

35 Relationships

A Types of relationships

Here is a scale showing closeness and distance in relationships in different contexts.

	CLOSER ←	→ MORE DISTANT
<i>friendship:</i>	best friend	good friend friend acquaintance
<i>work:</i>	close colleague	colleague/workmate
<i>love/romance:</i>	lover	steady boy/girlfriend ex-*
<i>marriage:</i>	wife/husband/partner	ex-*

* ex- can be used with or without (informally) another word: She's my ex. (girlfriend, etc.)

Mate is a colloquial word for a good friend. It can also be used in compounds to describe a person you share something with, e.g. classmate, shipmate, workmate, flatmate.

Workmate is usual in non-professional contexts; colleague is more common among professional people.

Fiancé/ée can still be used for someone you are engaged to, but a lot of people feel it is dated nowadays. You will sometimes see husband-/wife-to-be in journalistic style.

English has no universally accepted word for 'person I live with but am not married to', but partner is probably the commonest.

B Liking and not liking someone

core verb	positive	negative
like	love adore worship idolise	dislike hate can't stand loathe
respect	look up to admire	look down on despise
attract	turn s.b. on	repel turn s.b. off
be attracted to	fancy	

She doesn't just like Bob she idolises him! I can't stand him.

I really fancy Lisa, but her friend just turns me off.

Fancy and turn off are informal. Repel is very strong and rather formal.

C Phrases and idioms for relationships

Jo and I get on well with each other. [have a good relationship]

Adrian and Liz don't see eye to eye. [often argue/disagree]

I've fallen out with my parents again. [had arguments]

Tony and Jane have broken up / split up. [ended their relationship]

George is having an affair with his boss. [a sexual relationship, usually secret]

Children should respect their elders. [adults/parents, etc.]

Let's try and make it up. [be friends again after a row]

She's my junior / I'm her senior / I'm senior to her, so she does what she's told. [refers to position/length of service at work]

(See Unit 69 for more words relating to likes and dislikes.)

77 Binomials

Binomials are expressions (often idiomatic) where two words are joined by a conjunction (usually 'and'). The order of the words is usually fixed. It is best to use them only in informal situations, with one or two exceptions.

odds and ends: small, unimportant things, e.g. Let's get the main things packed; we can do the odds and ends later.

give and take: a spirit of compromise, e.g. Every relationship needs a bit of give and take to be successful.

You can often tell something is a binomial because of the sound pattern.

Tears are part and parcel of growing up. [part of / belong to]

The boss was ranting and raving at us. [shouting / very angry]

The old cottage has gone to rack and ruin. [ruined/decayed]

He's so prim and proper at work. [rather formal and fussy]

The hotel was a bit rough and ready. [poor standard]

She has to wine and dine important clients. [entertain]

B

Other times, the clue is that the words are near-synonyms.

You can pick and choose; it's up to you. [have a wide choice]

My English is progressing in leaps and bounds. [big jumps]

It's nice to have some peace and quiet. [peace/calm]

The doctor recommended some rest and recreation. [relaxation]

First and foremost, you must work hard. [first / most importantly]

Many grammar words combine to form binomials.

There are cafés here and there. [scattered round]

We've had meetings on and off. [occasionally]

I've been running back and forth all day. [to and from somewhere]

To and fro can be used just like back and forth.

He is unemployed and down and out. [without a home or money]

She's better now, and out and about again. [going out]

She ran up and down the street. [in both directions]

Your language probably has many binomials. Make sure those which look similar in English have the same word order as your language. These four are very neutral binomials and can be used in formal or informal situations. Try translating them.

A black and white film, please. Ladies and gentlemen, your attention, please!

She ran back and forth. There was hot and cold water in every room.

E

Binomials linked by words other than and.

You've got your sweater on back to front. [the wrong way]

He won't help her; she'll have to sink or swim. [survive or fail]

Slowly but surely, I realised the boat was sinking. [gradually]

Sooner or later, you'll learn your lesson. [some time/day]

She didn't want to be just friends; it had to be all or nothing.

Well I'm sorry, that's all I can offer you; take it or leave it.

It's about the same distance as from here to Dublin, give or take a few miles. [perhaps a mile or two more, or a mile or two less]

32 The weather

A Cold weather

In Scandinavia, the **chilly** (1) days of autumn soon change to the cold days of winter. The first **frosts** (2) arrive and the roads become icy. Rain becomes **sleet** (3) and then snow, at first turning to **slush** (4) in the streets, but soon **settling** (5), with severe **blizzards** (6) and **snowdrifts** (7) in the far north. Freezing weather often continues in the far north until May or even June, when the ground starts to **thaw** (8) and the ice **melts** (9) again.

(1) cold, but not very (2) thin white coat of ice on everything (3) rain and snow mixed (4) dirty, brownish, half-snow, half-water (5) staying as a white covering (6) snow blown by high winds (7) deep banks of snow against walls, etc. (8) change from hard, frozen state to normal (9) change from solid to liquid under heat

Warm/hot weather

close /kləʊs/ [warm and uncomfortable] **stifling** [hot, uncomfortable, you can hardly breathe] **humid** [hot and damp, makes you sweat a lot] **scorching** [very hot, often used in positive contexts] **boiling** [very hot, often used in negative contexts] **mild** [warm at a time when it is normally cold] *Note also:* We had a heatwave last month. [very hot, dry period]

Wet weather

This wet weather scale gets stronger from left to right.

damp → drizzle → pour down / downpour → torrential rain → flood

Autumn in London is usually chilly and damp with rain and drizzle.

It was absolutely pouring down. *or* There was a real downpour.

In the Tropics there is usually torrential rain most days, and the roads often get flooded.
or There are floods on the roads.

This rain won't last long; it's only a shower. [short duration]

The storm damaged several houses. [high winds and rain together]

We got very wet in the thunderstorm. [thunder and heavy rain]

Hailstones were battering the roof of our car. [small balls of ice falling from the sky].

Note also hail (uncountable).

The sky's a bit overcast; I think it's going to rain. [very cloudy]

We had a drought /draut/ last summer. It didn't rain for six weeks.

D Mist and fog

Nouns and adjectives: **haze/hazy** [light mist, usually caused by heat] **mist/misty** [light fog, often on the sea, or caused by drizzle] **fog/foggy** [quite thick, associated with cold weather] **smog** [mixture of fog and pollution (smoke + fog)]

E Wind

There was a gentle breeze on the beach, just enough to cool us.

There's a good wind today; fancy going sailing?

It's a very blustery day; the umbrella will just blow away.

There's been a gale warning; it would be crazy to go sailing.

People boarded up their windows when they heard there was a hurricane on the way.