

Collocations with phrasal verbs

A News items

The Justice Minister said he would **abide by the decision**¹ of the High Court to free the prisoner.

The police, **acting on a tip-off**³, arrested the thieves as they left the building.

Hollywood star Glenda Nixon has **filed for divorce**⁴. She and her husband Kevin Lomax have lived apart for the last six months.

The new Regional Governor will **take up office**² on 1 March, following his party's recent election victory. The Education Commission has been asked by the government to **come up with an alternative** to the present schools examination system.

The police intend to **come down heavily on**⁵ anyone causing trouble at tomorrow's football final.

- ¹ (formal) accept the decision ³ a secret warning
² (formal) start work in an official position ⁴ made an official request for a divorce
⁵ punish very strongly

B Everyday conversation

Note how B uses a collocation with a phrasal verb to repeat A's ideas.

A: It was great just sitting in the town square and enjoying the feel of the place, wasn't it?

B: Yes, it was nice to just sit there **soaking up the atmosphere**.

A: I think we should both arrange our work schedules so we don't have to work in May.

B: Yes, I'll try to **free up some time** so we can go away together.

A: I'm finding it hard to find time to practise the French I learnt at school.

B: Yes, I have a similar problem **keeping up my Spanish**.

A: Well, all that gardening has made me hungry.

B: Yes, it certainly helps to **work up an appetite**.

A: It'd suit my arrangements if we could meet up at lunch-time.

B: Yes, that would **fit in perfectly with my plans** too.

A: The hotel wasn't as good as I thought it would be.

B: No, it didn't **live up to my expectations** either.



C Other phrasal verbs with strong collocations

burst into laughter/tears [suddenly start to laugh/cry]

When she saw the damage the floods had done to her house, she **burst into tears**.

dip into savings/funds [spend part of some money which was being saved]

The club had to **dip into their emergency funds** to pay for the repairs to the roof.

jot down an address / a phone number / a room number [write down quickly]

Can I **jot down your email address**?

see off an intruder/opponent [get rid of, defeat]

He's a tough guy. He **saw off several intruders** who were trying to break into his house.

adhere to principles / beliefs / ideals / a philosophy [formal: continue to maintain a belief]

It's difficult to **adhere to one's beliefs** when one is being constantly attacked.

TIP

It is often difficult to remember the meanings of phrasal verbs. When a phrasal verb has a set of collocations as in the examples in C, write them down together. This is a good way of remembering the meaning.

Exercises

11.1 Complete the collocations using prepositions from the box.

by down for in with to up up to up with

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 file divorce | 5 live expectations |
| 2 come an alternative | 6 abide a decision |
| 3 take office | 7 jot someone's address |
| 4 adhere a philosophy | 8 fit plans |

11.2 Complete each sentence using a collocation from 11.1 in the appropriate form.

- I'd been looking forward to the course but unfortunately it my expectations.
- Has anyone a good alternative to the petrol- or diesel-fuelled car yet?
- I should your address in case I forget it.
- The new president of our club is due to office next week.
- We have to the decision of the committee; we have no choice.
- Most members of the group a common philosophy.
- I don't have any special arrangements, so can easily your plans.
- Hilda Bragg has divorce in a New York court.

11.3 Answer these questions using collocations from the opposite page.

- What can you do with savings or funds in an emergency?
- What can you do with principles or ideals?
- What can you try to do with a language if you don't want to lose it?
- What can guard dogs help you to do if you have intruders?

11.4 Correct the collocation errors in these sentences.

- Everyone broke into laughter when she told the story.
- We had a run along the beach to work in an appetite before lunch.
- The police have said they intend to go down heavily on anyone carrying an offensive weapon at the match.
- Do you think you could free out some time to have a quick meeting this afternoon?
- The police acted on a rip-off and managed to avert a possible disaster.
- I hope the party will live on to your expectations.
- We sat on our hotel balcony, soaking through the atmosphere of the carnival.
- Tanya quickly saw out her opponent in the semi-final and now goes on to the final.

11.5 Answer these questions. Write full sentences using the word in brackets in a collocation from the opposite page.

- What do you plan to do in future to make sure you don't lose your English? (KEEP)
- What film or gig or sports event have you been to that wasn't as good as you expected? (LIVE)
- What sort of thing might tempt you to use some of your savings? (DIP)
- Your best friend is getting married 100 miles away tomorrow and all the trains have been cancelled. What would you try to do? (COME)
- At short notice some friends have invited you to stay for the weekend. They've already made some plans for the weekend. What would you do your best to do? (FIT)
- How easy do you find it always to act according to your principles? (ADHERE)

A Fiona



In my mid-twenties I **joined the staff** of a language school. The pay wasn't brilliant but I could **make a living**¹ and there were many **aspects of the job** that I enjoyed. The other **members of staff** were nice and I enjoyed teaching the students. A few years later, after returning from **maternity leave**, I decided to **go part-time**. Luckily I was able to **do a job-share**² with another woman who had a small child. Then the school began to go through a difficult period and had to **lay off staff**³. I decided to **go freelance**⁴. I had managed to build up a **network of contacts** and this gave me a good start. I soon had a substantial **volume of work** – private students and marking exams – and was able to **earn a good living**.

¹ earn enough to live (can also be used just to refer to one's job and how one earns one's money: *She makes a living as a hairdresser*)

² situation where two people share equal parts of the same job

³ dismiss staff because there is no work for them to do

⁴ work for several different organisations rather than working full-time for one organisation



People usually **do work**, NOT **make work**. If we talk about people **making work**, it means that they create work for other people to do, e.g. *A baby makes a lot of work for its parents – but it's worth it.*

B Ben



After graduating, I **practised medicine**¹ for a number of years in London. I managed to **carve a niche for myself**² as a specialist in dermatology. Then I realised I needed some fresh challenges and so I did a job swap for a year with my **opposite number**³ in a clinic in Vancouver. When I returned, I went back to my old job and also **took up the post**⁴ of editor of a leading medical journal. I **held that position** for a number of years. I'm now hoping to go abroad again and so am letting everyone know that I **am open to offers**.

¹ worked as a doctor

³ someone doing the same job in a different location

² make a special position for myself

⁴ started work

C Julia



After graduating in economics, I did the usual thing of **putting together my CV**¹ and applying for jobs. I got a very **tempting offer** from an investment bank and accepted it. It was a high pressure environment but I felt motivated and I did very well. I was put on a **fast-track scheme**² and was **moving up the ladder**³ fast. However, one day I **had a change of heart**⁴. I realised I'd stopped enjoying the excitement. I felt I needed to **get my priorities right**⁵. I decided that other aspects of my life should **take priority over**⁶ my work. I **handed in my resignation** and moved to the country.

¹ CV = *curriculum vitae*, a written description of your education, qualifications, skills and career

³ being promoted

² system for rapid training and promotion of talented staff

⁴ my attitude or mood changed

⁵ give importance to the right aspects of life

⁶ be more important to me than



We say someone is **under a lot of / considerable pressure**, NOT **under high pressure**.

Exercises

12.1 Match the beginning of each sentence with its ending.

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1 My husband and I do | of contacts. |
| 2 Circulate the report to all members | the staff in our company. |
| 3 Kazuki has been happier since he went | of work this month. |
| 4 I hope it won't be necessary to lay | of staff. |
| 5 It's not easy to make | part-time. |
| 6 Meeting people is the best aspect | a job-share. |
| 7 Marian was the last person to join | off many of our staff. |
| 8 Anna will be going on maternity | of the job. |
| 9 Try to build up a good network | a living as an actor. |
| 10 We've had a ridiculous volume | leave next month. |

12.2 Complete the conversation using words from the opposite page.

Meg: Did you know my son's in Australia at the moment? He's doing a job swap with his opposite (1), the person who (2) a similar position to his in the company's Sydney office.

José: Wow, that's good! But I thought he wanted to go to the States this year?

Meg: Well, yes. He did have a very tempting (3) from a company in New York and he was about to accept, but then he had a (4) of heart.

José: So, have you met the exchange person from Sydney?

Meg: Yes, he's been to dinner a couple of times. He'd like to settle here in fact and has asked us to tell everyone he's (5) to offers from any companies that might be interested. Maybe your firm might be interested?

José: Perhaps. We could do with someone with good Australian contacts. But we could really do with someone who could (6) a post before the end of the year.

Meg: That could work out perhaps. He certainly seems very nice. And he'd be motivated to do well for you because he's so keen to stay here.

José: And do you think your son will stay in Australia?

Meg: I hope not. I've told him to get his priorities (7) Being near his mum should (8) priority over Australian beaches and sunshine!

12.3 Rewrite each sentence using the word in brackets.

- The recession meant that the company had to make some workers redundant. (LAY)
- Your family should really be more important to you than your work. (PRIORITY)
- Nita soon gained several promotions at work. (LADDER)
- Bill hates his new boss so much that I think he'll soon leave. (RESIGNATION)
- Vic earns good money as a freelance journalist. (LIVING)
- I need to write down all my qualifications and experience before I apply for jobs. (CV)
- My father always wanted to work as a doctor in a rural community. (PRACTISE)

12.4 Correct the seven collocation errors in this paragraph.

George makes a life as a sports reporter on a local newspaper but he is under high pressure at work at the moment. He's had far too much work to make recently. He's been put on a fast-track scheme for promotion and they're really pushing him. It's so hard that he's thinking of handing over his resignation and going freelancing. It wouldn't be easy but I'm sure he'd soon work a niche for himself as a sports journalist.

A

Discussing job applicants



- Guy: So which of these applicants do you think we should interview? They all seem to **fit** the job description quite well to me. It's quite a **daunting task** to **narrow the list down** to just one person.
- Julia: I agree. So, let's start by **taking up** references for these ten people.
- Guy: OK. So why did you pick these ten out of the fifty who applied?
- Julia: Well, these ten all seem to be people who realise the importance of **working as a team**. They've all shown that they are capable of **mastering new skills**. And they're all clearly comfortable with **taking on responsibility**.
- Guy: Did you automatically eliminate the two who'd previously **taken industrial action**¹?
- Julia: One of them – I'd also heard rumours about his involvement in a **professional misconduct** case. He was certainly **relieved of his duties**² at ARG under mysterious circumstances. But the other was standing up for a woman who'd been **wrongfully dismissed**³, even though he knew he might lose his own job. So he sounded good to me.
- Guy: Fair enough. He must have strength of character to risk **losing his own livelihood**.
- Julia: That's right. So could we **pencil in a meeting** for considering the references? And then I'd better leave you and go and **clear my desk**⁴ before I go home.
- Guy: Yes, sure. How about Friday at 10?

¹ gone on strike² (formal) dismissed³ (formal, legal) unfairly dismissed⁴ deal with all the papers on one's desk (also used when someone is clearing their desk because they are leaving their job)

If workers refuse to work, they **go on strike** or **stage a strike**, NOT ~~make~~ a strike.

B

Conversation about a new job



- Jenny: I hear your brother's **landed a fantastic new job**¹.
- Ali: Actually it's not as good as he hoped. He's got a terribly **heavy workload** and that means working some very **unsocial hours**. He also complains about having to do lots of **menial tasks** around the office, **running errands** for his boss.
- Jenny: But he's paid well?
- Ali: Not really. He just about gets a **living wage**². And all the **overtime** is **unpaid**.
- Jenny: He'll just have to **throw a sickie**³ from time to time.
- Ali: Yes, I suggested he did that too, but he says he's afraid of **getting the sack**⁴ if he does. He feels there might be some **prospects** for him there eventually, even if he is just being used as **sweated labour**⁵ at the moment.
- Jenny: Well, with any luck he'll eventually find that he can **realise his potential**⁶ there.
- Ali: I hope so. But they have a very **high turnover** of staff and it won't be easy for him to **stay the course**⁷.
- Jenny: No, but he's very determined, isn't he? So let's hope it all works out.

¹ (informal) got a new (and usually a good) job² enough money to live on³ (informal) take a day off work pretending to be sick⁴ (informal) being dismissed⁵ workers who are paid very little and work in very bad conditions⁶ achieve all that he is capable of⁷ remain there until he is successful

Exercises

13.1 Find a collocation in A that matches each definition.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 to make a provisional date for a meeting | 6 unfairly sacked |
| 2 an alarmingly difficult task | 7 to be deprived of your source of income |
| 3 to become skilled at doing new things | 8 behaviour unacceptable for someone in a particular job |
| 4 to request statements from referees | |
| 5 to have the skills required for a job | |

13.2 Complete this paragraph using words from the box in the appropriate form.

be fit land run sweat take

Mel was surprised but happy to (1) a job on her local newspaper as soon as she left university. She was surprised because she didn't feel that she (2) the job description, but she was happy because she had always dreamt of working as a journalist. So she didn't really mind when she found that she was spending much of her time (3) errands for the editor. Her brother said she was just being used as (4) labour but she felt confident that there (5) good prospects for her there. She was sure she would soon have the chance to (6) on more responsibility.

13.3 Complete each conversation using a collocation from the opposite page to make B agree with what A says.

- 1 A: I think that Mick will leave his new job before the year is out.
B: Yes, I agree. I don't think he'll either.
- 2 A: Had you heard that they may fire some members of staff?
B: Yes, I did hear a rumour that some people might
- 3 A: Inflation is so high that I don't seem to earn enough to live on any more.
B: No. I don't feel I earn myself.
- 4 A: Has the HR Manager been removed from his job?
B: Yes, he was yesterday.
- 5 A: I hope the workers don't decide to go on strike.
B: Yes, it would be very unfortunate if they decide to
- 6 A: It's going to be hard to decide which of the job applicants to shortlist.
B: Yes, I don't know how we are going to

13.4 Answer these questions about your own work or ask someone else these questions and write down the answers.

- What kind of menial tasks does your job involve?
- Do you think this job will allow you to realise your potential?
- Do you ever have to work unsocial hours? If so, why? If not, why not?
- Does there tend to be a high turnover of staff at your workplace?
- If you do overtime, is it paid or unpaid?
- Have you ever thrown a sickie? If so, why? If not, why not?
- Have you ever taken or would you ever consider taking industrial action?
- In your job is it necessary to work as a team?
- Do you have a heavy workload?



It will probably be particularly useful for you to learn work collocations that relate to your own professional life. Look on the Internet for information in English about the job that you do or are interested in doing in the future. Make a note of any interesting collocations that you come across.

14 Thoughts and ideas

A Talking about thoughts

I **honestly think** we can win the match tonight. [NOT I **strongly think**]
 I'm not sure if I want to invest in your business or not, but I'll **give it some thought**.
Bear in mind that there are often delays to flights during bad weather. [remember]
 It's **common knowledge** that Jane is looking for a new job. [everyone knows]
 My teenage son hasn't yet **grasped the importance of** revising for exams. [understood how important something is]
 I **take the view** that we are all responsible for our own actions. [believe]
 It's a **foregone conclusion** that Jaime will win the race. [absolutely certain]
 I'm not quite sure what I'm going to do but I've got a **rough idea**. [general idea]
 I don't **subscribe to the theory** that nature and nurture are of equal significance but it is now a **widespread belief**. [hold that opinion]; [generally held view]
Opinions are divided as to whether mothers of young children should go out to work or not, but it is my **firm conviction** that different things suit different families. [people hold different views]; [I am totally convinced]



We say I am **becoming aware** of the problem, NOT I am **getting aware**.

B Judging

collocation	example	meaning
judge someone harshly	Don't judge him too harshly . He really couldn't have done things differently.	be very critical of someone
poor judgement	Deciding to set up a business now shows poor judgement of the economic situation.	
pass judgement on	Di's quick to pass judgement on other people but she's far from perfect herself.	criticise
against your better judgement	I finally agreed to go out with him, against my better judgement .	despite the knowledge that something is a bad idea
a lack of judgement	His approach to his children showed a lack of judgement .	an inability to judge a situation wisely
an error of judgement	Promoting Alec was a serious error of judgement .	bad decision

C Metaphors of thinking

We can talk about **thinking laterally** [approaching a problem in an imaginative and original way rather than using a traditional approach]. We can say someone has a **fertile imagination** [one that produces lots of original and interesting ideas]. We can **wrestle with a problem** [struggle to find a solution] and we can have a **nagging doubt** [an unpleasant feeling of doubt that will not go away]. We can also talk about something **fuelling speculation** [encouraging people to consider that something may be true], and sometimes people **jump to conclusions** [guess the facts about a situation without having enough information].

Exercises

14.1 Look at A. Correct the collocation errors in these sentences.

- Opinions are separated on the issue of single-sex schools and there are sound arguments on both sides of the case.
- I believe that the government will win another term in office but my girlfriend takes a different opinion.
- I strongly think that you'd be making a serious mistake if you took that job.
- I don't believe it's a foregone fact that the larger company will win the contract.
- People are gradually getting aware of the problem of climate change.
- You should bear in thought that your visitors will be tired after their long flight.
- I've got a raw idea of what I want to say in my essay but I haven't planned it properly yet.
- Increasing numbers of people today subscribe for the theory that small is beautiful.

14.2 Complete the paragraph using words from the box.

error firm grasped laterally pass poor



Recent research shows that people who spend time meditating each day improve their mental abilities. It seems that meditation particularly enhances our ability to think in creative, unusual ways, in other words, to think 'outside the box' or think (1) It may, then, have been an unfortunate (2) of judgement on the part of the management at BNM and Co. to put a stop to the yoga classes that staff had organised for their lunch-breaks.

'It would seem that our managers have not yet (3) the importance of these classes,' explained yoga instructor Zandra, 'but it is not my place to (4) judgement on them. Their judgement may be (5) at the moment but it is my (6) conviction that as people come to understand yoga better, they will see how it could benefit the company as well as individual members of staff.'

14.3 Rewrite each sentence using the word in brackets.

- It's unwise to draw conclusions too quickly about people's motives. (JUMP)
- Everyone knows that Ellie has been taking money from the till. (COMMON)
- I agreed to help him though I knew it was wrong. (AGAINST)
- I'm afraid your decisions show you are unable to judge situations well. (LACK)
- We have to decide when to have the party. Can you think about it? (THOUGHT)
- I think you are being too critical of him. Remember he's only 18. (HARSHLY)
- Surprisingly, a large number of people believe left-handed people are more intelligent. (WIDESPREAD)

14.4 Use a dictionary to find frequent collocations with these words. Your collocations can use the words literally or metaphorically.

- 1 a fertile 2 to fuel 3 to wrestle with 4 a nagging

14.5 Use a dictionary or an online corpus (see Unit 4) to decide whether these are common collocations or not.

- 1 bear in memory 2 personal conviction 3 harshly treated 4 a rough belief

A Business news

Charles Park and Sons have **announced record profits** for last year despite a slight **decline in demand** for one of their key products, caused by increasingly **fierce competition**¹ in the sector. They say they are already well on the way to **meeting their targets** for the first quarter. Their new models will **go into production**² in the spring and this is expected to **boost**³ their **sales and profits** even more.

The government today announced its intentions to **stimulate growth** in the south-west by **allocating** a large **part of its** development **budget** to industrial projects in the area. Roger Middle, who **chaired the committee** working on this scheme, said that local people welcomed the decision, which should **generate more business** for local firms. They appreciate that their area has many **unique selling points** for businesses and their employees, and feel that development will **pay dividends**⁴ for everyone living and working in the area.

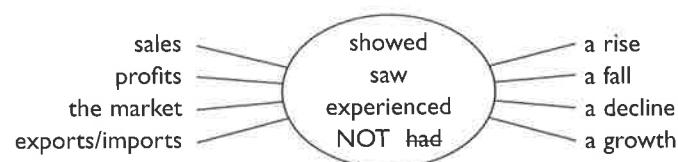
Clothing firm G and L has announced plans to build a new factory in the Midlands. Their spokesperson, Mark Mulloy, said yesterday that the proposal **made sound business sense**. 'It will be easier for us to **maintain quality** and **promote the interests** of our shareholders at the same time as **satisfying the demands** of our **target market**,' he said.

SIB Distribution held an **emergency meeting** last night to discuss the crisis caused by yesterday's rise in fuel prices. Their MD said, 'This **hike in prices**⁵ will seriously **affect the bottom line**⁶. It's a considerable challenge for us as we already operate on **narrow profit margins**. However, we have **set ourselves clear objectives** and are confident we will still be able to **balance the books**⁷. We have no intention of **calling in the receivers**⁸ yet!'

- | | |
|--|--|
| ¹ NOT high competition | ⁵ (journalistic) rise in prices |
| ² start being made | ⁶ affect the net income |
| ³ increase | ⁷ make sure the amount spent is not more than the amount earned |
| ⁴ bring advantages | ⁸ going bankrupt |

B Describing trends

An important part of many business reports is the description of trends. The *Cambridge Learner Corpus* shows that there are a number of collocation errors which are frequently made when candidates write about business in advanced English exams.



We say a **slight decrease/increase**, NOT a **little decrease/increase** and a **substantial decrease/increase**, NOT a **strong decrease/increase**. When comparing two things in terms of quantity, we say, for example, Exports were **five times greater than** imports, NOT Exports were five times ~~larger~~ than imports.

Exercises

15.1 Are these sentences true or false?

- 1 A business executive will feel worried if the company experiences a decline in demand for its products.
- 2 A business CEO is pleased if the company does not meet its quarterly sales targets.
- 3 A hike in the price of raw materials is likely to present a difficult challenge for a business that uses those materials.
- 4 Marketing and sales staff will promote their products' unique selling points.
- 5 Business managers are likely to be happy about calling in the receivers.
- 6 A company is likely to feel more secure if it has narrow profit margins.

15.2 Complete each sentence using a word from the opposite page.

- 1 It was a sad day for the company when it finally had to call in the
- 2 I'm sure you'll agree that our new mobile phone has a number of unique selling
- 3 We use a professional accountant to help us balance our
- 4 The bank agreed that our plans make sound business
- 5 We must ensure that the research project does not negatively affect the bottom
- 6 We look forward to next spring, when our exciting new line will go into
- 7 All your hard work will eventually pay
- 8 We are confident that our new business strategy will help boost both sales and

15.3 Correct the collocation errors in these sentences.

- 1 The company is pleased to report a strong increase in profits over the last quarter.
- 2 The new health and safety committee is to be tabled by a retired doctor.
- 3 There is increasingly high competition between airline companies.
- 4 The company's exports to Japan had considerable growth over the last decade.
- 5 The sales figures for March show a little decrease on those for February.
- 6 Our sales in the domestic market are certain to have a rise next year.
- 7 Last year sales were three times larger in Europe than in Australia.
- 8 We feel that this proposal does considerable business sense.
- 9 Although we need to reduce our costs, it's important we attain the quality that our reputation is built on.
- 10 Business leaders hope new government policies will stimulus growth.

15.4 Answer these questions about the collocations in this unit.

- 1 When might the Managing Director of a company call an emergency meeting?
- 2 What kind of age group is a sports car company likely to have as its target market?
- 3 Why would shareholders be pleased if their company announced record profits?
- 4 In what situations other than business do people set themselves objectives?
- 5 Name three things that a business would have to allocate part of its budget to.
- 6 How might a company try to stimulate growth in demand for its products?



On the website www.companieshouse.gov.uk you can find reports on several million companies. Look up a company that interests you and make a note of any interesting collocations that you find.

A Shopping in the high street or online?

Most companies carry out surveys¹ to find out what customers or potential customers feel about their products and services. I answered one recently about **online shopping**. I personally much prefer to **go shopping** on the high street rather than to shop on the Internet. You get a much better impression of whether something is good **value for money** or truly **fit for purpose**² when you can touch it. And I feel if you have a problem with a purchase, it's easier to go back and **make a complaint** if you've bought something from a shop. But shopping online has its advantages, and many companies **offer you a discount** when you **place an order** online. And, of course, lots of online companies have plenty of **regular customers** and plenty of **satisfied customers**. I suppose the bottom line is that it's good for us as consumers to have as much **healthy competition** as possible.

¹ or do surveys, NOT make surveys ² good at doing what it is supposed to do



We say **do the shopping** or **go shopping**, NOT **do-shopping**. **Do the shopping** means the regular daily, weekly or monthly shopping that people do for food and household items. It is a household chore (compare: do the ironing/washing). While **go shopping** also means this, it has the additional meaning of shopping as a leisure activity (compare: go fishing/swimming).

B Complaining about service

I ordered this skirt on the Internet and I'm furious. On their website they promise **prompt service**. In fact they said they offered a **next-day service** but it took ten days to come. When I rang up to complain they **put me on hold** and then never got back to me! Then, when the skirt eventually arrived, the zip was broken. It's really **poor quality** – though the advert says all their clothes are **top quality**. I'm going to **kick up such a fuss**¹. Of course, I'll demand a **full refund**², but I'd really like an apology as well. And I'll certainly **take my custom elsewhere**³ in future.



¹ (informal) make a very forcible complaint

² ask for all my money back (NB NOT **strongly demand** because the verb *demand* cannot be made stronger in English – it is already strong enough)

³ not buy from the same place again

C Company promise

If you have **grounds for complaint**¹, please contact our Head Office at the address below. We pride ourselves on **providing an excellent service** and all our products **conform to safety regulations**². We **honour all commitments**³ to customers. We **take very seriously** any **complaints** about poor service. So if you feel that one of our products does not **come up to standard**⁴, then we will immediately offer you a replacement. We promise to **handle all complaints** promptly.

¹ a reason for complaining

² obey all the rules or laws relating to safety

³ do what we said we would do

⁴ reach appropriate standards



Learn more collocations relating to the topic of customer services by looking at the customer services page of a company website, for example, that of John Lewis, a British department store: www.johnlewis.com/Help/HelpHome.aspx. Make a note of any interesting collocations.

Exercises

16.1 Look at A. Correct the collocation errors in these sentences.

- 1 Have you ever made a complain to the management about the food in a restaurant?
- 2 I hate making shopping on Saturdays as the town is so crowded then.
- 3 If you want your shopping delivered, you can put your order with us online or by phone.
- 4 We made a large-scale customer survey before developing our new product range.
- 5 On-the-web shopping is proving increasingly popular.
- 6 I was surprised by the weak quality of the acting in that film we saw last night.

16.2 Choose the correct collocation.

- 1 This shop gives very good *worth / cost / value* for money.
- 2 Every business wants *satisfactory / satisfied / satisfying* customers.
- 3 He is an economist who believes in the advantages of *healthy / rich / fertile* competition.
- 4 Service doesn't have to be next-day but it should be reasonably *punctual / prompt / present*.
- 5 I hate it when you phone a company and get put on *hole / hang / hold* for ages.
- 6 Dan kicked up a terrible *fuss / foot / fever* about the service we received.
- 7 The hotel manager *dealt / handled / honoured* our complaint very efficiently.
- 8 We can't sell our old sofa because it doesn't *perform / inform / conform* to modern safety regulations.
- 9 I would prefer not to take my custom *somewhere / anywhere / elsewhere*.
- 10 The service at the hair salon did not *run / come / do up* to standard.

16.3 Complete the letters using words from the opposite page.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to complain about the service I received in your Cambridge branch.

I bought a suit there recently but it is poorly cut and does not fit well, even though it is the size I normally take. I am a (1) customer of yours and have never had any problems before. I returned the suit to the shop the next day, but the manager refused to give me a full (2)

I request that you look into this matter and

(3) this complaint seriously. Otherwise I may be forced to take my (4) elsewhere.

Yours faithfully,

John Cole

Dear Mr Cole,

Thank you for your letter regarding your purchase of a suit from us. We apologise for the inconvenience caused to you.

Our company is committed to (5) an excellent service and selling (6) quality garments. We therefore enclose the requested refund and trust that you will continue to shop with us and will never again have (7) for complaint about our goods.

Yours sincerely,

Jason Campbell

Customer Services Manager

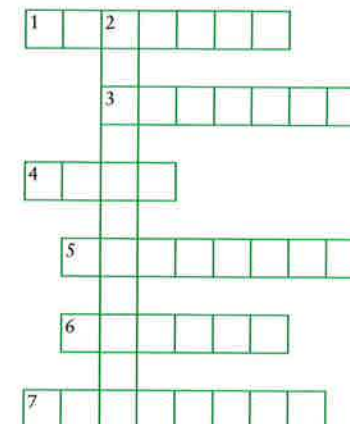
16.4 Complete the crossword.

Across

- 1 When choosing new offices you must ensure that they will be fit for — .
- 3 To get your money back you'll have to prove you have — for complaint.
- 4 I have no option but to demand a — refund.
- 5 I am afraid that your service simply fails to come up to — .
- 6 As a respected firm we always — all our commitments.
- 7 It is our policy to offer students a — on books and stationery.

Down

- 2 Your helmets do not conform to safety — .



A Courses and qualifications



When she was a small child, Amelia's teachers identified her as having unusual intelligence and remarkable **mental agility**¹, and they put her on a special programme for **gifted children**. Amelia **won a scholarship** to attend a local grammar school. By the age of eighteen, she was a **straight A student**², and she **secured a place**³ at one of the country's most prestigious seats of learning⁴ to read⁵ English Literature.

In the first academic year of the English Literature programme, the **core subjects**⁶ were *The development of the novel* and *Contemporary poetry*. Amelia had a large number of **set texts**⁷ to read. It was hard work but she loved it. Her professors were all **distinguished scholars** and her courses were taught by some of the world's **leading authorities** in the field. She completed her studies with considerable success and **graduated from university** last year. In the meantime, her parents have decided that it is time they made up for their lack of **formal education** and they have **signed up** for a number of evening courses⁸. Eventually they hope to **meet the entry requirements** for university entrance and to be able to complete a degree as **mature students**⁹.

¹ ability to think quickly and clearly

² a student who always gets very good marks

³ (formal) was accepted as a student;
(informal: got a place)

⁴ (very formal) educational institution
with a very good reputation

⁵ (formal and increasingly old-fashioned) do or study

⁶ subjects which all the students on the course
have to do

⁷ specific books which students must study

⁸ or enrolled on ... courses

⁹ students who are older than average

B Harry's school report

Mathematics	Harry's work has shown a marked improvement this term. However, his attention occasionally wanders in class.
English	Harry has a natural talent for English. He achieved full marks ¹ in the last class test.
French	There is room for improvement in Harry's work in French. He seems to find it difficult to learn vocabulary by heart .
Geography	Harry has a thirst for knowledge and is a quick learner . It is a pity that sometimes his concentration in class wavers ² .
Science	Harry has demonstrated an ability to apply what he learns to the wider world. He showed considerable initiative in the way he approached his project on energy.
Physical Education	Although Harry has a proven ability ³ for tennis, he will not make any progress until he stops playing truant . ⁴ This must not continue .

¹ 100%

² concentration is not steady

³ ability shown by his achievements

⁴ being absent without permission



You attend school to **acquire knowledge**, NOT **get knowledge**.

Exercises

17.1 Answer the questions using collocations from A.

- 1 What happens when you successfully complete a degree course?
- 2 What do you call students who are in their thirties or older?
- 3 What are, for example, Harvard, the Sorbonne and Cambridge University?
- 4 What kind of people teach at Harvard, the Sorbonne and Cambridge University?
- 5 What do you call children who are particularly intelligent or have special talents?
- 6 What do you call students whose marks are always excellent?

17.2 Match the beginning of each sentence with its ending.

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 1 We were all very impressed by the student's mental | heart. |
| 2 My grandmother is very intelligent but she's had little formal | place. |
| 3 I've never found it easy to learn scientific formulae by | education. |
| 4 I'd love to study medicine there but it's very hard to get a | ability. |
| 5 For the first year Shakespeare exam we had to read six set | requirements. |
| 6 I am so proud of you for managing to get full | agility. |
| 7 Your work is not too bad but there is certainly still room for | learner. |
| 8 Your little girl has shown herself to be a very quick | marks. |
| 9 The test has been designed to enable pupils to demonstrate their | texts. |
| 10 I hope to study there but I may not be able to meet the entry | improvement. |

17.3 Complete this teacher's letter to the parents of a problem pupil.

Dear Mr and Mrs Wolf,

We are very concerned about Peter's behaviour. He has played (1) from school three times this month and has been seen in town in school hours. When he does come to class, his attention (2) and he does not seem able to concentrate on his lessons. He does not seem to understand the work and yet he never asks any questions or requests any help. The only time he (3) any initiative is in devising excuses for not having done his homework.

Although he has a (4) talent for art, he is not even taking any interest in art lessons.

This is disappointing, as last year there was a (5) improvement in Peter's work and we hoped he might (6) a scholarship. However, unless he starts to (7) school regularly and to put more effort into his studies, he will certainly not even meet the (8) for the college course he has plans to (9) on next year.

I would be grateful if you could come into school to discuss this situation further.

Yours sincerely,

Thomas Chips

(Headteacher)

17.4 Answer these questions.

- 1 What are the core subjects for pupils at primary school in your country?
- 2 What would you say are the most prestigious seats of learning in your country?
- 3 Have you ever signed up for a course that you didn't complete?
- 4 If you could take a degree course now, what subject would you like to read?
- 5 When does the academic year begin and end in your country?
- 6 What do you need to do to secure a place at university in your country?

17.5 Use a dictionary to find different words to complete each collocation.



- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1 a thirst for | 3 his wavers |
| 2 join a | 4 proven |

18 Writing essays, assignments and reports

A Preparing for a research assignment

Here is an extract from a study skills leaflet given to students at a university, containing advice on how to tackle a research project. Note the collocations in bold.

- All students are expected to **submit** a 5,000-word **report**, detailing their research project and **presenting** their findings.
- Select** a research topic in discussion with your tutor. You will need to formulate a **working hypothesis**¹ when you begin your study. The purpose of your research is to see if your data **supports the hypothesis**².
- If you are **undertaking**³ a study which involves informants or volunteers, read the advice on **research ethics**⁴ in the department handbook.
- A key section of your report will be a **literature review**. This is not simply a summary of your **background reading**, but an **in-depth critique**⁵ of the most important books and articles, where you can show your awareness of current research.
- Make sure you **provide**⁶ a **rationale** for your study, and always **back up your conclusions** with evidence; never exaggerate any claims you make.
- Wherever appropriate, you should **lay out your results** in the form of tables, charts and diagrams.

¹ a theory which can be used provisionally but may change

² We usually do not say *prove the hypothesis*; *prove* is too strong.

³ (formal) carrying out; (informal: doing)

⁴ a system of standards which control how research is done

⁵ examination and judgement of something, done carefully and in great detail

⁶ (formal) give

B Other collocations often used in essays, reports and assignments

The book offers a **vigorous**¹ defence of free market economics and **makes the case** for privatisation of all state-owned industries. It **confronts issues** which are of current importance in developing countries.

McGraw **puts the case** for single-sex primary education but he fails to **tackle** all of the issues that opponents of this approach to early schooling have raised.

This essay cannot give an **exhaustive**² account of climate change; it focuses only on the risk to sea levels. Recent **research indicates** that sea levels are rising very rapidly.

Physicists have recently begun to **formulate new theories** about the nature of the universe. The big question is how to **test** these theories.

Although Kristov's book **covers a lot of ground**, it does not offer a **full explanation** of the events leading to the civil war. Indeed, **the thrust**³ of Kristov's argument is that such an account cannot be written, since the people with **first-hand**⁴ knowledge of those events are no longer living.

This essay provides a **critical analysis**⁵ of international trade agreements.

¹ very strong and forceful ² extremely detailed ³ the main idea or opinion that is discussed
⁴ experienced directly ⁵ a detailed study or examination which assesses quality



We say **do research**, NOT ~~make~~ research. The Internet is a good place to **do research**.

Exercises

18.1 Complete each sentence using a verb from the box in the appropriate form.

cover	indicate	present	provide	put
review	tackle	test	undertake	

- It is a huge task to a study involving hundreds of participants.
- Fischler her findings at an international biochemistry conference last year.
- Chapter 2 the literature on urban regeneration and concludes that more research is needed.
- I have a rationale for the study in the introduction to this essay.
- The research that owning a pet increases life expectancy by five years.
- The next step was to the theory by carrying out a set of experiments.
- The essay a lot of ground.
- The book a number of issues which were previously ignored.
- The lecturer the case for a dramatic change in economic policy.

18.2 Rewrite each sentence using a form of the words in brackets.

- The system of standards for conducting research are described in the university's research manual. (ETHIC)
- You need to make an examination and judgement of the arguments which is very detailed. (DEPTH, CRITIQUE)
- You need to read books and articles which give you information about the subject. (BACKGROUND)
- You do the analysis in order to find out whether the data indicate that your initial idea was correct. (HYPOTHESIS)
- All the interviewees were people who had knowledge of the situation from direct experience. (FIRST)
- It is impossible to give a complete explanation of the decline of agriculture in the 1960s. (FULL)

18.3 Complete each sentence using a word from the box in the correct form. Then number the events in the order in which they would occur in real life.

- ☐ Write a analysis of previous studies.
- ☐ Form a hypothesis.
- ☐ out your results in tables and diagrams.
- ☐ your report.
- ☐ a topic.
- ☐ Make the for studying the topic in the introduction.

case
critical
lay
select
submit
work

18.4 Correct the collocation errors in these sentences.

- The trust of Torsten's argument is that public transport can never replace the private car.
- Economists reformed a new theory of inflation in the late 1980s.
- It is important that we should front the issue of climate change immediately.
- In her essay, she put forward a vigorated defence of the European Union constitution.
- I shall not attempt to give an exhausting account of population growth in this essay.
- The article does not back down its conclusions with enough convincing evidence.

FOLLOW UP

Find an article on the Internet relating to an academic subject that is important for you. Print it off and highlight any useful collocations you notice in it.

A Organising your social life

Hi Nadia,
How was your weekend? My old school friend Emma came on a **flying visit**¹, which was fun. We had a **girls' night out** on Saturday with a couple of other friends. We **went out for a meal** to a local restaurant. So much for me **sticking to my diet**!
Emma was here for a **surprise party** for her parents on Sunday. She and her brother wanted to **spring a surprise on**² them for their 30th wedding anniversary – they thought 30 years together definitely **called for a celebration**³ – so they decided to **throw a party** for them. They had it at a hotel near their house and invited all their parents' old friends. The vicar who'd married them even **put in an appearance**⁴! They asked me along too and it was lovely, a really **special occasion** with a fun atmosphere. I was just sorry I couldn't **spend much quality time**⁵ with Emma, but she promised the next time she comes it won't be such a **whirlwind visit**⁶. Anyway, what about you? Is life its usual busy **social whirl**⁷? Do you still **go clubbing** every weekend?
Claire

¹ a visit that doesn't last long

² to surprise

³ meant that a celebration was appropriate

⁴ came just for a short time

⁵ time where people can give their complete attention to each other

⁶ brief and very busy visit

⁷ non-stop set of social events

B Formal entertaining

To: Councillor D. M. Patel
County Hall, Swithick

Penniston International Youth Festival

Dear Councillor Patel,

First let me thank the County Council, on behalf of the Festival Organising Committee, for **playing host to**¹ the welcome reception for our international colleagues and for **making us** so **welcome** at County Hall last week. We were also grateful that you were able to **find time to pay us a visit** at our weekly planning meeting, where we were delighted to hear that you intend to **join the festivities** at the opening ceremony of the festival.

We would further like to invite you and your spouse to **attend a formal function**, to be held at the Castle Hotel, Penniston on Friday 27 July, from 7.30pm to 10.30pm, to mark the closing of the festival.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Janowski (Committee Chair)

¹ providing the facilities for

² social event where a family comes together, usually to celebrate something

³ take out for dinner and drinks

⁴ (rather formal) a very friendly and welcoming atmosphere

⁵ place where a public event or meeting happens



We say **organise a barbecue** or **have a barbecue**, NOT ~~make~~ a barbecue.

Castle Hotel Penniston

Whether you are planning a formal party, a **family gathering**² or simply want to **wine and dine**³ new business contacts in a **convivial atmosphere**⁴, the 16th-century Castle Hotel is **the perfect venue**⁵. Our 24 bedrooms, three restaurants and Function Room can be reserved by calling us on 1327 5547655 or by booking online at www.castlepenniston.com.

Exercises

19.1 Complete the conversation words from the opposite page.

Suki: How was Bill's (1) retirement party?

Dave: Great. You should have seen his face; he really had no idea about it and he was so moved. It was a really nice gesture for the company to (2) a party for him like that. They really **wined and** (3) us. And even the MD put in an (4) ! What happened to you? I was surprised not to see you there.

Suki: Oh, well I was planning to come, but then my friends (5) a surprise on me too that same night.

Dave: Was it a (6) occasion?

Suki: Yes, it was my birthday and my friends had arranged a girls' (7) out and invited lots of friends that I hadn't seen for ages.

Dave: Sounds great. Happy Birthday, by the way.

19.2 Choose the correct collocation.

1 My parents have always *gave / made / had* my friends feel very welcome.

2 My aunt came on a *quality / whirling / flying* visit last week.

3 It's quite difficult to *hold on / keep with / stick to* a diet when you're eating out with friends.

4 You've passed your exam! Well, that *takes / gives / calls* for a celebration!

5 We hope you will *give / find / spend* time to visit our exhibition of students' artwork.

6 It's important to try to spend plenty of *welcome / convivial / quality* time with your family.

7 My sister's life is a constant *special / active / social* whirl.

8 I recommend you *pay / spend / go* a visit to the folk museum while you're in Dekksu.

9 Athens *threw / gave / played* host to the first modern Olympic Games in 1896.

19.3 Rewrite each sentence using a collocation from the opposite page. Then say whether the sentence you have written is more or less formal.

1 We could go to a nightclub later.

2 The restaurant has a really friendly atmosphere.

3 London is holding the Olympics in 2012.

4 She has a mad social life.

5 I have to go to a formal function on Thursday.

6 We invite you to join in the fun at the opening of the Arts Festival.

7 Grapsley Park is a great place for an outdoor concert.

19.4 Which do you prefer:

1 when you're too tired to cook, ordering a takeaway or eating out?

2 plain food or rich food?

3 having a family gathering or having a barbecue with friends?

4 giving a dinner party or going out for a meal?

5 paying your friends a visit or playing host to friends at your own home?

6 a whirlwind visit from a friend, or a relative who stays for a week?



A Types of language and conversation

Some conversations are not serious. They consist of **idle chatter**, in which the speakers just exchange **pleasantries**¹ or share **juicy**² **gossip** about their friends and colleagues, **exchanging** **news** and **spreading rumours**. Rumours are always **flying around** in any society, of course. But sometimes when you **engage someone in conversation**, it may become more serious. You may **open your heart** to the person you are talking to, for example. You may even find yourself **drawn into an argument**. Some people always want to **win an argument**; for others **losing the argument** is not important as they simply enjoy a good discussion. If you are in a very noisy place, it can become impossible to **carry on a conversation** of any kind and it is also hard for parents to **hold a conversation** when there are small children in the room.

¹ (formal) make polite conversation ² (informal) interesting because it is shocking or personal

B Managing topics

Hi Jane,

As you know, I wanted to talk to my parents yesterday about my plans for dropping out of university but I didn't have much luck. First of all, I found it very hard to **broach the subject**¹. As soon as I started explaining how badly I wanted to start earning, one of them would **change the subject**. It was as if they were deliberately trying to avoid something they sensed was going to be a problem. Eventually I managed to **bring up the subject** again and they finally started to **take me seriously**. I tried not to **overstate my case**² for leaving and just put things as simply as I could. But then they started to **bombard me with questions**³. Why did I really want to leave? What would I do? Did I realise that I would get a much better job with a degree? Dad didn't listen to my answers – he just started making **broad generalisations** about the importance of education. He went on and on for about half an hour before telling me to **drop the subject** and never refer to it again. So I'm not sure what to do next. Any advice?

Bob

¹ begin a discussion of a difficult topic

³ ask me lots of questions

² give too much importance or seriousness to a point of view

C Adjective + noun phrases

collocation	example	meaning
bad/strong/foul language	TV dramas today use much more bad/strong/foul language than they did 40 years ago.	swear words, taboo language; <i>foul</i> suggests much stronger disapproval than <i>bad</i> or <i>strong</i>
four-letter words	Please try to express your feelings without using four-letter words .	swear words, taboo words (many of which have four letters in English)
opening gambit	'You're a teacher, aren't you?' was his opening gambit .	a remark made in order to start a conversation
a rash promise	Don't make any rash promises . Think before you agree to anything.	promises made without thinking
an empty promise	She's full of empty promises . You shouldn't believe a word she says.	promises made which the speaker has no intention of keeping
a tough question	Do I regret anything? That's a tough question .	difficult question to answer

Exercises

20.1 Look at A. Correct the collocation errors in these sentences.

- 1 It can be hard to carry out a serious conversation in a noisy room.
- 2 He finds it very difficult to open his head and talk about his feelings to anyone.
- 3 I don't like discussing things with people who always want to gain every argument.
- 4 My mother always used to tell me not to spill unkind rumours.
- 5 I usually find it better not to get driven into an argument with Paul.
- 6 We had a very enjoyable time just sitting in the park enjoying some idling chatter.
- 7 I managed to resist all his attempts to engage me into conversation.
- 8 I've never talked to him much – we've done no more than change pleasantries.

20.2 Complete each sentence using a word from the box in the appropriate form.

bring broach drop hold lose strong take tough

- 1 I the argument because I didn't know enough about the subject.
- 2 I think it's time we the subject of our marriage with our parents.
- 3 No one will your ideas seriously unless you present them more effectively.
- 4 My mother can't get used to hearing well-dressed young people using language in public places.
- 5 Whenever I try to up the subject of moving to London, he leaves the room.
- 6 I've said I'm sorry – why can't you just the subject?
- 7 They're sure to ask you some questions at your interview but you can take time to think before you answer.
- 8 I felt so ill last week that I could barely a conversation.

20.3 Match the two parts of these collocations.

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1 juicy | promise |
| 2 broad | generalisations |
| 3 exchange | gambit |
| 4 take | question |
| 5 four-letter | seriously |
| 6 tough | word |
| 7 rash | gossip |
| 8 opening | news |

20.4 Rewrite each sentence using the word in brackets.

- 1 Please stop talking about this subject immediately. (DROP)
- 2 Sam has a habit of promising things that he has no intention of doing. (EMPTY)
- 3 You must give due importance to the lab's safety regulations. (SERIOUSLY)
- 4 It's better not to spend too long trying to make your point. (OVERSTATE)
- 5 Could we please start talking about something else? (SUBJECT)
- 6 Did you hear the rumours that people were spreading about your boss last year? (FLYING)
- 7 There are rather a lot of rude words in the play. (LANGUAGE)
- 8 Such general statements tend to be rather meaningless. (BROAD)
- 9 The way he began the conversation took me by surprise. (GAMBIT)
- 10 The children asked me lots and lots of questions about my trip. (BOMBARD)