failure

1 Verb + failure

Use the correct form of these verbs:

admit *put (...) down to*
blame *criticise*
end in *feel*

1. I ..... such a failure! That's the third time I've tried to pass my driving test.
2. The government has been widely ..... for its failure to cut hospital waiting lists.
3. The attempt to climb K2 without oxygen ..... failure. The climbers had to turn back when they were only three hundred metres from the summit.
4. The easy way out is to ..... others for our failures. We should all face up to our own shortcomings.
5. Men are often too proud to ..... failure and ask for help.
6. He ..... the failure of his business ..... bad luck, not bad management.

2 Adjective collocations

We use a number of adjectives to emphasise failure. Match the two halves of these situations:

1. The office block had cost millions, but nobody was interested in renting offices so far from the city centre.
2. My older brother always did brilliantly at school and university,
3. The hospital simply wouldn't listen to what we had to say about the treatment of our baby.
4. After three hours of heated discussion, we had got nowhere, so we all went home.
5. It used to be that if you hadn't got married by the age of twenty-five,
6. The scheme to recruit more business people into teaching never got off the ground.

a. *you were considered a total failure as a woman.*
b. *It was a complete failure. The pay simply wasn't high enough to attract them.*
c. *The meeting had been a dismal failure.*
d. *We were frustrated by their total failure to understand the nature of our complaint.*
e. *The whole enterprise was a costly failure.*
f. *so, although I did quite well, I always felt a comparative failure.*

3 Noun + of + failure

Use these nouns in the following sentences:

risk *sense* *catalogue* *history* *fear*

1. The health service in this country has a long ..... of failure.
2. ..... of failure is one of the main reasons many students don't perform in examinations to the best of their ability.
3. I have to admit there is a slight ..... of failure with this type of operation. It's only about 5%, but it's still a risk.
4. Sir Michael's time as Minister has just been one long ..... of failures.
5. It's very important not to give children a ..... of failure.

4 Noun + failure

Complete the sentences below with these nouns:

business *heart* *power* *crop*

1. A series of ..... failures has led to widespread famine.
2. It was a ..... failure which plunged the town into darkness last night.
3. She died of ..... failure.
4. The decline in the economy led to an increase in ..... failures of over 50% last year.

Notes

1. In 1-3 'resulted in' is also possible.
2. Note the underlined expressions:
   The attempt to save the men trapped on board the submarine was doomed to failure right from the start.
   Frank is still coming to terms with the failure of his marriage.
3. Accidents are often caused by 'mechanical failure' of some kind:
   The official report on the rail crash blamed mechanical failure as the main cause of the accident.
4. Note the preposition in this expression:
   My father was a complete failure as a salesman.

LIVEWORKSHEETS