means add power to the battery. But *charge* can also mean ask for money, as in *The app charges a monthly fee*. The context and grammar make the meaning clear.

## Exercises

**35.1** Complete each sentence with a collocation from the box. Use the correct verb form.

*download an app | charge your phone | go viral | back up your files | browse the web | lose connection | strong signal*

1. Make sure you \_\_\_\_\_ before the laptop crashes and you lose everything.
2. Her dance video \_\_\_\_\_ and got two million views in a day.
3. I had to \_\_\_\_\_ to scan the QR code at the restaurant.
4. We kept \_\_\_\_\_ because the train went through tunnels.
5. There's no \_\_\_\_\_ in the basement, so my calls keep dropping.
6. Remember to \_\_\_\_\_ tonight; it's almost out of battery.

**35.2** Find and correct the wrong word in each sentence.

1. I need to download an update before the new feature works.
2. Can you join to the Wi-Fi using this password?
3. You should make up your files in case the disk fails.
4. It's hard to flow a video when the signal is weak.
5. Please put on airplane mode before the plane departs.
6. She likes to surf the web for travel deals on Sundays.

## 36

## Media, news and entertainment

*From late-night bulletins to blockbuster cinema, the media world has its own ready-made word partnerships. This unit gathers the collocations you need to talk naturally about news, television and film.*

## A News and reporting

When something dramatic happens, channels interrupt their schedule with **breaking news**. A reporter is then sent out to **cover a story**, and editors decide how much space or airtime to give it.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
breaking news	We interrupt this programme with some <b>breaking news</b> from the capital.
cover a story	Every channel <b>covered the story</b> within minutes of the announcement.
break a story	A young blogger <b>broke the story</b> long before the national papers did.
run a story	The editor refused to <b>run the story</b> until the facts were confirmed.
a news bulletin	The main details were read out in the evening <b>news bulletin</b> .
a breaking story	Journalists rushed to the scene of the <b>breaking story</b> .

## B On television

A programme that is being shown live is said to **go on air**. The most valuable slot is **prime time**, the evening hours when audiences are largest and advertisers pay the most.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
go on air	The new chat show <b>goes on air</b> at nine tonight.
prime time	The drama was moved to <b>prime time</b> to attract a wider audience.
a live broadcast	Millions watched the <b>live broadcast</b> of the ceremony.
attract viewers	Reality shows still <b>attract viewers</b> in their millions.
a repeat showing	I missed it first time, so I caught the <b>repeat showing</b> at the weekend.

## C Film and entertainment

A film that earns a fortune at the cinema is a **box-office hit**; people also call it simply a **hit film**. The opposite is a flop.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
a hit film	Her latest <b>hit film</b> was praised by critics and fans alike.
a box-office hit	The sequel became a surprise <b>box-office hit</b> over the summer.
release a film	The studio plans to <b>release the film</b> in time for the holidays.
star in a film	She was thrilled to <b>star in a film</b> opposite her childhood hero.
a star-studded cast	Audiences were drawn in by the <b>star-studded cast</b> .

**Tip:** Notice that we say *on air* (without *the*) but *on the air* is also heard in American English. For films, prefer *release a film* rather than *publish a film*; *publish* is for books and articles.

### Exercises

**36.1** Complete each sentence with one word.

- We interrupt this programme to bring you some breaking \_\_\_\_\_.
- Reporters were sent to \_\_\_\_\_ the story as it unfolded.
- The show goes on \_\_\_\_\_ at eight o'clock every evening.
- Advertisers pay most for slots during prime \_\_\_\_\_.
- The film was a huge box-\_\_\_\_\_ hit last year.
- A young blogger \_\_\_\_\_ the story before the newspapers did.
- The film featured a star-\_\_\_\_\_ cast of famous actors.
- The studio will \_\_\_\_\_ the film next month.

**36.2** Choose the correct collocation in each pair.

- The drama was shown at (prime time / first time) to attract more viewers.
- Every channel (covered / discovered) the story within minutes.
- She was delighted to (play / star) in a film with her favourite actor.
- The new series (goes / makes) on air tonight.
- The editor refused to (run / drive) the story without proof.
- Their latest (hit / beat) film broke all records.
- I caught the (repeat / replay) showing at the weekend.
- The main facts appeared in the evening news (leaflet / bulletin).

## 37 The environment and nature

*Environmental issues fill the news, and discussing them well means knowing which verbs and adjectives go with which nouns. This unit builds the collocations you need to talk about climate, energy and wildlife.*

### A Climate and emissions

The warming of the planet is usually called **climate change**. Each of us leaves a **carbon footprint**, the total amount of greenhouse gas our activities produce.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
climate change	Scientists warn that <b>climate change</b> is happening faster than expected.
carbon footprint	Cycling to work helped her cut her <b>carbon footprint</b> .
reduce emissions	The factory invested in cleaner machines to <b>reduce emissions</b> .
global warming	Melting glaciers are a clear sign of <b>global warming</b> .
greenhouse gases	Burning coal releases large amounts of <b>greenhouse gases</b> .
raise the temperature	Even a small rise can <b>raise the temperature</b> of the oceans.

### B Energy and resources

Power from the sun, wind and water is known as **renewable energy**. Using less and wasting less helps us **conserve resources** for future generations.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
renewable energy	The country now gets half its power from <b>renewable energy</b> .
conserve resources	Simple habits at home can help us <b>conserve resources</b> .
save energy	Switching off lights is an easy way to <b>save energy</b> .
fossil fuels	Many governments aim to phase out <b>fossil fuels</b> .
natural resources	The region is rich in <b>natural resources</b> such as timber and water.

### C Wildlife and pollution

Animals at risk of dying out are called **endangered species**. Governments and citizens must work together to **tackle pollution** in our air, rivers and seas.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
endangered species	The reserve protects several <b>endangered species</b> of bird.
tackle pollution	The city introduced clean buses to <b>tackle pollution</b> .
protect wildlife	New laws were passed to <b>protect wildlife</b> in the forest.
preserve the environment	Volunteers worked hard to <b>preserve the environment</b> along the coast.
pose a threat	Plastic waste continues to <b>pose a threat</b> to marine life.

**Tip:** Use *tackle*, *address* or *combat* with problems like *pollution* and *climate change*. Avoid *fight pollution* in formal writing, though it is common in speech. Remember that *climate change* is uncountable: never say *a climate change*.

### Exercises

**37.1** Match the verb on the left with the noun on the right to make a collocation.

1. reduce (a) resources
2. conserve (b) energy
3. tackle (c) emissions
4. protect (d) the environment
5. save (e) pollution
6. preserve (f) wildlife

**37.2** Complete each sentence with a collocation from the unit.

1. Cycling instead of driving reduces your carbon \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The country now produces clean power from \_\_\_\_\_ energy.
3. The panda is one of many \_\_\_\_\_ species in danger of dying out.
4. Many scientists agree that \_\_\_\_\_ change is the greatest challenge of our age.
5. Burning coal and oil releases harmful greenhouse \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Governments want to stop relying on fossil \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Plastic in the ocean continues to pose a \_\_\_\_\_ to sea life.
8. Turning off appliances at night is a simple way to save \_\_\_\_\_.

## 38 Crime and the law

Talking about crime and justice requires precise word partnerships, especially when describing what happens in a courtroom. This unit covers the collocations you need from the moment a crime is committed to the final verdict.

### A Committing offences

When someone does something illegal, we say they **commit a crime** or **break the law**. The two phrases are close in meaning, but *break the law* can include minor offences as well as serious ones.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
commit a crime	He insisted he had never <b>committed a crime</b> in his life.
break the law	Parking there means you are <b>breaking the law</b> .
commit an offence	Driving without insurance is to <b>commit an offence</b> .
obey the law	Most citizens <b>obey the law</b> without ever thinking about it.
get away with a crime	For years the gang seemed to <b>get away with their crimes</b> .

### B Police and prosecution

If a victim decides to take legal action, they may **press charges** against the suspect. The case is then handed to the prosecution.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
press charges	The shop owner decided not to <b>press charges</b> against the boy.
make an arrest	The officers were able to <b>make an arrest</b> within hours.
bring charges	Prosecutors chose to <b>bring charges</b> of fraud.
gather evidence	Detectives spent weeks trying to <b>gather evidence</b> .
question a suspect	Police continued to <b>question the suspect</b> overnight.

### C In court

An accused person must **stand trial** before a judge. If found guilty, they may pay a **heavy fine** or **serve a sentence** in prison.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
stand trial	The former minister will <b>stand trial</b> next month.
serve a sentence	He is currently <b>serving a sentence</b> of five years.
a heavy fine	The company received a <b>heavy fine</b> for polluting the river.
reach a verdict	The jury took two days to <b>reach a verdict</b> .
plead guilty	She chose to <b>plead guilty</b> to the lesser charge.
face trial	Three people will <b>face trial</b> over the robbery.

**Tip:** Be careful with *fine*: we say *a heavy* or *a hefty fine* for a large one, not *a big fine* in formal use. We *serve a sentence* but *pay a fine*. *Press charges* is usually done by a victim; *bring* or *file charges* is done by prosecutors.

### Exercises

**38.1** Choose the correct word to complete each collocation.

- commit a (crime / fault)
- break the (rule / law)
- serve a (sentence / fine)
- press (charges / accusations)
- stand (trial / court)
- reach a (decision / verdict)
- a heavy (fine / cost)
- plead (guilty / sorry)

**38.2** Complete each sentence with one word from the unit.

- If you park on a yellow line, you are breaking the \_\_\_\_\_.
- The victim refused to \_\_\_\_\_ charges against her neighbour.
- The jury took two days to reach a \_\_\_\_\_.
- The factory paid a heavy \_\_\_\_\_ for breaking safety rules.
- The accused will \_\_\_\_\_ trial in the spring.
- Detectives worked for weeks to \_\_\_\_\_ evidence.
- He is now \_\_\_\_\_ a sentence of three years in prison.
- The police were quick to make an \_\_\_\_\_ at the scene.

## 39 Politics and society

*Politics has a vocabulary full of fixed expressions, from elections to social campaigns. This unit gives you the collocations to discuss how decisions are made and how societies change.*

### A Elections and government

When citizens choose their leaders, a country or party will **hold an election**. A party that gains more than half the seats is said to **win a majority**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
hold an election	The government promised to <b>hold an election</b> within the year.
win a majority	No single party managed to <b>win a majority</b> this time.
cast a vote	Millions of people queued to <b>cast a vote</b> .
form a government	The two parties agreed to <b>form a government</b> together.
run for office	She announced that she would <b>run for office</b> next spring.

### B Making laws and policy

Once in power, a parliament can **pass a law** to change how the country is run. Leaders must also pay attention to **public opinion**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
pass a law	Parliament voted to <b>pass a law</b> banning single-use plastics.
public opinion	The minister was forced to act by the weight of <b>public opinion</b> .
introduce a policy	The council plans to <b>introduce a policy</b> on recycling.
make a decision	Leaders were under pressure to <b>make a decision</b> quickly.
shape policy	Voters' concerns increasingly <b>shape policy</b> at every level.

### C Society and change

Campaigners often work to **raise awareness** of important issues and to **tackle inequality** between rich and poor.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
raise awareness	The charity ran a campaign to <b>raise awareness</b> of mental health.
tackle inequality	The new budget aims to <b>tackle inequality</b> in education.
address an issue	The mayor promised to <b>address the issue</b> of homelessness.
promote equality	The law was designed to <b>promote equality</b> in the workplace.
bring about change	Peaceful protests can <b>bring about change</b> over time.

**Tip:** *Public opinion* is uncountable, so we never say *a public opinion*; use *an opinion poll* to mean a survey. We *pass* or *introduce* a law, but we *break* a law (see Unit 38). With problems such as *inequality*, use *tackle* or *address*, not *solve*, unless the problem can be fully ended.

#### Exercises

**39.1** Complete each collocation with a verb from the box: *hold, win, pass, raise, tackle, cast*.

- \_\_\_\_\_ an election
- \_\_\_\_\_ a majority
- \_\_\_\_\_ a law
- \_\_\_\_\_ awareness
- \_\_\_\_\_ inequality
- \_\_\_\_\_ a vote

**39.2** Complete each sentence with a suitable collocation from the unit.

- The government has promised to hold an \_\_\_\_\_ before the summer.
- Neither party was able to win a \_\_\_\_\_ in the vote.
- Parliament voted to \_\_\_\_\_ a law banning plastic bags.
- The charity's main goal is to raise \_\_\_\_\_ of climate issues.
- The new budget tries to \_\_\_\_\_ inequality in schools.
- Politicians cannot ignore the weight of public \_\_\_\_\_.
- After the election, the two parties agreed to \_\_\_\_\_ a government.
- Activists believe that protest can bring about \_\_\_\_\_.

## 40 Science and research

Scientific writing relies on a set of standard collocations that describe how knowledge is built. This unit gives you the verb and noun partnerships you need to describe research from first idea to final result.

### A Starting research

Scientists begin by deciding what to study. They **carry out research** and **conduct an experiment** to find out how something works.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
carry out research	The team will <b>carry out research</b> into rare diseases.
conduct an experiment	Students were asked to <b>conduct an experiment</b> on plant growth.
do research	She spent two years <b>doing research</b> in the Arctic.
fund a study	A charity agreed to <b>fund a study</b> on air quality.
set up an experiment	It took all morning to <b>set up the experiment</b> correctly.

### B Working with data

During a study, researchers **gather data** and then look for patterns. A good scientist will **test a hypothesis** rather than simply assume it is true.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
gather data	The satellites <b>gather data</b> on ocean temperatures.
test a hypothesis	The next step is to <b>test the hypothesis</b> under laboratory conditions.
analyse the results	It took weeks to <b>analyse the results</b> of the survey.
collect samples	Divers <b>collect samples</b> of water from the reef.
record findings	Each team must carefully <b>record their findings</b> .

### C Results and conclusions

Once the data is in, scientists **draw a conclusion**. Sometimes the work leads them to **make a discovery** that changes how we see the world.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
draw a conclusion	It is too early to <b>draw a conclusion</b> from such a small sample.
make a discovery	The astronomers hope to <b>make a discovery</b> about distant planets.
publish a paper	The group plans to <b>publish a paper</b> in a leading journal.
prove a theory	The experiment finally <b>proved the theory</b> correct.
present the findings	She will <b>present the findings</b> at the conference.

**Tip:** Use *carry out*, *conduct* or *do* with *research* and *experiments*, but never *make research*. We *draw* a conclusion (not *take*) and *make* a discovery (not *do*). *Data* can be treated as singular or plural: *the data shows* or *the data show* are both accepted.

### Exercises

40.1 Correct the wrong verb in each collocation.

- make research
- do an experiment correctly (give the more formal verb)
- take a conclusion
- do a discovery
- check a hypothesis
- collect data (give an alternative verb meaning the same)

40.2 Complete each sentence with a collocation from the unit.

- The team will carry \_\_\_\_\_ research into rare diseases.
- Before drawing any conclusions, scientists must test their \_\_\_\_\_.
- The satellites \_\_\_\_\_ data on ocean temperatures every hour.
- It is too early to draw a \_\_\_\_\_ from so few results.
- The astronomers hope to make an exciting \_\_\_\_\_ about distant planets.
- Students were asked to \_\_\_\_\_ an experiment on plant growth.
- The group plans to \_\_\_\_\_ a paper in a leading journal.
- Divers \_\_\_\_\_ samples of water from the coral reef.

## 41 Sport and fitness

When we talk about exercise, training and competition, English relies heavily on fixed word partnerships. You don't "make sport" or "do a record" – you **play sport** and **beat a record**. This unit groups the most useful collocations by what they describe.

### A Getting and staying in shape

Most people start because they want to **get fit** or **lose weight**. To do that, they **work out** at the gym, **go for a run**, or simply try to **stay active** during the day.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
get fit	I joined a gym in January to <b>get fit</b> before the summer.
work out	He <b>works out</b> three times a week before breakfast.
build muscle	Lifting weights helped her <b>build muscle</b> in her arms and back.
stay in shape	Cycling to the office keeps me <b>in shape</b> without much effort.
burn calories	A brisk walk <b>burns calories</b> and clears your head.
get out of breath	I used to <b>get out of breath</b> climbing the stairs.

### B Before, during and after exercise

Coaches always tell you to **warm up** properly so you don't **pull a muscle**, and to **cool down** gently when you finish.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
warm up	The players <b>warmed up</b> for ten minutes before the match.
cool down	Always <b>cool down</b> with some light stretching.
pull a muscle	She <b>pulled a muscle</b> in her leg during training.
break sweat	The workout was so gentle I barely <b>broke a sweat</b> .
push yourself	You have to <b>push yourself</b> a little to make progress.

### C Competition and results

In competitive sport you **win a match**, **score a goal** or, if you are exceptional, **beat a record**. Someone who loves a sport is often described as a **keen runner** or a keen swimmer.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
win a match	Our team <b>won the match</b> in the final minute.
beat a record	She <b>beat the world record</b> by two seconds.
score a goal	He <b>scored a goal</b> with a header from the corner.
a keen runner	My sister is a <b>keen runner</b> and trains every morning.
set a record	The young athlete <b>set a new national record</b> last week.
take up a sport	I <b>took up tennis</b> after watching the tournament on TV.

**Tip:** Use **do** for activities ending in *-ing* or without a ball (do yoga, do athletics), **play** for ball and team sports (play football, play tennis), and **go** for activities ending in *-ing* that you go out to do (go swimming, go cycling).

### Exercises

**41.1** Complete each sentence with one verb: *get, beat, warm, build, score, take, pull*.

- I'd love to \_\_\_\_\_ fit before my holiday in August.
- Remember to \_\_\_\_\_ up before you start the race.
- If you lift weights regularly, you'll \_\_\_\_\_ muscle quite quickly.
- She ran so fast that she managed to \_\_\_\_\_ the record.
- Be careful not to \_\_\_\_\_ a muscle when you stretch.
- He \_\_\_\_\_ the winning goal just before the whistle.
- My brother decided to \_\_\_\_\_ up boxing last year.

**41.2** Choose the correct collocation in each pair.

- After every session I always (cool down / cold down) with some stretches.
- She's a very (keen / sharp) runner and never misses a morning jog.
- Cycling to work helps me (stay / hold) in shape.
- The match was tough, but our team finally (won / made) it.
- I go to the gym to (make / work) out twice a week.
- A short run will (burn / spend) plenty of calories.
- I got so (out of breath / out of air) that I had to stop and rest.

## 42 Time, routines and schedules

We use a rich set of collocations to talk about how we organise our days. We can **save time**, **waste time**, or even **kill time** while we wait. This unit sorts these expressions by topic so you can describe your own routine naturally.

### A Having and not having time

A good habit can **save time**, but a busy morning often means you **run out of time**. When you have nothing to do, you might **kill time** or **waste time** scrolling on your phone.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
save time	Preparing lunch the night before <b>saves time</b> in the morning.
run out of time	We <b>ran out of time</b> and couldn't finish the last question.
waste time	Don't <b>waste time</b> arguing about details that don't matter.
kill time	I read a magazine to <b>kill time</b> before my flight.
make time	She always <b>makes time</b> for a phone call with her parents.
find time	I never seem to <b>find time</b> to clean the garage.

### B Schedules and deadlines

At work you might follow a **tight schedule** and worry about a **looming deadline**. If everything goes smoothly, you stay **on schedule** and **meet a deadline** with time to spare.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
a tight schedule	We're on a <b>tight schedule</b> , so let's start the meeting on time.
meet a deadline	The team worked late to <b>meet the deadline</b> .
fall behind schedule	The project <b>fell behind schedule</b> after the supplier was delayed.
a busy schedule	Despite a <b>busy schedule</b> , he found an hour to help me.
stick to a schedule	Children sleep better if you <b>stick to a schedule</b> .

### C Daily routines

Many habits happen **on a daily basis**. You **set an alarm**, **have a lie-in** at the weekend, or **stick to a routine** that keeps your week organised.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
set an alarm	I <b>set an alarm</b> for six so I can go running.
on a daily basis	She checks her emails <b>on a daily basis</b> .
have a lie-in	On Sundays we like to <b>have a lie-in</b> until ten.
get into a routine	It took a month to <b>get into a routine</b> after the baby arrived.
a hectic morning	After a <b>hectic morning</b> , I needed a quiet lunch.

**Tip:** Notice the difference between **spend time** (a neutral choice: *I spent two hours on it*) and **waste time** (a negative judgement: *I wasted two hours on it*). **Kill time** is neither – it simply means filling an empty gap while you wait.

### Exercises

**42.1** Complete each sentence with a verb from the box: *save, run, set, meet, kill, stick, have*.

- If we leave now, we'll \_\_\_\_\_ time and avoid the traffic.
- I always \_\_\_\_\_ an alarm before an early flight.
- We had so much to do that we \_\_\_\_\_ out of time.
- The designers managed to \_\_\_\_\_ the deadline by Friday.
- I read the whole newspaper just to \_\_\_\_\_ time at the station.
- On Saturdays I love to \_\_\_\_\_ a lie-in.
- Try to \_\_\_\_\_ to a routine and you'll sleep better.

**42.2** Match each sentence half on the left with its ending. Write the correct ending.

- We're on a very tight \_\_\_\_\_ (basis / schedule).
- I check the news on a daily \_\_\_\_\_ (basis / routine).
- The whole project fell behind \_\_\_\_\_ (time / schedule).
- I never seem to find \_\_\_\_\_ to read for pleasure (time / hour).
- After a hectic \_\_\_\_\_, I just wanted to sit down (morning / clock).
- It took weeks to get into a \_\_\_\_\_ at the new job (routine / basis).
- She always makes \_\_\_\_\_ for her friends (time / schedule).

## 43 Weather and the seasons

Weather is one of the most common topics in everyday English, and native speakers describe it with vivid, fixed phrases. We don't say "strong rain"; we say **heavy rain**. This unit collects the natural collocations for rain, heat, cold and wind.

### A Rain and wet weather

A grey sky might bring **heavy rain**, or just **scattered showers** that come and go. When it pours suddenly, we say it is **pouring with rain** or that there's a **torrential downpour**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
heavy rain	The match was cancelled because of <b>heavy rain</b> .
scattered showers	The forecast warns of <b>scattered showers</b> in the afternoon.
pour with rain	It <b>poured with rain</b> all the way home.
a torrential downpour	We got caught in a <b>torrential downpour</b> without umbrellas.
a light drizzle	By evening the storm had faded to a <b>light drizzle</b> .

### B Heat and sunshine

In summer a **heatwave** can settle in for days. On a clear afternoon, **the sun is beating down** and the air feels **boiling hot**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
a heatwave	The country is in the middle of a <b>heatwave</b> .
the sun is beating down	By noon <b>the sun was beating down</b> on the empty streets.
boiling hot	It was <b>boiling hot</b> , so we stayed in the shade.
bright sunshine	We woke to <b>bright sunshine</b> and clear blue skies.
soaring temperatures	<b>Soaring temperatures</b> kept everyone indoors at midday.

### C Cold, wind and winter

When winter arrives it can be **freezing cold**, with a **biting wind** and a **hard frost** on the grass each morning.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
freezing cold	It was <b>freezing cold</b> , so I wore two jumpers.
a biting wind	A <b>biting wind</b> swept across the open field.
a hard frost	There was a <b>hard frost</b> overnight and the car was iced up.
thick fog	<b>Thick fog</b> made it hard to see the road ahead.
heavy snow	<b>Heavy snow</b> closed the schools for two days.
a gentle breeze	A <b>gentle breeze</b> made the warm afternoon pleasant.

**Tip:** English usually pairs weather nouns with specific adjectives. We say **heavy rain** and **heavy snow** (not "strong"), but a **strong wind** (not "heavy"). For temperature we say **freezing cold** and **boiling hot** – both are informal ways of saying "very".

### Exercises

**43.1** Choose the correct adjective or verb to complete each weather collocation.

- The roads flooded after a night of (heavy / strong) rain.
- A (biting / cutting) wind blew straight off the sea.
- The whole region was hit by a (heat / hot) wave last July.
- It was (freezing / frozen) cold on the mountain.
- By lunchtime the sun was (beating / hitting) down.
- The forecast mentioned (scattered / spread) showers for tomorrow.
- A (hard / heavy) frost covered the fields at dawn.

**43.2** Complete each sentence with a noun: *downpour, sunshine, fog, snow, breeze, drizzle*.

- We woke to bright \_\_\_\_\_ and not a cloud in the sky.
- Heavy \_\_\_\_\_ closed the schools for two days.
- Thick \_\_\_\_\_ made it almost impossible to see the road.
- We were soaked in a sudden torrential \_\_\_\_\_.
- A gentle \_\_\_\_\_ kept us cool on the beach.
- The rain eased into a light \_\_\_\_\_ by the evening.

## 44 Art, music and culture

Talking about the arts means knowing which words go together. A gallery doesn't "make" an exhibition; it **holds an exhibition**. A band doesn't "publish" a record; it **releases an album**. This unit groups the key collocations for visual art, music and performance.

### A Visual art and exhibitions

A famous painting is a **work of art**. Galleries **hold an exhibition**, artists **create a masterpiece**, and collectors **admire a painting** they hope one day to own.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
a work of art	That sculpture is a genuine <b>work of art</b> .
hold an exhibition	The museum is <b>holding an exhibition</b> of early photography.
create a masterpiece	She spent three years <b>creating her masterpiece</b> .
display a painting	The gallery <b>displays paintings</b> by local artists.
visit a gallery	We <b>visited the gallery</b> on the last day of our trip.

### B Music and recordings

A band can **release an album**, **write a song**, or **top the charts** if the public loves it. Many musicians say they want to **play live** rather than only record in a studio.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
release an album	The band will <b>release their new album</b> in the spring.
write a song	He <b>wrote the song</b> after a long walk in the hills.
top the charts	Their single <b>topped the charts</b> for six weeks.
play live	The group prefers to <b>play live</b> in small venues.
form a band	They <b>formed a band</b> while they were still at school.

### C Performance and the audience

At the theatre, actors **play a role** and give a **live performance** in front of a **packed audience**. If the crowd loves it, they **give a standing ovation**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
play a role	She <b>plays the leading role</b> in the new musical.
a live performance	The festival ended with a <b>live performance</b> by the orchestra.
a packed audience	The comedian walked out to a <b>packed audience</b> .
give a standing ovation	The crowd <b>gave a standing ovation</b> at the final curtain.
put on a show	The drama club <b>puts on a show</b> every summer.
take the stage	The singer <b>took the stage</b> just after nine.

**Tip:** Be careful with **play**. We *play a role* in a film, but we *play live* when performing music. For exhibitions, the natural verbs are **hold** or **put on** an exhibition – not "make" or "do".

### Exercises

**44.1** Complete each sentence with a verb: *hold, release, play, give, top, form, take*.

- The gallery will \_\_\_\_\_ an exhibition of modern sculpture next month.
- Their latest album is expected to \_\_\_\_\_ the charts.
- She will \_\_\_\_\_ the leading role in the new production.
- The audience stood up to \_\_\_\_\_ a standing ovation.
- The studio plans to \_\_\_\_\_ the new album in June.
- They \_\_\_\_\_ a band when they were teenagers.
- The headline act will \_\_\_\_\_ the stage at ten o'clock.

**44.2** Choose the correct collocation in each pair.

- The painting is widely seen as a true (work / piece) of art.
- The band loves to play (live / alive) in front of a crowd.
- The comedian performed to a (packed / full-up) audience.
- The orchestra gave a wonderful (live / living) performance.
- The drama club (puts on / makes) a show every summer.
- He spent years (creating / building) his masterpiece.
- It took her months to (write / make) the song.

PART E

# Style, register and idiom

*Choosing collocations that fit the moment — academic essay or quick chat, formal email or vivid idiom — and avoiding the classic mistakes.*

UNITS 45–52

## 45 Collocations in academic writing

Academic writing relies on a fairly fixed set of verb–noun and adjective–noun partnerships. Using them correctly makes your writing sound objective, precise and credible. This unit looks at the building blocks you need for essays, reports and dissertations.

### A Carrying out research

When you describe research, you do not “make” or “do” a study — you **conduct a study** or **carry out research**. You then **collect data**, **analyse the results** and **draw conclusions**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
conduct a study	The team <b>conducted a study</b> involving 400 participants.
carry out research	Researchers <b>carried out research</b> across twelve countries.
collect data	We <b>collected data</b> over a six-month period.
analyse the results	The authors <b>analysed the results</b> using regression models.
draw conclusions	It is too early to <b>draw firm conclusions</b> from one trial.

### B Supporting your claims

Good academic writing is cautious. You rarely “prove” things; instead you **provide evidence**, **support a claim** or **make a case** for an idea.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
provide evidence	The data <b>provide strong evidence</b> for the theory.
support a claim	Few studies <b>support this claim</b> directly.
play a significant role	Diet <b>plays a significant role</b> in long-term health.
a growing body of research	<b>A growing body of research</b> links sleep to memory.
raise questions	These findings <b>raise important questions</b> about the model.

### C Comparing and defining

You often need to **draw a distinction** between ideas, **make a comparison**, or **take a different approach**. These verbs are fixed: we say *draw* a distinction, not “make” one.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
draw a distinction	The author <b>draws a clear distinction</b> between cause and correlation.
make a comparison	It is useful to <b>make a comparison</b> with earlier work.
take an approach	This paper <b>takes a qualitative approach</b> to the problem.
address an issue	The review <b>addresses a key issue</b> in the field.
shed light on	The experiment <b>sheds light on</b> an old debate.

**Tip:** Academic verbs are usually more formal than their everyday equivalents: prefer *conduct* over *do*, *provide* over *give*, and *demonstrate* over *show*. Match the verb to the register of your field.

### Exercises

**45.1** Complete each sentence with the correct verb: *conduct, provide, draw, play, carry, raise*.

- The university \_\_\_\_\_ out research into renewable energy.
- Her results \_\_\_\_\_ convincing evidence for the hypothesis.
- We must \_\_\_\_\_ a distinction between belief and fact.
- Education \_\_\_\_\_ a significant role in social mobility.
- They \_\_\_\_\_ a large-scale study last year.
- These findings \_\_\_\_\_ several new questions.

**45.2** Replace the underlined everyday word with a more academic collocation partner.

- The scientists did a study on sleep patterns.
- There is a growing amount of research on this topic.
- The author makes a distinction between the two terms.
- The data give evidence for a clear trend.
- We need to get data from more participants.
- Climate change has a significant role in migration.

## 46 Linking and signposting phrases

Signposting phrases guide your reader through a text: they signal contrast, cause, sequence and emphasis. Most are fixed

chunks, so learning them as whole units helps you write clearly and connect your ideas smoothly.

### A Showing contrast

To set one idea against another, use phrases such as **in contrast**, **on the other hand** or **that said**. These usually open a sentence and are followed by a comma.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
in contrast	Sales rose in Europe. <b>In contrast</b> , they fell in Asia.
on the one hand	<b>On the one hand</b> , the plan is cheap; on the other, it is risky.
on the other hand	The film is long; <b>on the other hand</b> , it never feels slow.
that said	The results are weak. <b>That said</b> , the method is sound.

### B Cause and result

To show that one thing leads to another, use **as a result**, **for this reason** or **due to**. Keep them at the start of the clause they explain.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
as a result	Costs rose sharply. <b>As a result</b> , prices went up.
for this reason	<b>For this reason</b> , the project was delayed.
due to	The flight was cancelled <b>due to</b> bad weather.
with regard to	<b>With regard to</b> funding, no decision has been made.

### C Adding emphasis and detail

To highlight a point or add information, use **it is worth noting**, **in particular** or **more importantly**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
it is worth noting	<b>It is worth noting</b> that the sample was small.
in particular	Some users, <b>in particular</b> beginners, struggled.
more importantly	It is cheaper and, <b>more importantly</b> , safer.

### D Sequencing and concluding

To order your points and finish, use **to begin with**, **in addition** and **to sum up**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
to begin with	<b>To begin with</b> , the budget is too low.
in addition	<b>In addition</b> , staff need more training.
to sum up	<b>To sum up</b> , the policy worked but cost too much.

**Tip:** Don't overload a paragraph with linkers. One clear signpost per idea is enough; a string of them (*Firstly... Moreover... Furthermore... In conclusion...*) can make writing feel mechanical.

#### Exercises

**46.1** Choose the best phrase to complete each sentence: *as a result*, *in contrast*, *to sum up*, *it is worth noting*, *with regard to*, *on the other hand*.

- \_\_\_\_\_ the budget, we are still waiting for approval.
- The first option is fast; \_\_\_\_\_, it is expensive.
- Demand collapsed. \_\_\_\_\_, the factory closed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ that these figures are estimates only.
- \_\_\_\_\_, the plan is bold but achievable.
- Northern sales grew steadily. \_\_\_\_\_, southern sales fell.

**46.2** Each phrase has one wrong word. Correct it.

- in a result
- on the one side
- with regards to
- to sum it
- it is worth to note
- by contrast to this point (make it the two-word linker)

## 47 Formal and informal collocations

Many ideas can be expressed in two registers: a formal one for official letters, reports and academic work, and an informal one for everyday conversation, texts and emails to friends. Knowing both — and choosing the right one — is a key part of sounding natural and appropriate.

## A Requests and transactions

Formal English often replaces simple verbs (*get, ask, buy*) with heavier Latin-based ones (*obtain, request, purchase*). Compare **purchase a ticket** with **get a ticket**.

FORMAL	INFORMAL
purchase a ticket	get a ticket
request assistance	ask for help
obtain permission	get the OK
require further information	need to know more
submit an application	send in a form

## B Talking and informing

Formal writing prefers **inform someone** and **apologise for**, while speech uses **tell someone** and **say sorry**.

FORMAL	INFORMAL
inform someone	tell someone
apologise for the delay	say sorry for being late
raise a concern	mention a worry
provide details	give the facts
express gratitude	say thanks

## C Actions and decisions

In reports we **reach a decision** and **commence work**; in conversation we **make up our minds** and **get started**.

FORMAL	INFORMAL
reach a decision	make up your mind
commence work	get started
resolve an issue	sort something out
terminate a contract	end a deal
postpone a meeting	put off a meeting

**Tip:** Phrasal verbs (*sort out, put off, get started*) tend to be informal, while their single-word equivalents (*resolve, postpone, commence*) are formal. When in doubt, the single Latin-based verb is usually safer in writing.

## Exercises

**47.1** Rewrite each informal phrase in a more formal register.

1. We need to ask for help with the report.
2. Can you tell the team about the change?
3. They had to put off the meeting.
4. I'd like to get a ticket for Friday.
5. Please send in your application by Monday.
6. We finally made up our minds.

**47.2** The following come from a text message and are too formal. Make each one informal.

1. I must apologise for the delay.
2. Could you provide details of the venue?
3. We should commence work soon.
4. I wish to express my gratitude.
5. Let's resolve this issue tonight.
6. I need to obtain permission first.

## 48 Spoken English: conversational chunks

*Natural speech is full of short, ready-made chunks that soften what we say, buy thinking time or check that the listener is following. They rarely appear in formal writing, but using them makes your spoken English sound fluent and relaxed.*

### A Being honest and direct

To introduce a frank opinion, speakers use **to be honest** or **to tell you the truth**. These signal that something candid is coming.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
to be honest	<b>To be honest</b> , I didn't enjoy the film.
to tell you the truth	<b>To tell you the truth</b> , I'd forgotten all about it.
if I'm honest	I was nervous, <b>if I'm honest</b> .
fair enough	"I'd rather stay in." <b>"Fair enough."</b>

### B Softening and hedging

To avoid sounding too blunt, speakers add vague chunks like **sort of**, **kind of** or **or something**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
sort of	It was <b>sort of</b> blue, more like turquoise.
kind of	I'm <b>kind of</b> tired today.
or something	Let's grab a coffee <b>or something</b> .
mind you	He's late again. <b>Mind you</b> , the traffic was awful.

### C Checking and agreeing

To check understanding or react to what someone says, use **you know what I mean**, **have a point** or **I see what you mean**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
you know what I mean	It's a bit much, <b>you know what I mean?</b>
have a point	"It's too risky." "You <b>have a point.</b> "
I see what you mean	<b>I see what you mean</b> , but I still disagree.
that's a good point	<b>That's a good point</b> — I hadn't thought of that.

**Tip:** These chunks are great for speaking but look out of place in formal essays or official emails. In a job interview, use them sparingly — a little *to be honest* sounds natural, but too much *sort of* and *kind of* can seem hesitant.

#### Exercises

**48.1** Choose the chunk that fits each situation: *to be honest*, *fair enough*, *have a point*, *mind you*, *sort of*, *you know what I mean*.

- "I can't come tonight, I'm too tired." "\_\_\_\_\_."
- \_\_\_\_\_, I never really liked that job.
- The colour is \_\_\_\_\_ green, but not quite.
- You \_\_\_\_\_ — we probably can't afford it.
- It just feels wrong somehow, \_\_\_\_\_?
- The hotel was tiny. \_\_\_\_\_, it was very cheap.

**48.2** Match each chunk (1–6) with its function (a–f).

- to be honest
- sort of
- fair enough
- have a point
- mind you
- you know what I mean

**Functions:** a) softening/being vague    b) introducing a frank opinion    c) accepting what someone says    d) admitting the other person is partly right    e) adding a contrasting afterthought    f) checking the listener follows you

*courteous without sounding stiff. This unit covers the chunks you will meet most often at work.*

### A Opening and attaching

At the start of an email you often refer to an attachment or a previous message. Use **please find attached** and **further to our conversation**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
please find attached	<b>Please find attached</b> the revised proposal.
further to our conversation	<b>Further to our conversation</b> , here are the figures.
I am writing to	<b>I am writing to</b> confirm the details below.
as discussed	<b>As discussed</b> , I've booked the room for 3pm.

### B Taking action and following up

To promise action, use **look into the matter**, **get back to you** or **touch base**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
look into the matter	I'll <b>look into the matter</b> and update you shortly.
get back to you	I'll <b>get back to you</b> by the end of the day.
touch base	Let's <b>touch base</b> next week about the launch.
set up a call	Shall we <b>set up a call</b> to discuss the budget?
keep you posted	I'll <b>keep you posted</b> on any changes.

### C Looking ahead and closing

To talk about the future and sign off politely, use **going forward**, **in due course** and **do not hesitate to contact me**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
going forward	<b>Going forward</b> , we'll send weekly reports.
in due course	We will confirm the date <b>in due course</b> .
do not hesitate to contact me	<b>Do not hesitate to contact me</b> if you have questions.
look forward to hearing from hearing from you	<b>I look forward to hearing from you.</b>

**Tip:** Some of these are quite informal (*touch base*, *keep you posted*, *going forward*) and suit colleagues you know well; others (*in due course*, *do not hesitate to contact me*) are formal and suit clients or first contact. Read the room before choosing.

## 49 Business English and professional email

*Professional emails and meetings rely on a small core of polite, semi-fixed phrases. They keep your message clear and*

## Exercises

**49.1** Complete the email phrases with the missing word.

1. Please find \_\_\_\_\_ the agenda for Monday.
2. I'll look \_\_\_\_\_ the matter and reply soon.
3. Let's set \_\_\_\_\_ a call for Thursday.
4. I'll get \_\_\_\_\_ to you with the numbers.
5. Going \_\_\_\_\_, we'll meet monthly.
6. Do not \_\_\_\_\_ to contact me with questions.

**49.2** Choose the most suitable phrase to finish each email sentence.

1. I've sent the file. I'll \_\_\_\_\_ (keep you posted / look into) on progress.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ (As discussed / In due course), I've attached the contract.
3. We should \_\_\_\_\_ (touch base / get back) next week about the plan.
4. I \_\_\_\_\_ (look forward to / find attached) hearing from you.
5. We'll confirm the venue \_\_\_\_\_ (going forward / in due course).
6. I'm writing to \_\_\_\_\_ (set up / look into) a call for Friday.

## 50 Collocations built on metaphors

Many everyday collocations are quietly metaphorical: we speak of ideas as objects we can grasp, of arguments as fire, and of feelings as floods. Recognising the picture behind a phrase helps you remember which words go together and use them naturally.

### A Heat and temperature

Strong feelings and conflict are often described as hot, while calm or unfriendly things are cold. So we have a **heated debate** and a **warm welcome**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
a heated debate	The proposal sparked a <b>heated debate</b> in parliament.
a warm welcome	The new staff were given a <b>warm welcome</b> .
a frosty reception	His idea met with a <b>frosty reception</b> .
blow off steam	She went for a run to <b>blow off steam</b> .

### B Light and brightness

Hope and intelligence are linked to light: a hopeful future is a **bright future**, and a clever person is bright.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
a bright future	The young pianist has a <b>bright future</b> ahead.
a bright idea	Whose <b>bright idea</b> was it to leave early?
cast light on	The report <b>casts light on</b> a hidden problem.
a glimmer of hope	The talks offered a <b>glimmer of hope</b> .

### C Weighing and grasping

We treat thoughts as physical objects: we **weigh up the options** and **grasp an idea** as if holding it in our hands.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
weigh up the options	Take time to <b>weigh up the options</b> before deciding.
grasp an idea	It took me a while to <b>grasp the idea</b> .
grapple with a problem	Scientists are still <b>grappling with the problem</b> .
juggle responsibilities	She has to <b>juggle several responsibilities</b> at once.

### D Water and flow

Large quantities are often described as water: a **flood of complaints**, a **stream of visitors**, a **wave of support**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
a flood of complaints	The change brought a <b>flood of complaints</b> .
a stream of visitors	There was a <b>steady stream of visitors</b> all day.
a wave of support	The campaign sparked a <b>wave of support</b> .
pour money into	The city <b>poured money into</b> the stadium.

**Tip:** When you learn a metaphorical collocation, picture the image behind it. "A *flood* of complaints" sticks in the memory better than a dry list, and the image tells you that "a *flood*" means a large, sudden amount.

## Exercises

**50.1** Complete each collocation with a metaphor word: *heated, bright, weigh, flood, grasp, frosty*.

- The meeting turned into a \_\_\_\_\_ debate.
- She quickly \_\_\_\_\_ed the main idea.
- We need to \_\_\_\_\_ up the options carefully.
- The decision caused a \_\_\_\_\_ of complaints.
- The talented student has a \_\_\_\_\_ future.
- His suggestion got a \_\_\_\_\_ reception.

**50.2** Match the metaphor word (1–6) with the noun it collocates with (a–f).

- a glimmer of
- a wave of
- blow off
- juggle
- pour money
- a stream of

*Nouns:* a) support b) hope c) visitors d) steam e) into a project f) responsibilities

## 51 Idiomatic and fixed expressions

*Idioms are fixed phrases whose meaning cannot be guessed from the individual words. You cannot change the words inside them, so they must be learned as whole units. Used well, they make your English sound natural; used wrongly, they stand out. This unit introduces some of the most common.*

### A Social situations

Some idioms describe how people interact. To **break the ice** is to ease the tension when people first meet.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
break the ice	A quick game helped <b>break the ice</b> at the party.
see eye to eye	The partners don't always <b>see eye to eye</b> .
get on like a house on fire	The two of them <b>got on like a house on fire</b> .
clear the air	We had a frank talk to <b>clear the air</b> .

### B Easy, hard and rare

Idioms often comment on difficulty or frequency. Something very easy is **a piece of cake**; something rare happens **once in a blue moon**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
a piece of cake	The exam was <b>a piece of cake</b> .
once in a blue moon	We eat out <b>once in a blue moon</b> .
easier said than done	Saving money is <b>easier said than done</b> .
a tough nut to crack	That client is <b>a tough nut to crack</b> .

### C Being right and getting to the point

When someone is exactly right, they **hit the nail on the head**. The key fact in a discussion is **the bottom line**.

COLLOCATION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
hit the nail on the head	You've <b>hit the nail on the head</b> — that's the real issue.
the bottom line	<b>The bottom line</b> is that we're out of money.
cut to the chase	Let's <b>cut to the chase</b> and discuss the price.
get the wrong end of the stick	Sorry, I <b>got the wrong end of the stick</b> .

**Tip:** Idioms are fixed — you cannot say “a slice of cake” for something easy, or “hit the nail on the top”. Change one word and the idiom breaks. Learn the exact form, and remember most idioms are informal, so avoid them in formal writing.

## Exercises

**51.1** Complete each idiom with the missing word.

- The test was a piece of \_\_\_\_\_.
- We only meet once in a blue \_\_\_\_\_.
- You've hit the nail on the \_\_\_\_\_.
- Someone needs to break the \_\_\_\_\_.
- The bottom \_\_\_\_\_ is that we can't afford it.
- Let's cut to the \_\_\_\_\_.

**51.2** Choose the idiom that best replaces the phrase in brackets.

- That problem is (very difficult to solve). [a tough nut to crack / a piece of cake]
- They (became friends instantly). [saw eye to eye / got on like a house on fire]
- You (understood it wrongly). [got the wrong end of the stick / hit the nail on the head]
- Quitting is (harder than it sounds). [easier said than done / once in a blue moon]
- We talked to (resolve the tension). [clear the air / break the ice]
- They rarely (agree). [see eye to eye / cut to the chase]

## 52 Common collocation mistakes to avoid

Some collocation errors are extremely common among learners because the "wrong" version follows a logical pattern or matches the learner's own language. This final unit gathers the classic traps so you can spot and correct them in your own writing and speech.

### A Do or make?

We **make a decision** and **make a mistake**, but **do homework** and **do research**. Broadly, *make* suggests creating something, while *do* suggests an activity or task.

DON'T SAY	SAY
do a mistake	I always <b>make a mistake</b> with this word.
make your homework	Did you <b>do your homework</b> ?
do a decision	We need to <b>make a decision</b> today.
make a research	They <b>did some research</b> on the topic.
do an effort	Please <b>make an effort</b> to be on time.

### B Say or tell?

We **tell someone something** (with a person), but **say something** (no person needed). You *tell* a person; you *say* words.

DON'T SAY	SAY
say me the answer	Can you <b>tell me the answer</b> ?
he told that he was tired	He <b>said that he was tired</b> .
tell the truth to nobody (=keep it secret; use as positive form)	Always <b>tell the truth</b> .
say a story	She <b>told a story</b> to the children.
tell hello	He <b>said hello</b> and left.

### C Wrong prepositions

Prepositions in collocations are fixed and rarely translate directly. We are **interested in** something and **good at** something.

DON'T SAY	SAY
interested on music	She's <b>interested in</b> music.
good in maths	He's <b>good at</b> maths.
depend of the weather	It <b>depends on</b> the weather.
married with someone	She's <b>married to</b> a teacher.
arrive to a place	We <b>arrived at</b> the station late.

### D False intensifiers

Some adjectives are already extreme, so we don't add *very*. Use **absolutely delicious**, not "very delicious".

DON'T SAY	SAY
very delicious	The meal was <b>absolutely delicious</b> .
very excellent	Her work is <b>truly excellent</b> .
very huge	The crowd was <b>absolutely huge</b> .
very perfect	The timing was <b>just perfect</b> .

**Tip:** When you meet a new collocation, note the exact partner words and any preposition together (*good at, depend on*). Storing them as one chunk is far more reliable than translating word by word from your first language.

**Exercises**

**52.1** Correct the collocation mistake in each sentence.

1. I think you did a mistake on page two.
2. Have you made your homework yet?
3. She is very interested on history.
4. Can you say me what happened?
5. The cake was very delicious.
6. It depends of how much it costs.

**52.2** Choose the correct word in each pair.

1. We need to (make / do) a decision soon.
2. He (said / told) me a funny story.
3. She's really (good in / good at) drawing.
4. They (arrived to / arrived at) the airport early.
5. The view was (very / absolutely) stunning.
6. Please (make / do) an effort to listen.

# Answer key

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Where a task asks you to write your own sentences, sample answers are given; other natural answers may also be correct.

## Unit 1 · What is a collocation?

1.1 1 heavy rain 2 make a mistake 3 a quick decision 4 highly likely 5 a warm welcome 6 take a photo

1.2 1 OK 2 X → make a mistake 3 OK 4 X → a quick decision 5 OK 6 X → a warm welcome

## Unit 2 · Types of collocation

2.1 1 G 2 L 3 G 4 L 5 G 6 L

2.2 1 S 2 W 3 S 4 W 5 S 6 W

## Unit 3 · How to learn collocations

3.1 1 make 2 take 3 give 4 catch 5 hold 6 make

3.2 Sample answers: 1 make a mistake 2 interested in 3 heavy traffic 4 strongly recommend 5 heavy rain 6 make a decision

## Unit 4 · Using this book and a collocations dictionary

4.1 1 Part C 2 Part D 3 Part B 4 Part E 5 Part A 6 Part E

4.2 Suggested order: 1 Choose a unit 2 Read the explanation sections 3 Do the exercises 4 Check your answers in the key 5 Note down the collocations you got wrong 6 Use five new collocations in your own sentences

## Unit 5 · Verb + preposition

5.1 1 on 2 for 3 to 4 on 5 about 6 of 7 on 8 for

5.2 1 rely *on* me 2 deal *with* your refund 3 discuss the new schedule (no *about*) 4 correct 5 agree *with* you 6 applied *for* a scholarship 7 reminds me *of* our trip 8 worry *about* the results

## Unit 6 · Adjective + preposition

6.1 1 at 2 of 3 on 4 from 5 about 6 for 7 in 8 for

6.2 1 c 2 a 3 b 4 e 5 g 6 f 7 d

## Unit 7 · Noun + preposition

7.1 1 for 2 of 3 in 4 to 5 between 6 for 7 of 8 to (or towards)

7.2 1 reason 2 cause 3 fall 4 relationship 5 solution 6 need 7 effect 8 connection

## Unit 8 · Prepositional phrases

8.1 1 in 2 by 3 under 4 by 5 at 6 on 7 out 8 by

8.2 1 in time 2 on time 3 At first 4 at least 5 under control 6 out of date 7 in cash 8 In general

## Unit 9 · Verb patterns: -ing forms and to-infinitives

9.1 1 to book 2 waiting 3 meeting 4 to answer 5 eating 6 driving 7 to cancel 8 cleaning

9.2 1 look forward to *hearing* 2 offered *to help* 3 enjoy *walking* 4 correct 5 keep *arriving* 6 used to *getting up* 7 mind *opening* 8 suggested *taking*

## Unit 10 · Verbs with objects and that-clauses

10.1 1 of 2 of 3 about 4 for 5 with 6 – 7 – 8 –

10.2 1 told 2 said 3 tell 4 said 5 tell 6 tell 7 say 8 told

## Unit 11 · make and do

11.1 1 make 2 do 3 do 4 made 5 making 6 have done 7 making 8 do

11.2 1 make a mistake 2 did the housework 3 do my homework 4 make friends 5 make a suggestion 6 do a lot of research 7 (correct) make an appointment 8 do the washing-up

## Unit 12 · have and take

12.1 1 take 2 had 3 take 4 take / have 5 took 6 have 7 take 8 having

12.2 1 c 2 a 3 d 4 b 5 e 6 f

## Unit 13 · get and give

13.1 1 got 2 give 3 get 4 give 5 got 6 give 7 get 8 gave

13.2 1 giving 2 got 3 give 4 get 5 give 6 gives 7 get 8 give

## Unit 14 · go, come and keep

14.1 1 keep 2 went 3 gone 4 come 5 keep 6 came 7 keep 8 gone

14.2 1 come true (NOT become true) 2 went bankrupt 3 keeps her promises 4 keep an eye on 5 have gone missing 6 came as a surprise 7 came to an end 8 keep an eye on

## Unit 15 · Other common verbs: pay, save, spend, run, hold, break, catch

15.1 1 pay 2 save 3 run 4 hold 5 break 6 catch 7 spend 8 catch

15.2 1 broke a (new) world record 2 pay attention 3 runs a small bakery 4 pay a fine 5 hold an election 6 broke a promise 7 save you a lot of time 8 break the law

### Unit 16 · Strong adjective + noun collocations

16.1 1 heavy 2 strong 3 narrow 4 deep 5 heavy 6 key  
7 bitter 8 heavy

16.2 1 importance 2 deal 3 accent 4 factor 5 argument  
6 trouble 7 care 8 role

### Unit 17 · Intensifying adverb + adjective

17.1 1 highly 2 bitterly 3 deeply 4 utterly 5 fully 6  
perfectly 7 bitterly 8 highly

17.2 1 c 2 d 3 e 4 a 5 f 6 b 7 g 8 h

### Unit 18 · Verb + adverb collocations

18.1 1 strongly 2 flatly 3 sincerely 4 completely 5  
vaguely 6 badly 7 readily 8 deeply

18.2 1 hardly → strongly recommend 2 vaguely → flatly  
denied 3 deeply → completely forgot 4 flat → flatly  
refused 5 sincerely → badly need 6 vaguely → readily  
admits 7 completely → sincerely hope 8 readily →  
firmly believe

### Unit 19 · Noun + noun and compound collocations

19.1 1 c 2 a 3 e 4 g 5 b 6 d 7 f 8 h

19.2 1 climate change 2 traffic jam 3 job interview 4  
power cut 5 labour shortage 6 research project 7 phone  
signal 8 crime wave

### Unit 20 · Quantifying and partitive expressions

20.1 1 wide 2 deal 3 slight 4 growing 5 piece 6  
amount 7 heavy 8 handful

20.2 1 a very useful piece of advice (advice is uncountable)  
2 a piece of good news / some good news 3 furniture  
(not furnitures) 4 a slight chance (delete "possibility") 5 a  
great deal of time 6 a bit of luck (not lucks) 7 a wide  
range of toys 8 a small fraction of the money (delete  
"percent")

### Unit 21 · Work and careers

21.1 1 apply 2 meet 3 take 4 land 5 hand 6 climb

21.2 1 demanded → demanding 2 promote →  
promotion 3 vacant → vacancy 4 carrier → career 5  
below → under 6 since I made → since I was made  
(redundant)

### Unit 22 · Business and the workplace

22.1 1 launch 2 reached 3 hold 4 cut 5 boost 6 gain

22.2 1 c (make a decision) 2 d (raise an issue) 3 e (a  
thriving business) 4 b (run at a loss) 5 f (set the agenda) 6  
a (gain market share)

### Unit 23 · Money and personal finance

23.1 1 take 2 budget 3 meet 4 up 5 rates (or rate) 6 open

23.2 1 cut back on 2 run up 3 earn interest 4 in debt 5 put  
money aside 6 a tight budget

### Unit 24 · Education and studying

24.1 1 sit (or take) 2 take 3 do 4 meet 5 make 6 master

24.2 1 colours 2 curve 3 knowledge 4 attention 5 exam 6  
question

### Unit 25 · Shopping and consumerism

25.1 1 value 2 on 3 buy 4 refund 5 bargain 6 keep

25.2 1 make → do (do the shopping) 2 of → for (value for  
money) 3 change → exchange 4 order → offer (on special  
offer) 5 win → get (get a refund) 6 correct (no error)

### Unit 26 · Health and illness

26.1 1 catch 2 came 3 take 4 running 5 made 6 fell 7  
pick

26.2 1 a splitting headache 2 side effects 3 under the  
weather 4 prescribe 5 get over 6 blocked nose 7 dizzy

### Unit 27 · The body and physical movement

27.1 1 eyebrows 2 fists 3 hands 4 head 5 legs 6 breath 7  
shoulders

27.2 1 took a deep breath 2 stretch our legs 3 raised her  
eyebrows 4 shook hands 5 clenched his fists 6 shrugged  
his shoulders 7 held their breath

### Unit 28 · Travel and transport

28.1 1 miss 2 got 3 board 4 hit 5 change 6 missed 7 take

28.2 1 heavy 2 connecting 3 delayed 4 get 5 check 6  
pulled over 7 through

### Unit 29 · Holidays and tourism

29.1 1 sightseeing 2 package 3 sun 4 guided 5 track 6  
insurance 7 checked

29.2 1 backpacking 2 book 3 city break 4 try 5 guided 6  
self-catering 7 packed

### Unit 30 · Food, cooking and eating out

30.1 1 bite 2 balanced 3 out 4 off 5 bill 6 slap-up 7 tip

30.2 1 skipped breakfast 2 cut down on sugar 3 has gone  
stale 4 book a table 5 do the washing-up 6 prepared a  
meal 7 follow the recipe

### Unit 31 · Relationships and family

31.1 1 settle down 2 start a family 3 get on well with 4  
close-knit family 5 drift apart 6 fall in love

31.2 1 common 2 married 3 apart 4 raise 5 keep 6  
build

### Unit 32 · Feelings and emotions

32.1 1 breathed 2 calm down 3 lost 4 burst 5 feel 6  
have

32.2 1 c 2 d 3 a 4 e 5 f 6 b

### Unit 33 · Personality and character

33.1 1 has 2 is 3 has 4 is 5 have 6 be

33.2 1 set in his ways 2 down to earth 3 a quick temper  
4 a heart of gold 5 a sharp mind 6 a positive attitude

### Unit 34 · Communication and conversation

34.1 1 end 2 chat 3 heated 4 mind 5 break 6 point

34.2 1 b 2 a 3 a 4 a 5 b 6 a

### Unit 35 · Technology and the internet

35.1 1 back up your files 2 went viral 3 download an app  
4 losing connection 5 strong signal 6 charge your phone

35.2 1 download → install (install an update) 2 join →  
connect (connect to the Wi-Fi) 3 make up → back up  
(back up your files) 4 flow → stream (stream a video) 5  
put on → turn on (turn on airplane mode) 6 surf →  
browse (browse the web)

### Unit 36 · Media, news and entertainment

36.1 1 news; 2 cover; 3 air; 4 time; 5 office; 6 broke; 7  
studded; 8 release

36.2 1 prime time; 2 covered; 3 star; 4 goes; 5 run; 6 hit; 7  
repeat; 8 bulletin

### Unit 37 · The environment and nature

37.1 1 c (reduce emissions); 2 a (conserve resources); 3 e  
(tackle pollution); 4 f (protect wildlife); 5 b (save energy); 6  
d (preserve the environment)

37.2 1 footprint; 2 renewable; 3 endangered; 4 climate; 5  
gases; 6 fuels; 7 threat; 8 energy

### Unit 38 · Crime and the law

38.1 1 crime; 2 law; 3 sentence; 4 charges; 5 trial; 6 verdict;  
7 fine; 8 guilty

38.2 1 law; 2 press; 3 verdict; 4 fine; 5 stand; 6 gather; 7  
serving; 8 arrest

### Unit 39 · Politics and society

39.1 1 hold; 2 win; 3 pass; 4 raise; 5 tackle; 6 cast

39.2 1 election; 2 majority; 3 pass; 4 awareness; 5 tackle; 6  
opinion; 7 form; 8 change

### Unit 40 · Science and research

40.1 1 carry out / do research; 2 conduct an experiment; 3  
draw a conclusion; 4 make a discovery; 5 test a hypothesis;  
6 gather data

40.2 1 out; 2 hypothesis; 3 gather; 4 conclusion; 5  
discovery; 6 conduct; 7 publish; 8 collect

### Unit 41 · Sport and fitness

41.1 1 get; 2 warm; 3 build; 4 beat; 5 pull; 6 scored; 7 take

41.2 1 cool down; 2 keen; 3 stay; 4 won; 5 work; 6 burn; 7  
out of breath

### Unit 42 · Time, routines and schedules

42.1 1 save; 2 set; 3 ran; 4 meet; 5 kill; 6 have; 7 stick

42.2 1 schedule; 2 basis; 3 schedule; 4 time; 5 morning; 6  
routine; 7 time

### Unit 43 · Weather and the seasons

43.1 1 heavy; 2 biting; 3 heat; 4 freezing; 5 beating; 6  
scattered; 7 hard

43.2 1 sunshine; 2 snow; 3 fog; 4 downpour; 5 breeze; 6  
drizzle

### Unit 44 · Art, music and culture

44.1 1 hold; 2 top; 3 play; 4 give; 5 release; 6 formed; 7 take

44.2 1 work; 2 live; 3 packed; 4 live; 5 puts on; 6 creating; 7  
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### Unit 45 · Collocations in academic writing

45.1 1 carried 2 provide 3 draw 4 plays 5 conducted 6  
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45.2 1 conducted a study 2 a growing body of research 3  
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### Unit 46 · Linking and signposting phrases

46.1 1 With regard to 2 on the other hand 3 As a result 4  
It is worth noting 5 To sum up 6 In contrast

46.2 1 as a result 2 on the one hand 3 with regard to 4 to  
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### Unit 47 · Formal and informal collocations

47.1 1 We need to request assistance with the report. 2  
Can you inform the team about the change? 3 They had  
to postpone the meeting. 4 I'd like to purchase a ticket for  
Friday. 5 Please submit your application by Monday. 6  
We finally reached a decision.

47.2 1 I'm so sorry I'm late. 2 Could you give me the  
details of the venue? 3 We should get started soon. 4  
Thanks so much. / I just want to say thanks. 5 Let's sort  
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### Unit 48 · Spoken English: conversational chunks

48.1 1 Fair enough 2 To be honest 3 sort of 4 have a  
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48.2 1 b 2 a 3 c 4 d 5 e 6 f

### Unit 49 · Business English and professional email

49.1 1 attached 2 into 3 up 4 back 5 forward 6 hesitate

49.2 1 keep you posted 2 As discussed 3 touch base 4  
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### Unit 50 · Collocations built on metaphors

50.1 1 heated 2 grasp 3 weigh 4 flood 5 bright 6 frosty

50.2 1 b 2 a 3 d 4 f 5 e 6 c

**Unit 51 · Idiomatic and fixed expressions**

51.1 1 cake 2 moon 3 head 4 ice 5 line 6 chase

51.2 1 a tough nut to crack 2 got on like a house on fire 3  
got the wrong end of the stick 4 easier said than done 5  
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**Unit 52 · Common collocation mistakes to avoid**

52.1 1 made a mistake 2 done your homework 3  
interested in history 4 tell me what happened 5  
absolutely delicious 6 depends on how much it costs

52.2 1 make 2 told 3 good at 4 arrived at 5 absolutely  
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Numbers refer to units, not pages.

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