

Chores & Errands

Difficulty Level: ★ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆

English collocations are words that naturally go well together. Native English speakers always use collocations, especially when discussing chores, errands, or housework in general.

Below you will find a collection of useful daily life collocations. While other verbs will work with the examples. These are the most common natural word pairs.

Chores are jobs around the house that you do on a regular basis. For example, washing the dishes. Errands are small jobs you have to do in order to deliver or collect something. For instance, going to the pharmacy to pick up a prescription, or stopping at the variety store for some milk.

Clean

Clean is your verb of choice if you do not know the appropriate collocation. However, there are much better suited verbs to describe daily tasks.

I have to clean the dishes.

Did you finish cleaning the laundry?

Did you clean the table?

Do

Use "do" for laundry, dishes, and housework in general.

I can't go out until I do the dishes.

Did you do the laundry?

Did you start doing the housework?

Wipe, Scrub, Sweep, & Mop

We use "wipe" for gently cleaning something like a table with spilt juice. We use "scrub" when we need to use more force and effort to remove dirt. For example, scrubbing the bathtub or scrubbing the pots and pans. We use "sweep" and "mop" when we talk about cleaning the floors.

Can you wipe the table before I set it?

I hate scrubbing toilets!

Hurry up and sweep the floor because it takes a long time for it to dry after mopping.

Empty/Load, Set/Clear, Vacuum & Iron

Use "empty" and "load" when we are talking about taking the dishes out or putting the dishes in. Use "vacuum" when we are vacuuming (vacuum can be both a noun and a verb). Use "set" when we are putting the dishes and cutlery on the table, and use "iron" when we are ironing our clothes after we take them out of the dryer.

Did you empty the dishwasher? I have to load it with more dirty dishes.

Where's the vacuum. I need to vacuum before the guests arrive.

Can you set the table? I'll clear it after dinner.

Errands

We often use the phrase "stop by ____" or "swing by ____" followed by the phrase "to pick up ____." when we talk about errands in our daily lives. Here are some examples included below.

I need to swing by the pharmacist to pick up Dan's prescription.

We should swing by the gas station to fill up.

Can you run an errand for me? I need you to swing by the office and pick up a package before 3 pm.

Tips:

- 1.) Children in Western society often do daily chores and are given an allowance, usually paid weekly. Koreans use the term "pocket money" instead.
- 2.) Rake, mop, and vacuum can act as both a noun and a verb. Therefore, "I need the vacuum." and "I need to vacuum." make complete sense and mean very different things."

Questions:

- 1.) Who does what chores in your family? Try to use the correct verb for the chore.
- 2.) What chores do you **despise** doing? Why?
- 3.) Do men and women have different chores in the household? What are considered manly/**masculine** chores? What are considered girly/**feminine** chores?
- 4.) Do you find any chores **therapeutic**?
- 5.) Did you receive a weekly or monthly **allowance** growing up?
- 6.) When do you complete most of your errands?
- 7.) How much time of your day goes towards housekeeping?
- 8.) Have you ever hired a housekeeper?
- 9.) Do you use any products to **sterilize** your living space?
- 10.) How would you describe your room: filthy, dirty, messy, neat, clean, or **spotless**?

Quiz

- 1.) Dinner was delicious! Can you help me _____ the table and _____ the dishwasher please?
- 2.) Dinner is almost ready could you please _____ the table?
- 3.) Can you _____ the grocery store and _____ some milk please?
- 4.) Did you _____ the laundry?
- 5.) I need you to _____ the bathtub really well. Its filthy!
- 6.) Have you seen the _____ and bucket? I need to _____ the floor.
- 7.) The dishwasher is broken. Could you please _____ the dishes by hand?
- 8.) The dishwasher is fixed. Could you please _____ the dirty dishes into the dishwasher.
- 9.) Did you remember to _____ the post office and _____ the package?
- 10.) You did a great job cleaning the bathtub. It looks _____.

Synonym Match:

Match the words from column 1 with the corresponding synonym in column 2.

Column 1	Column 2
1.) filthy	a.) opposite of neat
2.) messy	b.) very wet
3.) scrub	c.) slightly wet
4.) soaked	d.) remove wrinkles

Column 1	Column 2
5.) damp	e.) pocket money
6.) iron	f.) really dirty
7.) allowance	g.) go somewhere briefly
8.) stop by	h.) machines that help
9.) appliances	i.) a chore outside of home
10.) errand	j.) using lots of power

Vocabulary:

- **Despise:** Something you really dislike. "I absolutely despise Barrack Obama."
- **Masculine:** Having qualities or appearance traditionally associated with men. "Construction workers are really masculine."
- **Feminine:** Having qualities or appearance traditionally associated with women. "Flight attendants are very graceful and feminine."
- **Therapeutic:** Something that heals you or you find beneficial to your health. "Raking the leaves in the fall is very therapeutic."
- **Allowance:** An allowance is an amount of money given usually at regular intervals for a specific purpose. "My monthly allowance is \$200."
- **Sterilize/Sanitize:** To make free from live bacteria or other microorganisms. "Working in the food industry we have to make certain everything is always sterilized."
- **Spotless:** Absolutely clean. Free from any dirt. "Her house is always spotless."

Daily Expressions & Idioms:

1.) "Touch up": To quickly make something neat and appear clean.
(Women also use this expression when they are reapplying their makeup. "I'll be right back I'm just going to touch up my makeup. ")

"I'm expecting a visitor can you please put away your papers and touch up the living room."

2.) "Out of": When something you have is empty or no longer available.

"We are all out of salad dressing. Could you please swing by the grocery store and pick up some caesar salad."