

Introduction

What is a collocation?

A collocation is two or more words that often go together. These combinations just sound "right" to native English speakers, who use them all the time. On the other hand, other combinations may be unnatural and just sound "wrong".

Look at these examples:

natural English...	unnatural English...
the fast train	the quick train
fast food	quick food
a quick shower	a fast shower
a quick meal	a fast meal

Why learn collocations?

- ✓ Your language will be more natural and more easily understood.
- ✓ You will have alternative and richer ways of expressing yourself.
- ✓ It is easier for our brains to remember and use language in chunks or blocks rather than as single words.

How to learn collocations

- ✓ Be aware of collocations, and try to recognize them when you see or hear them.
- ✓ Treat collocations as single blocks of language. Think of them as individual blocks or chunks, and learn *strongly support*, not *strongly + support*.

- ✓ When you learn a new word, write down other words that collocate with it (*remember rightly, remember distinctly, remember vaguely, remember vividly*).
- ✓ Read as much as possible. Reading is an excellent way to learn vocabulary and collocations in context and naturally.
- ✓ Revise what you learn regularly. Practice using new collocations in context as soon as possible after learning them.
- ✓ Learn collocations in groups that work for you. You could learn them by topic (time, number, weather, money, family) or by a particular word (*take action, take a chance, take an exam*).
- ✓ You can find information on collocations in any good learner's dictionary. Moreover, you can find specialized dictionaries of collocations.

Types of collocation

There are several different types of collocation made from combinations of verb, noun, adjective etc. Some of the most common types are:

- a) adverb + adjective: completely satisfied (NOT ~~downright~~ satisfied)
- b) adjective + noun: excruciating pain (NOT excruciating joy)
- c) noun + noun: a surge of anger (NOT a ~~rush~~ of anger)
- d) noun + verb: lions roar (NOT lions ~~shout~~)
- e) verb + noun: commit suicide (NOT ~~undertake~~ suicide)
- f) verb + expression with preposition: burst into tears (NOT ~~blow up in~~ tears)
- g) verb + adverb: wave frantically (NOT wave ~~feverishly~~)

Sample Collocations

There are several different types of collocation. Collocations can be adjective + adverb, noun + noun, verb + noun and so on. Below you can see seven main types of collocation in sample sentences.

1. Adverb + adjective

- Invading that country was an utterly stupid thing to do.
- We entered a richly decorated room.
- Are you fully aware of the implications of your action?

2. Adjective + noun

- The doctor ordered him to take regular exercise.
- The Titanic sank on its maiden voyage.
- He was writhing on the ground in excruciating pain.

3. Noun + noun

- Let us give Mr. Jones a round of applause.
- The ceasefire agreement came into effect at 11 am.
- I would like to buy two bars of soap please.

4. Noun + verb

- The lion started to roar when it heard the dog barking.
- Snow was falling as our plane took off.
- The bomb went off when he started the car engine.

5. Verb + noun

- The prisoner was hanged for committing murder.
- I always try to do my homework in the morning, after making my bed.
- He has been asked to give a presentation about his work.

6. Verb + expression with preposition

- We had to return home because we had run out of money.
- At first, her eyes filled with horror, and then she burst into tears.
- Their behavior was enough to drive anybody to crime.

7. Verb + adverb

- She placed her keys gently on the table and sat down.
- Mary whispered softly in John's ear.
- I vaguely remember that it was growing dark when we left.

What is “Collocation Farm” ?

The “Collocation Farm” is a list containing 2,469 of the most frequent and useful collocations that occur in written academic English. The collocations have been listed under both of the headwords they contain in order to make them easier to find. This means, for example, that the collocation “*great accuracy*” appears both under the headword *great* and the headword *accurate*. The collocation *accurate description* likewise appears under *accurate*, as well as under the headword *describe*. This means each collocation appears twice in the list, once for each headword. Studying collocations is an important way to build up your academic vocabulary, and the “Collocation Farm” is one useful tool to help you do this.

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Headword	Collocations
ability	cognitive ability
abstract	abstract concept
abuse	sexual abuse
academy	(in) academic circles, academic achievement, academic career, academic community, academic debate, academic discipline, academic discourse, academic institution, academic journal, academic life, academic performance, academic research, academic skills, academic study, academic success, academic work, academic world, academic writing, academic year
accept	accept responsibility, acceptable behavior, socially acceptable, widespread acceptance, (be) commonly accepted, (be) generally accepted, (be) universally accepted, (be) widely accepted
access	allow access (to), deny access (to), direct access, easy access, electronic access, equal access, free access, gain access (to), give access (to), have access (to), internet access, limited access, online access, open access, provide access (to), public access, ready access, unlimited access, easily accessible, readily accessible

account	brief account, comprehensive account, historical account
accurate	great accuracy, accurate assessment, accurate description, accurate information, accurate measurement, accurate picture, accurate record
achieve	achieve (a) goal, achieve (an) objective, achieve (an) outcome, academic achievement
acquire	acquire knowledge, newly acquired
act	sexual act, appropriate action, collective action, legal action, military action, positive action, active involvement, active participant, active participation, active role, (be) actively involved, political activism, commercial activity, cultural activity, economic activity, engage in (an) activity, human activity, learning activity, physical activity, political activity, professional activity, related activity, social activity, undertake (an) activity
acute	particularly acute, acutely aware
add	add information
additional	additional cost, additional information, additional problem, additional resources, additional support
address	address (an) issue
adjust	structural adjustment, make adjustments
administrate	public administration, administrative practices

context	broader context, cultural context, economic context, global context, historical context, institutional context, international context, original context, political context, present context, provide context, social context, specific context, wider context, contextual factors
continue	continued existence, continued growth, continued use, continuous process
contrast	marked contrast, sharp contrast, stark contrast, striking contrast
contribute	contribute significantly, contribute to (the) development (of), major contribution, make (a) contribution, significant contribution
control	central control, government control, internal control, personal control, (be) carefully controlled, (be) tightly controlled
controversy	controversial issue, highly controversial
convene	conventional view, conventional wisdom
convey	convey (a) message, convey information, convey meaning
convince	convincing evidence
cope	coping strategy
core	core area, core element, core issue, core skills, core value, central core
correct	correct (an) error, correct interpretation, politically correct
correlate	(be) highly correlated (with), (be) negatively correlated (with), (be) positively correlated (with), (be) significantly correlated (with),

	(be) strongly correlated (with), high correlation, negative correlation, positive correlation, significant correlation, significant correlation, strong correlation
cost	additional cost, rising cost
counter	counter argument
country	capitalist country, industrial country, industrialized country
cover	cover (a) range (of), cover (a) topic, cover (an) area, media coverage, provide coverage
create	create (an) environment, create (an) impression, create (an) opportunity, create conditions, create opportunities, create problems, newly created, creative process, creative thinking, creative work
crime	commit (a) crime, criminal offence
crisis	economic crisis
criteria	meet criteria, objective criteria, use criteria
critical	critical analysis, critical approach, critical attention, critical essay, critical evaluation, critical examination, critical factor, critical importance, critical inquiry, critical introduction, critical issue, critical perspective, critical point, critical reflection, critical review, critical role, critical scrutiny, critical theory, critical thinking, critical writing, highly critical, critically evaluate, radical critique

international	international agreement, international body, international community, international conference, international context, international journal, international organization, international treaty
internet	internet access
interpersonal	interpersonal relationships, interpersonal skills
interpret	interpret data, correct interpretation, historical interpretation, literal interpretation, alternative interpretation
intervene	effective intervention, government intervention
interview	conduct (an) interview
intimate	intimate relationship, (be) intimately connected (to, with)
intrinsic	intrinsic value
introduce	introduce legislation, brief introduction, critical introduction, introductory chapter, introductory section, introductory text
invest	foreign investment, private investment, foreign investor
investigate	empirical investigation, further investigation, scientific investigation
involve	(be) actively involved, (be) directly involved (in), become involved (with/in), get involved (with/in), active involvement, direct involvement
isolate	social isolation

issue	address (an) issue, central issue, complex issue, consider (an) issue, contemporary issue, controversial issue, core issue, critical issue, cultural issue, current issue, deal (with an) issue, discuss (an) issue, ethical issue, explore (an) issue, global issue, identify (an) issue, key issue, legal issue, main issue, major issue, methodological issue, practical issue, raise (an) issue, real issue, related issue, relevant issue, similar issue, single issue, special issue, specific issue, technical issue, theoretical issue, wider issue, environmental issues
item	individual item
journal	academic journal, international journal, online journal, publish (a) journal, scholarly journal
judgement	make(a) judgement
keenly	keenly aware
key	key area, key aspect, key characteristic, key component, key concept, key element, key factor, key feature, key findings, key issue, key objective, key player, key policy, key principle, key role, key source, key text, key theme, key topic
know	(be) commonly known (as), (be) generally known (as, by), (be) widely known, previously known
knowledge	acquire knowledge, background knowledge, historical knowledge, personal knowledge, previous knowledge, prior knowledge, professional knowledge, require knowledge, specific knowledge, tacit knowledge, technical knowledge

	recent research, scholarly research, scientific research, traditional research, undertake research
resemble	bear resemblance (to), closely resemble
resolve	conflict resolution, resolve (a) conflict, resolve (a) dispute
resource	additional resources, allocate resources, available resources, economic resources, electronic resources, financial resources, learning resources, limited resources, natural resources, provide resources, require resources, scarce resources, sufficient resources, use resources, valuable resources
respond	respond appropriately, appropriate response, emotional response, individual response
responsible	accept responsibility, assume responsibility, individual responsibility, personal responsibility, primary responsibility, social responsibility, take responsibility, (be) directly responsible (for), (be) largely responsible (for), (be) partly responsible (for), (be) primarily responsible (for), socially responsible
restrict	impose restrictions
result	final result, obtain (a) result, positive result, preliminary result, quantitative result, similar result, consistent results, experimental results
retrieval	information retrieval
review	review (a) study, annual review, brief review, comprehensive review, critical review

revise	revised edition, revised version
rich	rich source
right	legal right, natural right, individual rights
rising	rising cost
risk	risk assessment, increased risk, potential risk
role	active role, assume (the) role (of), central role, consider (the) role (of), critical role, crucial role, direct role, dominant role, essential role, examine (the) role (of), key role, leading role, major role, minor role, pivotal role, play (a) role (in), prominent role, significant role, take (a) role (in), take on (the) role (of, as), take up (the) role (of, as), vital role
root	(be) deeply rooted, historical roots
roughly	roughly equal, roughly equivalent
rule	legal rule, ruling class, ruling party
rural	rural area, rural community, rural economy, rural population, rural society
safe	safe sex, personal safety
salient	salient characteristic, salient feature
sample	random sample