

Essential Collocations for IELTS & TOEFL

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self study & classroom use

Essential Collocations for IELTS & TOEFL

A shortcut to developing fluency in
written and spoken English

Self-study and classroom use

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MA Graduates – Allameh Tabatabae'i University

2018
Arshadan Publications

سرشناسه	: حسینی زاده، سیده حمیده، ۱۳۶۴ - Hosseinizade, Seyyede Hamide
عنوان و نام پدیدآور	: Essential Collocations for IELTS & TOEFL: a shortcut to developing fluency in written and spoken English, Self-study and classroom use/ Seyedeh Hamideh Hosseinizadeh, Hojjat Rassaei Moqadam.
مشخصات نشر	: تهران: آموزشی تألیفی ارشدان، ۱۳۹۷ = ۱۸ م. ۲۰
مشخصات ظاهری	: ۱۶۱ ص.: مصور، جدول.
شابک	: ۹۷۸-۶۰۰-۹۹۵-۲۵۴-۰
وضعیت فهرست نویسی	: فیپا
یادداشت	: انگلیسی.
آوانویسی عنوان	: اسنشل...
موضوع	: زبان انگلیسی - واژگان - راهنمای آموزشی English language -- Vocabulary -- Study and teaching
موضوع	: با هم آبی (زبان شناسی) Collocation (Linguistics)
موضوع	: زبان انگلیسی - راهنمای آموزشی - خارجیان English language -- Study and teaching -- Foreign speakers
موضوع	: آزمون بین المللی زبان انگلیسی International English Language Testing System
شناسه افزوده	: رسایی مقدم، حجت، ۱۳۶۸ -
شناسه افزوده	: Rassaei Moqadam, Hojjat
رده بندی کنگره	: الف ۵۵/ح ۱۱۲۸/PE ۵۵ ۱۳۹۷
رده بندی دیویی	: ۴۲۸/۲۴
شماره کتابشناسی ملی	: ۵۳۸۷۵۲۸



مؤسسه آموزشی تألیفی ارشدان

Essential Collocations for IELTS & TOEFL

حمیده حسینی زاده - حجت رسایی مقدم

آموزشی تألیفی ارشدان

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۲۴۰۰۰ تومان

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■ تألیف:

■ ناشر:

■ ویرایش:

■ نوبت چاپ:

■ حروفچینی و صفحه آرایی:

■ طراح و گرافیک:

■ شابک:

■ شمارگان:

■ مرکز خرید آنلاین:

■ مرکز پخش و توزیع:

■ قیمت:

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To the student

What is a collocation?

Collocation refers to how words can be combined together in such a way that natural combinations of words are created. For example, in English language, “do harm” and “cause harm” are natural collocations, but the phrase “make harm” does not sound natural and correct to native speakers of English. In other words, the noun “harm” naturally collocates with “do” “or “cause”, and the verb “make” can never be used together with “harm”.

Are collocations important in such exams as IELTS and TOEFL?

Yes, they are. We strongly believe that if learners manage to use natural collocations in their speaking and writing in either the IELTS or the TOEFL, they will definitely be rewarded. If you do not believe us, just take a look at the IELTS public band descriptors for a band score of 7 in both writing and speaking under “Lexical Resource”:

Writing Task 2: “uses less common lexical items with some awareness of style and collocation”.

Speaking: “uses some less common and idiomatic vocabulary and shows some awareness of style and collocation, with some inappropriate choices”.

So it is obvious that if candidates wish to obtain a band score of 7 in this criterion (lexical resource), they will have to not only use less common words and expressions but also know what other words are frequently and naturally used together with these less common words. This will help candidates make their writing and speaking as natural as possible. Also, in the TOEFL test, fluency and coherence are evaluated under the criterion of “Language Use”. The use of appropriate collocations will make candidates’ word choice effective and their speaking and writing more fluent and coherent, thus improving their scores in “Language Use”.

How did we choose the collocations in this book?

The collocations provided in this book were all selected from 4 different valuable sources, namely *Oxford Collocations Dictionary*, *English Collocations in Use* (Intermediate), and *Key Words for Fluency* (Intermediate and Upper-intermediate). The selection criterion was according to the most common topics

which frequently appear in IELTS and TOEFL tests. In selecting the collocations, we also focused on the ones which candidates are likely to use in their own writing and speaking and encounter in reading and listening sections of these two international tests. In other words, collocations which are of limited use have not been included.

How should you use this book?

The book has been designed in a way which suits both self-study and classroom use. If you study one unit of the book every day, in just over a month you will have learned over 500 new collocations, which can make a dramatic improvement in the way you speak and write. When you want to practice IELTS or TOEFL speaking or writing, it is a good idea to study the related topics in this book before doing IELTS and TOEFL tasks. This will help you learn the collocations more effectively by having more practice and will also give you more confidence when doing IELTS and TOEFL tasks.

A list of 60 common phrasal verbs, which often appear in IELTS and TOEFL reading and listening sections, has also been provided in the Appendix. It is our hope that learning these verbs can also help you better understand reading and listening passages.

Unit 1 - Family

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"I work 80 hours a week and you work 90 hours a week — but we earn too much to be classified as a 'working family'!"

family	a working-class family	a family who do not have much money, education, or power
	a low-income family	a family who do not have or earn much money
	a middle-income family	a family who have an income that is not low and not high
	a loving family	a family who show a lot of love towards each other
	a close-knit family	a family in which all members help and support each other
	a dysfunctional family	a family in which conflict, misbehavior occurs a lot and parents neglect or abuse their child regularly
	a single-parent family	A mother or father who looks after their children on their own, without a partner - SYN lone parent family

childhood	a carefree childhood	a childhood without any worries or problems
	a childhood buddy	a friend that a person had when both of them were children
	a troubled childhood	a childhood with many problems

a broken home	a family that no longer lives together because the parents have divorced
strict parents	parents who expect their children to obey rules or to do what they say
raise children	to look after your children and help them grow - SYN bring up children
distant relatives	not closely related to you - OPP close
a bitter/painful divorce	making you feel very upset, or very difficult and unpleasant for you

Exercises

1. Complete the sentences with family related collocations.

- 1) I am very lucky because I come from _____ whose members are eager to help out one another through any hardships.
- 2) Because the divorce rate has been steadily rising in recent years, _____ are now becoming more and more common.
- 3) The sad truth is that the wealthy arrange to get all kinds of subsidies, while the _____ and the poor struggle to survive.
- 4) It is not at all surprising that all the four children in that extremely _____ lost touch with each other as adults. Both their parents were drug addicts who didn't care much about the kids.

- 5) In most Third World countries, _____ live in much worse neighborhoods than their middle or high-income counterparts.

2. Put the words from the box into the correct sentence.

troubled	strict	distant	carefree
raise	buddy	bitter	broken

- 1) Since she did not have any close relatives, after her death a _____ relative of hers inherited her beautiful house.
- 2) As he was sitting on the armchair, he was fondly remembering sweet memories of his _____ childhood when he had no worries or responsibilities.
- 3) Gill was thrilled to visit his childhood _____ whom he had last seen 27 years ago when Gil's family moved to another city.
- 4) Jack managed to survive a _____ childhood; he experienced abuse and poverty when he was growing up.
- 5) It was very upsetting to realize that after 10 years of marriage, Tom and Mary went through such a _____ divorce that they absolutely hate each other now.
- 6) It is now widely accepted that children from _____ homes are more likely to suffer mental health problems in adulthood.
- 7) Some people think that _____ parents who try to discipline their children harshly have more well-behaved kids.
- 8) Martha is an amazing woman who _____ her four children almost singlehandedly after her husband died.

IELTS and TOEFL Test Practice

1. Who do you feel close to in your family (or extended family)? Describe this person and say why you feel close to him/her.
2. You should talk about the following cue card for 2 minutes. You have one minute to prepare.

Describe a famous family in your country.

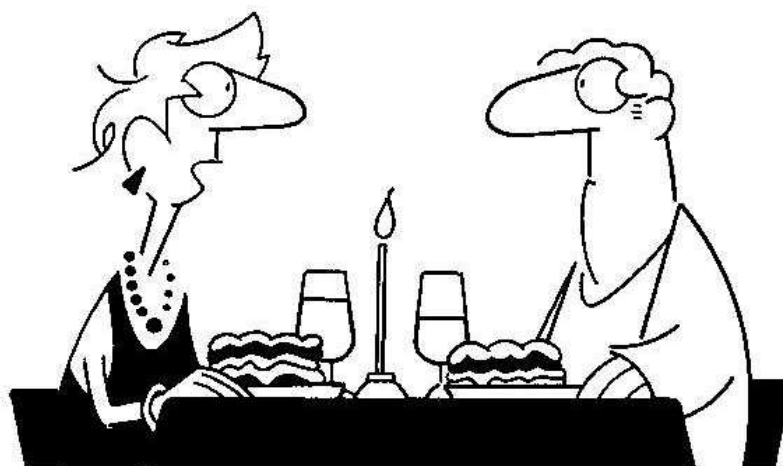
You should say:

- ✓ Who the family members are
- ✓ How you know about them
- ✓ Whether they get on well together

and explain if you would like to be a member of this family.

Unit 2 – Relationships

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“Our relationship is like a lasagna. A layer of love, a layer of anger, a layer of joy, a layer of pain...but all together, not a bad combination!”

make new friends	to become friendly with people
a bosom friend an intimate friend	a very close friend
be madly/deeply in love with someone/something	to love someone or something in a wild, uncontrolled way
a casual acquaintance	someone you know, but who is not a close friend
extraordinary/strong chemistry	if there is extraordinary/strong chemistry between two people, they like each other very much and find each other attractive
significant other	your significant other is your husband, wife, girlfriend, or boyfriend