

Collocations

What are Collocations?

Collocations are groups of two or more words which are generally used together. A collocation is therefore a fixed combination of words which are used in order to convey a specific meaning. For example, the words 'make' and 'belief' are used together in order to mean 'fake'.

Consider the following examples:

Correct	Incorrect
Break the law	Crack the law
Crack the exam	Break the exam

The words 'break' and 'crack' are synonyms. However, we always use 'break' and not 'crack' with 'law'. Similarly, 'crack' is always used with 'code'. This predetermined combination of words is known as collocation.

Correct	Incorrect
Fast food	Quick food
Quick witted	Fast witted
Catch a cold	Grab a cold
Grab a bite	Catch a bite
Watch TV	Look TV
Look into the matter	Watch into the matter

Importance of Collocations

- A sound knowledge of collocations can be helpful in learning the vocabulary of the language.
- It helps the learner grasp the finer nuances of the usage of the language.
- It enriches the language by giving the speaker alternative ways of expressing the same idea.

Example:

- A *variety* of tests
- A *battery* of tests

Types of Collocations

Following are some of the combinations of collocations in English:

Adjective and noun	rich vocabulary, stark contrast, heavy traffic, sharp features
Verb and noun	accept the offer, brew coffee, entrust responsibility, cry wolf, hold forth
Noun and noun	fuel tank, post office, soap bar, printer cartridge, round of applause
Verb and adverb	cry bitterly, fail miserably, cost dearly, speak softly, guess correctly

Adverb and verb	happily married, highly paid, grossly misunderstood, vaguely remember
Verb with preposition and noun	beamed with pride, take after someone, burst into tears
Noun and verb	flowers bloomed, plane taxied, bomb went off

Some Collocations Based on Common Verbs

Make

Make arrangements: The staff made arrangements for the picnic.
Make a choice: The customer has already made a choice.
Make progress: Raju made great progress in his new business.
Make an effort: She made an effort to reach out to her friends.
Make a contribution: The tenants made contributions to the charity.
Make a call: Can I use your phone to make a call?
Make a change: She is ready to make changes in the presentation.
Make a comment: Lalitha made a comment on how companies can usher in a change.

Do

Do ones best: I will try to do my best to find your lost pet.
Do business: It is risky to do business with him.
Do harm: The humid weather did more harm than good.
Do damage: The rumours did considerable damage to his reputation.
Do (someone) a favour: My friend did me a favour by letting me lend his house.
Do good: The coastal air did her health some good.
Do research: The team did research on the deteriorating quality of the city's air.
Do time (spend time in jail): He did time for an offence he committed in the 80s.
Do the dishes: Manu is in charge of doing the dishes.

Have

Have an advantage: The company had an advantage over their competitors.
Have an appointment: Christina left early since she had an appointment with the doctor.
Have fun: The children had fun at the village fair.
Have an argument: The tenants had an argument over the destroyed flowerbed.
Have a breakthrough: Tim had a breakthrough during his time at the medical school.
Have a care (be careful): He warned him before he left, "Have a care."
Have a conversation: Meena and Dev had a conversation over coffee.
Have a grudge: Sachin had a grudge against me over a trivial argument we had in school.
Have a heart: How could you be so cruel! Have a heart!

Collocations Based on Body

Collocation	Meaning	Usage
Have an eye for	Good at noticing	She has an eye for details.
Keep an eye on	Observe	Keep an eye on the students lest they copy.
Foot the bill	Pay the bill	The one who comes late foots the bill.
Go hand in hand	Go together	Lying goes hand in hand with stealing.
Head something	Lead	Marina headed the team.
Nod one's head	Agree	She nodded her head in approval.
Shake one's head	Disagree	Geeta shook her head at her son's insolence.
Raise an eyebrow	Suspicious	His sudden disappearance raised many eyebrows.
Clear one's throat	Draw attention	The teacher cleared her throat in class.
Fingers crossed	Hope	Let's keep our fingers crossed for the results.

Collocations Based on Movement

Collocation	Usage
Walked straight into	He walked straight into the library.
Run into	George ran into a debt.
Take off	The guests took off after the lunch.
Push (something) across	Martin pushed the bag across the table.
Charge at	The bull charged at the matador.
Jumped at	Manisha jumped at the opportunity.
Back down	The enemies backed down in the face of opposition.
Hit the rocks	Mr and Mrs Sharma's marriage hit the rocks.

Collocations Based on Thinking

Collocation	Usage
Think out of the box	We need fresh ideas, so please think out of the box.
Nagging doubt	Meena had a nagging doubt whether she locked the door.
Fuel speculations	The fight fuelled speculations that they are no longer friends.
Think deeply	I thought deeply about her question.
Fertile imagination	Little children have a fertile imagination.
Strongly believe	Arjun strongly believes that the watchman is the thief.
Bear in mind	Please bear in mind that you will have to be vigilant.
Wrestle with a thought	Lata wrestled with the thought of leaving her family.

Collocations Based on Business

Collocation	Usage
Record profits	The company announced record profits this year.
Pay rich dividends	A good decision will pay rich dividends later.

Collocation	Usage
Make a profit	The company made profit in the last quarter.
Dismiss an offer	The management dismissed Ganesh's offer.
Go bankrupt	Yasir went bankrupt after his last venture.
Impose a duty	The government should impose a higher duty on aluminium.
Widespread assumption	Rachna challenged the widespread assumption that girls are weak.
Move up the ladder	Ramesh knew how to move up the social ladder through glib talk.
Fierce competition	The product faced fierce competition from local players.

Collocations Based on Education and Knowledge

Collocation	Usage
Gifted person	She is a gifted person since she possesses so many qualities.
Thirst for knowledge	What drives him is his thirst for knowledge.
Fight illiteracy	The new government strives to fight illiteracy.
Higher education	Maria left for USA for higher education.
Vocational education	The colleges imparted vocational education to the students.
Pass an examination	Krishna passed the examination with flying colours.
