

at breakneck speed: extremely fast (generally for driving)

He took the corner at breakneck speed, lost control, and his car shot off the road.

sb comes from a broken home: sb's parents have got divorced (often used to suggest that the child's home life is/was unhappy)

Many of these young offenders come from broken homes.

a bumpy flight: a journey on a plane in which the plane moves about a lot because of air turbulence

It was quite a bumpy flight, which was a bit frightening for the more nervous passengers.

a capacity crowd: a crowd or audience that fills all of the seats in the room/hall/stadium

McCartney played to a capacity crowd wherever he went.

a catchy tune: a tune that is easy to remember [Note: **a catchy slogan/song**]

It will sell because it's got a catchy tune.

to have a clean driving licence: never to have been convicted of a driving offence

Applicants must have a clean driving licence.

common knowledge: sth everybody knows

It's common knowledge that they pulled strings to be where they are today.

a compulsive liar: a person who lies all the time and cannot stop himself from doing so [Note: If a book is **compulsive reading**, you can't stop reading it; if a TV programme is **compulsive viewing**, it is so interesting that you can't stop watching it]

Not only is he an inveterate cheat but he is also a compulsive liar.

a condemned building: a building that is going to be pulled down

She lived in a condemned block of flats in a run-down part of town.

a cushy job: a very easy job that does not take up too much of your time and usually pays well

She's got an incredibly cushy job. No wonder she gets out so often!

cutting-edge technology: the latest and most advanced technology

Using cutting-edge technology, we have designed a car that will outperform any other in its class.

a foregone conclusion: a result that you can predict with absolute certainty

Of course Benning will win. It's a foregone conclusion.

a mobile home: a large caravan, parked in a particular place and used as permanent accommodation [Note: **a mobile phone:** a portable telephone]

They bought a mobile home to spend their holidays in.

a non-stop flight: a flight which does not stop on the way to its destination

*"Are we stopping in Frankfurt?"
"No, it is a non-stop flight."*

to be in the public eye: to be continually appearing on TV, in newspapers and magazines

Constantly being in the public eye is one of the drawbacks of being famous.

a remote possibility/chance (that sth will/ could happen): very little possibility of sth happening

There is, I suppose, a remote chance that you'll get your money back, but I wouldn't bank on it.

a resounding success: a complete success

His seminars were a resounding success. There was never an empty seat.

small talk: conversation about unimportant things that people usually make at social occasions

I hate those parties where you don't know anyone and you just make silly small talk.

the sole survivor: the only person to survive an accident

It was a terrible accident. John Smith, the sole survivor, says the only thing he remembers was hearing a massive crash.

strong language: bad and offensive language

The film was given an 18 certificate because it contained a lot of strong language.

a total/complete stranger: sb you have never met before

I thought I knew him but when he turned round I saw that he was a total stranger.

a vicious circle: a difficult problem which creates new problems which cause the original problem to reoccur

She couldn't get a visa because she couldn't get a job, but she couldn't get a job because she couldn't get a visa. It was a vicious circle.

to have had a wasted journey: to arrive somewhere only to find out that you cannot do/get what you planned to do/get there

I'm sorry you have had a wasted journey, but we sold every ticket we had within half an hour.

Practice

1. *Collocate the adjectives below with the correct noun. Two of the nouns should be used twice. Completing the sentences in exercise 2 using the nouns below (a-u) will help.*

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1 a non-stop | a conclusion |
| 2 a cushy | b job |
| 3 a wasted | c tune |
| 4 a foregone | d crowd |
| 5 a catchy | e flight |
| 6 a compulsive | f speed |
| 7 the public | g driving licence |
| 8 a condemned | h liar |
| 9 a broken | i journey |
| 10 strong | j building |
| 11 a total | k home |
| 12 the sole | l knowledge |
| 13 a capacity | m survivor |
| 14 a vicious | n language |
| 15 a resounding | o possibility |
| 16 a clean | p stranger |
| 17 common | q success |
| 18 a bumpy | r circle |
| 19 breakneck | s eye |
| 20 a remote | t technology |
| 21 cutting-edge | u talk |
| 22 a mobile | |
| 23 small | |

2. *Complete the sentences using the nouns from exercise 1.*



- 1 No other passenger got out of the crash alive. She was the **sole**
- 2 He's got such a **cushy** He gets to work at eleven, does nothing and leaves at four.

- 3 He is incapable of telling the truth. He's a **compulsive**
- 4 They played to a **capacity** wherever they went. No matter how big the venue, not a seat remained empty.
- 5 They want someone with a **clean**, which counts me out as I was fined for speeding.
- 6 It was **common** that Sandra was planning to leave the company.
- 7 His last film was hardly what you'd call a **resounding** The critics hated it and it lost over ten million dollars.

- 8 He is living in a **condemned** on the Bays Road. I wonder where he'll go when they pull it down.
- 9 Not only was the film extremely violent but it also contained a lot of **strong**
- 10 Buenos Aires to London in twelve hours? It must have been a **non-stop**
- 11 I'd never met her before. She was a **total**
- 12 It's very unlikely that he'll win. There's a **remote**, I suppose. But it would take a miracle.
- 13 It's one of those songs with a really **catchy** It sticks in your mind.
- 14 You've travelled 200 miles to see him? But he moved last year. I'm sorry, it looks like you've had a **wasted**
- 15 The pilot said that there was a lot of turbulence en route and that we should expect a bit of a **bumpy**
- 16 He was driving around these narrow, winding mountain roads at **breakneck** in a powerful sports car. I was terrified.
- 17 She had a terrible childhood. Her father left home when she was five and, like most kids from a **broken**, she grew up feeling insecure about relationships.
- 18 Manchester United are playing the Women's Institute third team in the first round of the cup. That Manchester United will win is a **foregone**
- 19 This really is **cutting-edge** You won't find a more advanced scanner anywhere on the market.
- 20 It was a **vicious** We were losing customers so our sales were down. As a result, we had to put up our prices to cover costs. However, because we had put up our prices we lost more customers.
- 21 John is hopeless at **small** He gives one-word answers to anything you ask him!
- 22 Rather than live in a conventional house, he chose to live in a **mobile**
- 23 He says that he hates being on the front page of all the tabloids every other day, which is rubbish because we all know that he loves being in the **eye**.



bare feet: without shoes or socks on
I've told you not to walk in the garden in bare feet. You could tread on a thorn.

full marks: to get everything right in an exam/test and be given maximum points

I got full marks on the Listening Comprehension paper.

a gaping hole: a very big hole

I've got to go to the dentist. A filling fell out of one of my back teeth and now I have got a gaping hole in it.

a ghost town: a town that has been abandoned by most of its inhabitants and is empty and very quiet as a result

This place used to be thriving but, since that explosion at the nuclear waste factory, it's been a ghost town.

a golden opportunity: a very good chance (to get sth valuable or be successful)

Being offered a part in the most popular soap opera on American television was a golden opportunity for a young actor like him.

the gutter press: newspapers that concentrate on gossip and scandals rather than serious news

I wouldn't trust anything I read in the gutter press.

a heated argument: an argument which is very passionate and probably involves a lot of shouting

The two drivers got out, looked at the damage to their vehicles and a heated argument ensued.

a hefty fine: (informal) a big fine

If you get caught, you will have to pay a hefty fine.

the hot favourite: the one that everyone expects to win (the race, match, etc)

He is the hot favourite to win the title.

a household name: a name of a person or product that everyone knows

Pear Computers was launched in 1997, and within two years it was a household name throughout the world.

a husky voice: a deep, rough sounding but attractive voice

She had a deep husky voice that I found oddly attractive.

irreparable damage: damage that cannot be put right

The scandal was likely to do irreparable damage to his reputation.

The virus had done irreparable damage to their computers.

juicy gossip: very interesting, scandalous gossip

I've got a really juicy piece of gossip to tell you.

a nail-biting finish: a very exciting and dramatic end (to a sports match, book, film, etc)

It was a nail-biting finish to what had been a rather dull film.

the not-too-distant future: the near future

He claims that there will be a natural disaster of devastating proportions in the not-too-distant future.

a package holiday: a holiday in which everything (flights, hotels, meals, excursions, etc) is organised for you

He's far too independent to want to go on a package holiday.

rampant/galloping/spiralling inflation: inflation that is out of control

Rampant inflation was destroying the country's economy.

a recurrent/recurring dream: a dream that you have again and again

If you have a recurring dream, it means that you are worried about something.

a straight answer: a direct answer

I want a straight answer. Did you or did you not tell John that I hated him?

to get a/the wrong number: to make a mistake when you are dialling and get through to the wrong person

"Hello, is Derek there?" "No, I'm sorry, you have (got) the wrong number."

Practice

1. The words in bold below have been jumbled. Swap them around so that the sentences make sense.

- 1 Although 'Nosia' was only founded four years ago, it has become a household **dream**.
- 2 The gutter **gossip** got hold of the story and distorted it out of all recognition.
- 3 A recurring **future** about falling bothered him so much that he made an appointment with a psychologist.

- 4 I read this column in the Daily Herald because it's always full of juicy **press**.
- 5 In the not-too-distant **finish**, fossil fuels will have run out and we'll have to use alternative sources of energy.
- 6 They were shouting and waving their arms, clearly in the middle of a heated **name**.
- 7 Spiralling **damage** is making life increasingly difficult.
- 8 The fans were on the edge of their seats as they watched the nail-biting **argument**.
- 9 The flood did irreparable **inflation** to many of the city's oldest buildings.

2. a. Complete the noun combinations by providing the missing noun in column B. The first letter of the missing word is given and the spaces that follow indicate the number of missing letters. The **Association Words** box will provide clues for the missing Column B word. The meaning of the adjective half of the combination (A) is given in the **Meaning of A** column.

A	B	Meaning of A	Association Words
1 a heated	A _ _ _ _ _	angry, passionate	anger, words
2 a recurrent/recurring	D _ _ _ _	happening repeatedly	sleep, nightmare
3 the not-too-distant	F _ _ _ _	close, near	past, present
4 a golden	O _ _ _ _ _	good, not-to-be-missed	chance, possibility
5 irreparable	D _ _ _ _	cannot be fixed	destruction, repair
6 juicy	G _ _ _ _	scandalous	rumours, private life
7 a husky	V _ _ _ _	deep, hoarse	sound, speak
8 a straight	A _ _ _ _	honest and truthful	question, reply
9 a hefty	F _ _ _ _	large	money, punishment
10 full	M _ _ _ S	maximum	exam, points
11 a gaping	H _ _ _ _	very big	cavity, dig, leak
12 bare	F _ _ _ _	without shoes and socks	toes, inches
13 rampant	I _ _ _ _ _	rapidly increasing	economics, prices
14 the hot	F _ _ _ _ _	most people's	popular, winner
15 a/the wrong	N _ _ _ _	incorrect	six, four, nine
16 a ghost	T _ _ _ _	empty, abandoned	city, village
17 a package	H _ _ _ _ _	with everything organised	sun, rest, brochure
18 a nail-biting	F _ _ _ _ _	tense, exciting	end
19 a household	N _ _ _ _	very well-known	first, John
20 the gutter	P _ _ _ _	tabloid, sensationalist	paper, squeeze

- b. Now complete each of the sentences below with one of the above noun combinations.

1 Hello. Hello. Is Tim there? ... Tim Ford...
Is that 37465? ... Sorry, I must have got the

2 Stop beating about the bush
and give me a
Did you or did you not leak this
information to the press?

3 Twenty out of twenty. You got
..... in your composition.
Wow!

4 I'd never go on a
..... I like my
independence too much and I

hate huge resorts.

5 You shouldn't walk around the garden in
..... You could tread on a wasp.

6 I'm not surprised it sank. There's a
in the bottom of it.

7 If you are caught driving without insurance, not only
will you lose your licence but you will also have to pay
a

8 Newells Old Boys are the to win this
year's championship, and with the likes of Arano,
Jansen and Copani in their side who would bet
against them?

9 was crippling the country's economy.

10 When I spoke to his secretary for the first time, it was
on the phone. She had such a that
I thought I was talking to a man.

11 It wasn't so much a blazing row as a

12 At night, once the temperatures had dropped there
were people everywhere, but during the day it was a
.....

13 A scholarship to study at Cambridge! It was a
..... that she just had to take.

14 We believe that these pesticides are doing
..... to the environment, which is why
we want them banned - before it is too late.

15 There was a to the World Cup last
night, when, after thirty minutes of extra time, the
game went to a penalty shoot-out.