

2

Finding, recording and learning collocations

A

Finding collocations

There are two main ways in which you can find collocations.

- You can train yourself to notice them whenever you read or listen to anything in English.
Look at the collocations that are worth learning from this short text in English.

After **giving** Mark a **lift** to the airport, Julie **made her way** home. What an exciting **life** he **led**! At times Julie felt **desperately jealous** of him. She **spent her time** doing little more than **taking care of** him and the children. Now her sister was **getting divorced** and would doubtless be **making demands on** her too. Julie had promised to **give** her sister **a call** as soon as she got home but she decided to **run** herself **a bath** first. She had a **sharp pain** in her side and hoped that a hot bath might **ease the pain**.

Tip

Get into the habit of making a note of any good collocations you come across in any English text you read.

- You can find them in any good learner's dictionary.

For example, if you look up the word *sharp* you will find some of these collocations:

- a **sharp pain**
- a **sharp bend/turn**
- a **sharp contrast/difference/distinction**
- a **sharp rise/increase/drop**

Tip

When you look up a new word, make a point of noting it down in several different collocations.

B

Recording collocations

The best way to record a collocation is in a phrase or a sentence showing how it is used. Highlight the collocation by underlining it or by using a highlighting pen.

For example: I don't have access to that kind of secret information.

Or: Jim gave me a very useful piece of advice.

C

Learning collocations

Learning collocations is not so different from learning any vocabulary item. The key things are to:

- regularly revise what you want to learn
- practise using what you want to learn in contexts that are meaningful for you personally

- learn collocations in groups to help you fix them in your memory. You might group together collocations relating to the same topic. Or you might group collocations based on the same word, for example:

I must **find a way** to help him.

Can you **find your way** back to my house?

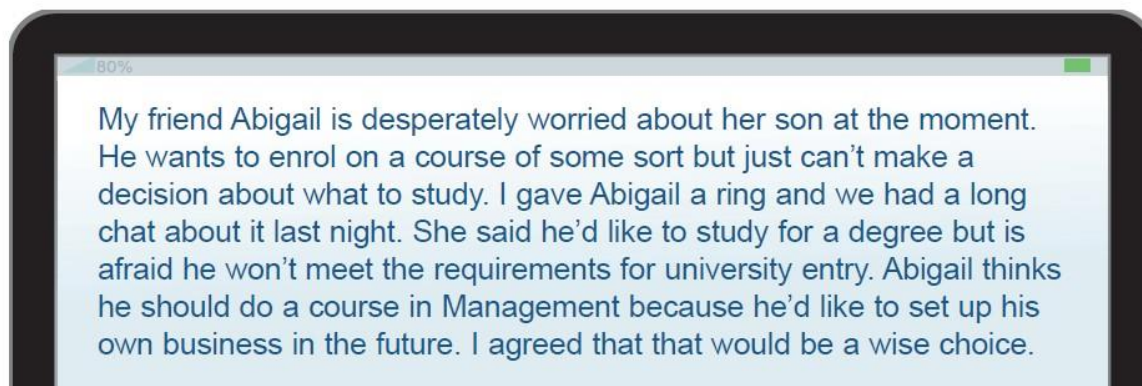
I **learnt the hard way** that Jack can't be trusted.

Please tell me if I'm **getting in your way**.

You must **give way to** traffic from the left.

I've **tried every possible way** to get him to change his mind.

2.1 Underline 11 collocations in this text.



2.2 Match the beginning of each sentence on the left with its ending on the right.

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1 She's having | her duty. |
| 2 She's taking | a lecture. |
| 3 She's giving | a party. |
| 4 She's making | an exam. |
| 5 She's doing | good progress. |

2.3 Correct the eight collocation errors in this text. Use a dictionary to help you if necessary.

In the morning I made some work in the garden, then I spent a rest for about an hour before going out to have some shopping in town. It was my sister's birthday and I wanted to do a special effort to cook a nice meal for her. I gave a look at a new Thai cookery book in the bookshop and decided to buy it. It has some totally easy recipes and I managed to do a good impression with my very first Thai meal. I think my sister utterly enjoyed her birthday.

2.4 Look at this entry for the verb *lead* in the *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. What collocations could you learn from this entry? Underline or highlight them. Then write one new sentence for each of them.

lead CONTROL E /li:d/ *verb* [I or T] (led, led) to control a group of people, a country, or a situation: *I think we've chosen the right person to lead the expedition.* ○ *I've asked Gemma to lead the discussion.* ○ *Who will be leading the inquiry into the accident?*
● **lead sb by the nose** *INFORMAL* to control someone and make them do exactly what you want them to do

Over to you

Use a dictionary to find three or four other good collocations for each of these words:

desperately pain wise run

Write the collocations you find in an appropriate way in your vocabulary notebook.