

**sth (a course, a holiday, etc) is tailored to one's needs:** sth has been designed to provide the things that sb specifically needs

*At Fogey's holidays we have tailored our tours to meet the specific needs of older holidaymakers.*

**to talk sense into sb:** to persuade sb to stop doing sth foolish

*He wants to give up his job and become a rock star. Someone has to talk some sense into him!*

**to have (bad/good) taste in sth:** to have bad/good aesthetic sense when it comes to choosing things, relationships, places, etc

*He's got really good/bad/poor taste in clothes.*

**to be teeming with people/animals:** to be crowded with people or to be full of animals (conveys the idea of a lot of movement)

*The plains below us were teeming with wildlife.*

**to think nothing of doing sth:** to think that sth is normal and not be bothered about it (whereas most people would find it unusual/difficult)

*A lot of people in Japan think nothing of travelling for three hours to get to work.*

**to thrive on sth:** to enjoy and be stimulated by sth that most people would find unenjoyable, difficult and unpleasant

*He thrives on working under pressure.*

**to be translated into another language:** to be said/written in another language

*Most of his books have been translated into Chinese.*

**to be unique to one thing/person/place:** to belong to or concern only that thing/person/place

*"That is the Windrush tree. It is unique to this island," she said proudly.*

**to update sb on sth:** to give sb the most recent news about sth [Note: an update on]

*The President said that he wanted to be updated every hour on the progress of the peace talks.*

**to venture out:** to leave a place (and in doing so taking a risk because it might be dangerous outside)

*If you do decide to venture out, please remember to steer clear of the poorly lit streets.*

**to vie for sth:** to compete with sb for sth

*Three construction companies are vying for the contract to build the new town hall.*

**to be wary of sb/sth/doing sth:** not to trust sb because you think they might harm/trick you in some way/to be cautious about (doing) sth because you think it's dangerous

*I'm very wary of opening my door to strangers.*

**to withdraw money from a bank:** to take money from your bank account

*I'd like to withdraw £30 from my current account, please.*

## At... Prepositional phrases

**keep sth at bay:** (keep sth) away from you so that it does not hurt or trouble you

*We installed an electric fence around the house in the hope that it would keep the bears at bay.*

**at all costs:** whatever happens, used with the verbs **avoid** and **prevent**

*Drinking the tap water should be avoided at all costs.*

**to be/put at a disadvantage:** to have a disadvantage/sth gives you a disadvantage

*Obviously, the fact that they had 10 players and we had only 9 put us at a disadvantage.*

**to be at sb's disposal:** to be available for sb to use

*During your stay, all the hotel's facilities will be at your disposal.*

**at gunpoint:** with sb pointing a gun at you

*He was robbed at gunpoint.*

**to be at large:** to have escaped and not yet have been caught

*It is reported that the remaining convict, who was still at large last night, has been recaptured.*

**at the latest:** no later than (used with a time or a date)

*Entry forms must reach this office by May 3 at the latest.*

**at length:** for a long time (used for speaking/talking)

*In the interview, Clapton spoke at length about his childhood.*

**not to be at liberty:** (formal) not to have permission or the authority to say/do sth

*I'm afraid I am not at liberty to answer that question.*

**at long last:** finally

*At long last, the local council have put new street lights along Canal Avenue.*

**at a loss to explain:** unable to explain [Note: **to be at a loss for words:** not to know what to say]

*Her parents were at a loss to explain why she had done such a thing.*

*When she told me what had happened, I was at a loss for words.*

**at the most:** the maximum (for money and time)

*It won't be expensive. It will cost £4 at the most.*

**at (such) short notice:** with (so) little advance warning

*He apologised for telling us about the meeting at such short notice.*

**at a push:** with difficulty

*I can be there by 5 o'clock at a push, but no earlier than that.*

**at random:** not according to a particular system/pattern/method

*Students were chosen at random to fill in a questionnaire.*

**at this rate:** if we continue like this

*We're losing £100 a day. At this rate, we are going to go bankrupt in six weeks.*

**to be at stake:** to be at risk

*You can't give up on the expedition now. Too much is at stake!*



## Practice

### 1. Complete the sentences with an appropriate preposition.



- 1 This particular species of parrot is **unique** ..... this island.
- 2 We were told that, if we wanted to **venture** ..... at night, we should stick to the area around the hotel.
- 3 For a man who edits a fashion magazine, he has appalling **taste** ..... clothes.
- 4 Our one-to-one courses are **tailored** ..... the individual needs of each and every one of our students.
- 5 It was three o'clock in the morning and the streets were still **teeming** ..... people.
- 6 I hate **withdrawing** money ..... cash point machines. I'm always worried that I'll put my card in and I won't get it back.
- 7 Most people would hate the kind of attention he gets from the media. But not Jan. He **thrives** ..... it.
- 8 She'd been on holiday, so I **updated** her ..... what had been going on while she had been away.
- 9 You should always be **wary** ..... people selling electrical goods at dramatically reduced prices. They often fall to pieces within two days of your buying them.
- 10 Her last novel was **translated** ..... 25 different languages.
- 11 Now he says he wants to leave university. See if you can **talk some sense** ..... him. He won't listen to me.
- 12 With four games to go, Manchester United have already won the championship. Behind them and **lying** ..... second place are three other teams.
- 13 Elvis Presley would **think nothing** ..... getting on a plane and flying 2000 km just to buy his favourite kind of sandwich.

### 2. Complete the sentences with an appropriate word/phrase from the box below.

long last – random – the most – a push – all costs – the latest –  
a disadvantage – stake – large – bay – liberty – this rate –  
our disposal – length – such short notice – gunpoint – a loss

- 1 We managed to keep the mosquitoes **at** ..... by burning one of those all-night mosquito coils.

- 2 He looked at the speedometer, which read 30 miles per hour. "We'll never get there **at** ..... Can't we go a bit faster?"
- 3 "When's the deadline?" "I was told that everything had to be handed in by Tuesday **at** ....."
- 4 Hello, Karen, it's Mark. Look, I'm sorry to ask you this **at** ....., but could you take Claudia's classes tomorrow morning?
- 5 **At** ....., the council has decided to do something about the appalling state of the roads around here.
- 6 "We can't risk it," he said. "It's too dangerous. There are too many lives **at** ....."
- 7 She was **at** ..... to explain her son's behaviour. He liked school, so why on earth would he want to drop out?
- 8 It's not at all expensive. It will cost you £20 **at** .....
- 9 On being asked who had supplied her with the information, she told the reporters that she was not **at** ..... to divulge her source's name.
- 10 It's eight o'clock and it is already very hot. This is where the Northern Europeans are **at** ..... The Southern Europeans are used to playing in these temperatures, while we are not.
- 11 It's a highly infectious disease, so contact with people who have been infected with it should be avoided **at** .....
- 12 Police have warned the public that two of the escaped leopards are still **at** .....
- 13 The people who were interviewed for this survey were chosen **at** .....
- 14 On our way to the ranch, we'll be stopping off at the Buenos Rios hotel, where the swimming pool will be **at** .....
- 15 "We don't need to take three cars," she said. "We can get five people in mine. Maybe even six **at** ....."
- 16 In a particularly exciting scene in the film, the hero is robbed **at** .....
- 17 He spoke **at** ..... about the financial benefits of the project, its social implications, and even its effect on the environment.

