

4 Types of collocation

There are many different types of collocation. Here are some examples.

A Adjectives and nouns

Notice adjectives that are typically used with particular nouns.

Emma always wears red or yellow or some other **bright colour**.

We had a **brief chat** about the exams but didn't have time to discuss them properly.

Unemployment is a **major problem** for the government at the moment.

Improving the health service is another **key issue** for government.

B Nouns and verbs

Notice how nouns and verbs often go together. The examples below are all to do with economics and business.

The **economy boomed** in the 1990s. [the economy was very strong]

The company has **grown** and now employs 50 more people than last year.

The company has **expanded** and now has branches in most major cities.

The two **companies merged** in 2013 and now form one very large corporation.

The company **launched the product** in 2012. [introduced the product]

The price increase **poses a problem** for us. [is a problem]

The internet has **created opportunities** for our business. [brought new opportunities]

C Noun + noun

There are a lot of collocations with the pattern *a ... of ...*.

As Max read the lies about him, he felt **a surge of anger**. [literary: a sudden angry feeling]

Every parent feels **a sense of pride** when their child does well or wins something.

I felt **a pang of nostalgia** when I saw the old photos of the village where I grew up.

D Verbs and expressions with prepositions

Some verbs collocate with particular prepositional expressions.

As Jack went on stage to receive his gold medal for the judo competition you could see his parents **swelling with pride**. [looking extremely proud]

I was **filled with horror** when I read the newspaper report of the explosion.

When she spilt juice on her new skirt the little girl **burst into tears**. [suddenly started crying]

E Verbs and adverbs

Some verbs have particular adverbs which regularly collocate with them.

She **pulled steadily** on the rope and helped him to safety. [pulled firmly and evenly]

He **placed** the beautiful vase **gently** on the window ledge.

'I love you and want to marry you,' Dylan **whispered softly** to Madison.

She **smiled proudly** as she looked at the photos of her new grandson.

F Adverbs and adjectives

Adjectives often have particular adverbs which regularly collocate with them.

They are **happily married**.

I am **fully aware** that there are serious problems. [I know well]

Harry was **blissfully unaware** that he was in danger. [Harry had no idea at all, often used about something unpleasant]

4.1 Complete each sentence with a collocation from A.

- 1 Come to my office ten minutes before the meeting so we can have ...
- 2 With her lovely dark hair Ella looks best when she wears ...
- 3 In your essay on the influence of TV, don't forget to discuss these ...
- 4 There is some crime in our town but it isn't ...

4.2 Replace the underlined words with a collocating verb from B.

- 1 We are going to introduce an exciting new product in June.
- 2 The economy was extremely high 30 years ago.
- 3 The new university they are planning will provide a lot of job opportunities.
- 4 There are always some problems when two companies join together but I think it will be worth it in the long run.
- 5 The increase in oil prices certainly creates a problem for us.
- 6 The company got bigger and has now added children's clothing to its product range.

4.3 Choose the correct feeling from the box to complete each sentence.

anger	horror	tears	nostalgia	pride	pride
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- 1 Most older people feel a slight pang of as they think back on their schooldays.
- 2 Grace's father was filled with when he saw that she had dyed her beautiful black hair blonde.
- 3 When Daniel saw how harshly the poor were treated by the wealthy landowners he felt a surge of
- 4 Swelling with, Jack watched his daughter pick up her violin and play.
- 5 When she saw her exam results, Kate burst into
- 6 If people have a sense of in their town, they are more likely to behave well there.

4.4 Look at E and F and choose the correct adverb to complete these sentences.

- 1 Perhaps it's a good thing that Liam's unaware of what people really think of him.
- 2 I am aware that there will be problems whatever we decide.
- 3 Stella smiled as she watched the children playing happily in the garden.
- 4 My grandparents have been married for 45 years.
- 5 Place the glasses in the box – they're very fragile.
- 6 William whispered in Anna's ear that he would always love her.

4.5 Which of the sections A–F on the opposite page would each of these collocations fit into?

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 make a decision | 6 roar with laughter |
| 2 blissfully happy | 7 a key factor |
| 3 tread carefully | 8 prices rise |
| 4 a surge of emotion | 9 a ginger cat |
| 5 acutely embarrassing | 10 burst into song |

Often, collocations rather than individual words suggest a particular register. For example, phrases using *pretty* meaning *fairly* sound informal when used with negative adjectives (**pretty awful**, **pretty dreadful**, **pretty dull**), and are typical of spoken English.

A Spoken English

Here are some more collocations which are almost exclusively found in spoken English.

I'm **bored stiff**¹ in this lesson!



¹ extremely bored

You **badly need** a haircut!



I'll **have a think** about it and let you know.



Give me a ring² when you get home.



² give me a phone call

B Formal English

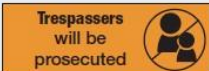
Some collocations are typical of formal English and are most likely to be found in an official, often legal, context, such as in notices.



[get off the bus]



[get off their bicycles]



[people who go onto someone's land or enter their building without permission will be taken to court]



¹ throw away

² container used for storing or putting objects in

C Newspaper English

Some collocations – particularly ones that use short, dramatic words – are found mainly in newspapers. In most cases they would not normally be used in everyday conversation.

COMPUTER FACTORY
TO AXE JOBS

[make staff redundant]

AIRLINE SLASHES PRICES

[cuts prices drastically]

Government **spending** will
rocket this year

POLICE CRACK DOWN ON SPEEDING

[start dealing with it in a more severe way]

POLICE QUIZ 16-YEAR-
OLD IN MURDER ENQUIRY

[ask questions]

FLU OUTBREAK HITS SOUTHERN EUROPE

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D Business English

Some collocations are characteristic of business English.

to **submit a tender** [present a document offering to do a job and stating the price]

to **raise capital** [get money to put into a business]

to **go into partnership with** someone [agree to start or run a business with someone]

to **start up a business**

5.1 Underline formal (F) or informal (I) collocations in these sentences (one per sentence) and put F or I in the brackets at the end.

- 1 Cyclists should dismount before crossing the footbridge. ()
- 2 Never dispose of batteries and similar items by throwing them onto a fire. ()
- 3 The students were all bored stiff by the lecture. ()
- 4 Passengers must alight from the bus through the rear door. ()
- 5 The grass badly needs cutting. ()
- 6 Please place all used tickets in the receptacle provided as you leave the building. ()

5.2 Underline typical news/media collocations in these newspaper clips.

1 **OIL COMPANIES SLASH PRICES**
There was good news for motorists today as pump prices were lowered by the major oil companies.

3 **FLOODS HIT CENTRAL REGION**
Towns and villages in the Central region were battling against floods tonight as heavy rain continued.

2 **DETECTIVES QUIZ BUSINESSMAN OVER MISSING TEENAGER**
Senior detectives interviewed a man who has been named as prime suspect in the case of a missing 18-year-old who is feared to have been abducted.

4 **CAR FIRM TO AXE 200 JOBS**
The Presco car firm has announced that 200 workers will be made redundant at its Kenton factory. The job losses are the result of falling profits.

5.3 Rewrite the headlines in exercise 5.2 using collocations more typical of ordinary conversation, as if you were telling a friend the news. Start each answer with 'Have you heard ...?' Use a dictionary if necessary.

5.4 Match the beginning of each sentence on the left with its ending on the right to make typical collocations used in business English.

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 1 We raised | partnership to develop a new range of products. |
| 2 They submitted | capital to expand the business. |
| 3 They went into | a business to supply sports equipment to schools. |
| 4 We started up | a tender for the new stadium. |

5.5 Choose a formal or informal collocation as instructed at the end of each sentence. Use a dictionary if necessary.

- 1 She was *dead* / *extremely keen* to meet the new coach. (informal)
- 2 We will be *boarding the aircraft* / *getting on the plane* in about ten minutes. (formal)
- 3 Mr Trotter *paid for* / *bore the cost of* the repairs. (formal)
- 4 I *withdrew from* / *dropped out of* my university course after a year. (informal)
- 5 The marketing manager *launched into* / *embarked upon* a detailed explanation of her new strategy. (informal)