English Collocations in Use

Advanced

How words work together for fluent and natural English

Self-study and classroom use

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Varieties of collocations
7 Metaphor
8 Intensifying and softening adverbs
9 Make and verbs that mean make
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foot the bill, heavy burden, run into trouble
deply offensive, spotlessly clean, wildly inaccurate
make a contribution, make a habit of, turn in a profit
generally speaking, talk business, get a message across
take up office, work up an appetite, see off an intruder

Topics: work and study
make a living, take up a post, move up the ladder
fit the job description, land a new job, menial tasks
bear in mind, widespread belief, jump to conclusions
fierce competition, stimulate growth, hike in prices
fit for purpose, kick up a fuss, grounds for complaint
gifted child, mature student, thirst for knowledge
working hypothesis, confront issues, critical analysis

Topics: leisure and lifestyle
call for a celebration, social whirl, play host to juicy gossip, broach the subject, opening gambit
declare independence, reach agreement, bow to pressure
refuse point-blank, decline to comment, gauge reaction
date back to, movable feast, propose a toast
set the trend, fashion victim, flawless complexion
lengthy delays, grind the gears, bear left
get itchy feet, off the beaten track, leg of the journey
keep in shape, reach fever pitch, score an own goal
toy with an idea, tentative suggestion, deciding factor
star-studded cast, glowing reviews, hold one’s attention
## Topics: the modern world

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Collocations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30 Regulations and authority</td>
<td>minimise danger, grant permission, faceless bureaucrats</td>
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<td>31 The environment</td>
<td>dump waste, searing heat, offset carbon emissions</td>
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<td>32 Town and country life</td>
<td>back of beyond, rural idyll, urban regeneration</td>
</tr>
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<td>33 Personal finance</td>
<td>clear one’s debts, agreed credit limit, identity theft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 The economy</td>
<td>curb inflation, safeguard one’s interests, plummeting profits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 Social issues</td>
<td>antisocial behaviour, dysfunctional family, unfit for human habitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 Science and technology</td>
<td>harness technology, cutting edge design, wireless hotspots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37 Health and medicine</td>
<td>build up resistance, adverse reaction, shake off a cold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38 Criminal justice</td>
<td>custodial sentences, beyond reasonable doubt, trumped-up charges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39 War and peace</td>
<td>deploy troops, pre-emptive strike, collateral damage</td>
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## Topics: people

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Collocations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40 Friendship</td>
<td>lifelong friends, platonic relationship, heal the rift</td>
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<tr>
<td>41 Youth and age</td>
<td>child prodigy, go through a midlife crisis, senior moment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42 Celebrities and heroes</td>
<td>go into rehab, kiss and tell, heap praise on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43 Criticising people</td>
<td>bone idle, poison the atmosphere, nasty piece of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44 References</td>
<td>act as a referee, accumulate experience, financial acumen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 Appearance and personality</td>
<td>boundless energy, stubborn streak, act one’s age</td>
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## Basic concepts

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<th>Concept</th>
<th>Collocations</th>
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<td>46 Time and space</td>
<td>cramped conditions, waste of space, go down in history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47 Sound</td>
<td>husky voice, incessant noise, let out a cry</td>
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<tr>
<td>48 Making things easier</td>
<td>viable options, simplicity itself, take the easy way out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49 Difficulty</td>
<td>severe blow, hinder progress, encounter difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 Quantity and size</td>
<td>finite number, endless supply, unknown quantity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 Change</td>
<td>sweeping changes, would make a change, sudden shift</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Functions

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Collocations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>52 Stopping and starting</td>
<td>bring a halt to, close off a street, dispel rumours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53 Cause and effect</td>
<td>root cause, provoke an outcry, dire consequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54 Describing groups and amounts</td>
<td>swarm of bees, flurry of activity, stroke of genius</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 Comparing and contrasting</td>
<td>bear little resemblance to, polar opposites, draw a comparison between</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56 Making an effort</td>
<td>give it one’s best shot, abortive attempt, worth a try</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57 Social English</td>
<td>not lose any sleep, to be brutally honest, be on the go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58 Discussing issues</td>
<td>make a commitment, give a straight answer, miss the point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59 Negative situations and feelings</td>
<td>nasty shock, take exception to, suffer at the hands of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 Positive situations and feelings</td>
<td>sense of achievement, state of euphoria, derive pleasure from</td>
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Using this book

**What is a collocation?**
Collocation means a natural combination of words; it refers to the way English words are closely associated with each other. For example, pay and attention go together, as do commit and crime; blond goes with hair and heavy with rain.

**Why learn collocations?**
You need to learn collocations because they will help you to speak and write English in a more natural and accurate way. People will probably understand what you mean if you talk about making a crime or say there was very hard rain this morning, but your language will sound unnatural and might perhaps confuse. Did you mean that there was a lot of rain or perhaps that there was a hailstorm?

Learning collocations will also help you to increase your range of English vocabulary. For example, you’ll find it easier to avoid words like very or nice or beautiful or get by choosing a word that fits the context better and has a more precise meaning. This is particularly useful if you are taking a written exam in English and want to make a good impression on the examiners. In advanced level exams, marks are often specifically awarded for the appropriate handling of collocation.

At an advanced level an appreciation of collocation can also be helpful in terms of appreciating other writers’ use of language. Skilled users of the language may choose to create effects by varying the normal patterns of collocation, with the aim of either startling or amusing their audience. This technique is particularly popular with poets, journalists and advertisers. From an appreciation of the way in which creative writers play with language, you may then even want to move on to use words in more original ways yourself. You are more likely to be able to do this effectively if you have assimilated the standard patterns of language use presented in this book.

**How were the collocations in this book selected?**
The collocations presented in this book were all selected from those identified as significant by the CANCODE corpus of spoken English, developed at the University of Nottingham in association with Cambridge University Press, and the Cambridge International Corpus of written and spoken English. We also made extensive use of the Cambridge Learner Corpus, a corpus of student language which showed us what kind of collocation errors learners tend to make.

These corpora show that there are many thousands of collocations in English. So how could we select which ones would be most useful for you to work on in this book?

Firstly, of course, we wanted to choose ones that you might want to use in your own written and spoken English. So, in the unit Health and medicine we include, for example, shake off a cold and respond well to treatment but not grumbling appendix, which is a strong collocation, but one which – we hope – most of you will not feel the need for.

Secondly, we decided it would be most useful for you if we focused on those collocations which are not immediately obvious. A pretty girl, a modern car or to buy a ticket are all collocations, but they are combinations which you can easily understand and produce yourself without any problems. So we deal here with less obvious word combinations, for instance, flatly contradict (not strongly contradict) and bitter enemies (not serious enemies).
Some of you may have already used our English Collocations in Use Intermediate. In general, we have tried to avoid focusing on collocations that we dealt with in that book. The one exception is with collocations that the Cambridge Learner Corpus highlighted as causing frequent problems for students, even in advanced level exams. We felt that it would be useful to draw attention to such collocations again, even if we had dealt with them previously.

Idioms can be seen as one type of collocation. We deal with them separately in English Idioms in Use, and so do not focus on them here.

**How is the book organised?**

The book has 60 two-page units. The left-hand page presents the collocations that are focused on in the unit. You will usually find examples of collocations in typical contexts with, where appropriate, any special notes about their meaning and their usage. The right-hand page checks that you have understood the information on the left-hand page by giving you a series of exercises that practise the material just presented.

The units are organised into different sections. First we start with important information relating to learning about collocations in general. Then there is a section focusing on different types of collocation. The rest of the book deals with collocations that relate to particular topics such as Student life and Film and book reviews, concepts such as Sound or Difficulty and functions such as Cause and effect or Comparing and contrasting.

The book has a key to all the exercises and an index which lists all the collocations we deal with, and indicates the units where they can be found.

**How should I use this book?**

It is strongly recommended that you work through the six introductory units first, so that you become familiar with the nature of collocations and with how best to study them. After that, you may work on the units in any order that suits you.

**What else do I need in order to work with this book?**

You need a notebook or file in which you can write down the collocations that you study in this book, as well as any others that you come across elsewhere.

You also need to have access to a good dictionary. At this level we strongly recommend the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary as this gives exactly the kind of information that you need to have about collocations. It does this both through the examples provided for each word entry and through special collocations boxes or mini-panels. Your teacher, however, may also be able to recommend other dictionaries that you will find useful. If you have access to the Internet, you will also find this a useful source of information about language use and we occasionally suggest possible activities using the web.

So, a study of collocation is highly recommended (Unit 8) if you want to impress people with your natural and accurate use of language and to gain more marks (Unit 1) in English exams. Above all, we sincerely hope (Unit 57) both that this book will help you acquire the knowledge (Unit 17) you need about English collocations and also that you will thoroughly enjoy (Unit 8) working through the units in English Collocations in Use Advanced.