possibility

1 Verb + possibility

Choose the more natural collocations:

1. Keep trying. Don't give up until you have ..... every possibility. *(explored / discovered)*
2. Look, we've been investigating this case for almost two years now. I think we've ..... all the possibilities. *(tried / exhausted)*
3. I'm afraid that we can't give you an exact date for the completion of the building. We have to .... the possibility that bad weather may hold up progress. *(allow for / prevail on)*
4. This new breakthrough ..... the possibility of finding a cure for MS. *(raises / lifts)*
5. We can't ..... the possibility that the child was swept out to sea by a huge wave. *(forget / rule out)*
6. Hundreds of police were present at the Cup Final to ..... any possibility of a repetition of last year's fighting between rival fans. *(evade / avoid)*
7. Let's ..... a few other possibilities before we book the hotel. We might find somewhere a bit more convenient. *(examine / discover)*
8. The conviction of John Faulkner ..... the possibility that other crimes might be solved through the use of DNA evidence. *(opens up / suggests)*

2 Considering and rejecting possibility

Mark the sentences C if they mean 'considering the possibility' and R if they mean 'rejecting':

1. They are examining the possibility of a complete five-year ban on fishing in the North Sea.
2. It's not likely to happen but I wouldn't rule out the possibility.
3. Have you decided how you'll travel to the meeting?
   > No, I'm still considering the possibilities.
4. At this stage of our investigation we can't exclude the possibility that he may have been murdered.
5. We are also looking at the possibility of converting the old school into a hotel.
6. Before the election the President refused to entertain the possibility of defeat.

3 Likely or unlikely possibilities

Mark the sentences below L if they are likely to happen and U if they are unlikely to happen:

1. I think we should postpone our trip to the seaside. There's a strong possibility of rain this afternoon.
2. We need to do a number of further tests as there is a remote possibility that it could be cancerous.
3. Cloudy skies are forecast so there's only a faint possibility that you will see the eclipse of the sun.
4. If sales of our products don't improve soon, I'm afraid job losses remain a real possibility.
5. There's a distinct possibility that I will be in London next week. Perhaps we can meet up.

4 Common expressions

Complete the sentences below with the following:

every *various* *any* *one* *endless*

1. In order to clear your debts, you have a number of options open to you. Selling your car is just ..... possibility.
2. Is there ..... possibility of you giving me a lift to the station tomorrow night?
3. Have you decided what to do?
   > No, I'm still considering the ..... possibilities.
4. The cottage is surrounded by huge areas of open countryside. There are ..... possibilities for hill-walking and fishing.
5. There is ..... possibility that we will be able to complete the work on time. We're almost certain to meet the deadline.

Notes

1. Note this expression:
   We might holiday in space one day – it's not beyond the bounds of possibility.
2. If something 'has possibilities', it means it has potential:
   The house is a bit run down, but it has possibilities.
3. Both 'for' and 'of' can be used after 'possibility':
   There's a possibility of snow.
   The place has possibilities for development.

LIVEWORKSHEETS