

4 Collocation

A Verb + noun

Collocation is the common combination of particular words with each other, and particular **collocations** may be different in your language. In English, certain verbs **collocate with** certain nouns. You will need to learn many of these **collocations**.

In any school, the headteacher obviously has to **make an effort** to **set an example** to their staff and students, and that starts by **treating** everyone **with respect**. It is also their job to **take responsibility** for important decisions that the school makes. If things go well, the headteacher **gets the credit**; if they don't, he or she has to be prepared to **take the blame**.

Carrie had been **spreading a rumour** that Sean and Sophie were going to have a baby, although she told everyone else to **keep it a secret**. It was, therefore, quite a shock when Sean finally **broke the news** to everyone that they were going to get a cat. We all **roared with laughter** – everyone except Carrie.

GLOSSARY

make an effort (to do sth)	attempt to do sth, especially when it is difficult
set an example (to sb)	do sth good or well that people can try to copy or achieve: set a good example
treat sb with respect	behave towards sb in a polite and caring way OPP treat sb like dirt
take responsibility (for sth/sb)	accept a duty to deal with sth/sb, so that it is your fault if sth goes wrong OPP pass the buck make sb else responsible for a difficult situation
get the credit (for sth)	be admired and given the praise for doing sth successfully
take the blame (for sth)	accept responsibility for sth that goes wrong
spread a rumour	tell a lot of people about a piece of news or information that may not be true
keep (sth) a secret	not tell anyone about sth that others must not know ALSO keep a promise / an appointment / a record
break the news	be the first person to tell others about sth important
roar with laughter	laugh loudly or a lot

1 Yes or No?

- If you keep a promise, is that a good thing?
- If you get the credit for something, are you pleased?
- If you pass the buck, are others happy?
- If you take the blame, is that positive?
- If you treat somebody like dirt, is that good?
- If you spread a rumour, is that a good thing to do?
- If you treat someone with respect, will they be pleased?
- If you take responsibility, is that a bad thing to do?

2 Complete the sentences with a suitable verb + noun combination.

- Teenagers respond well to her because she them with
- I didn't tell anyone because Emma told me to it a
- My sister has been a that I'm getting engaged. It's not true.
- Tanya does a fantastic job, but doesn't always the she deserves.
- It was a very funny joke, and everyone with
- My parents a good to me, and now I always an to do the same with my children.
- I can't remember who the about the wedding, but we were all delighted.
- My boss never accepts responsibility for things. He always the and makes someone else the He's awful.
- Young people must learn to for their actions; it's part of growing up.

3 There are many combinations with take, make and set. Do you know which verbs combine with each of these nouns?

control of sth	a limit	an impression	pleasure in doing sth	sth on fire	
a profit	tablets	an offer	a look at sth	the standard	a noise

take: make: set:



B Adjective + noun

There are also many common **adjective + noun** collocations that you may need to learn. For example, a person you know well and like is a **close friend** (NOT a **near friend** OR an **intimate friend**).

EXAMPLE

*I gave them a **detailed description** of the burglary.*

*He speaks with a **strong accent**.*

*Our **main concern** for the party is the weather.*

*It was a **typical example** of his stupidity.*

*The house was **utter chaos** when I got home.*

*The children had a **narrow escape**.*

*Nice to see a **familiar face** at the party.*

*The **vast majority** of students passed.*

*My sister's ring is **pure gold**.*

*I thought he'd be tall but he was **the complete opposite**.*

MEANING

a description full of information OPP **brief description**

a very noticeable accent OPP **slight accent**

most important worry SYN **principal concern**

very good example SYN **perfect example**

complete confusion ALSO **utter nonsense**

ideas that you think are stupid or not true

= they were lucky to escape safely

a person you recognize and know

a very large majority

not mixed with anything else ALSO **pure silk/cotton**

a person or thing that is as different as possible from sb/sth else SYN **the exact opposite**

4 Cover the text above and match 1–8 with a–h.

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| 1 a familiar | a escape |
| 2 a typical | b chaos |
| 3 a vast | c face |
| 4 a slight | d opposite |
| 5 utter | e accent |
| 6 a detailed | f majority |
| 7 the exact | g description |
| 8 a narrow | h example |

5 Answer the questions. What's ...

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 a synonym for a typical example ? | 4 the opposite of a detailed description ? |
| 2 the opposite of a slight accent ? | 5 a synonym for the complete opposite ? |
| 3 a synonym for the main concern ? | 6 a noun that combines with utter ? |

6 Complete the dialogues with a suitable **adjective + noun** combination.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Was it true what your dad said? | ~ No, it was Don't believe anything he says. |
| 2 Did they all understand? | ~ No, the I had to explain it. |
| 3 You managed to avoid the accident? | ~ Yes, but it was a |
| 4 Are you worried about the exam? | ~ Yes, my is that I get nervous. |
| 5 Did the top feel nice when you tried it on? | ~ Yes, lovely. It was |
| 6 Do you know what she looks like? | ~ Yes, my uncle gave me a |
| 7 Did you see your old friends in Cardiff? | ~ Yes, and it was great to see so many |
| 8 Ingrid's English is good. | ~ Yes, but she speaks with a |
| 9 Do you get on well? | ~ Yes, we're |
| 10 Was everything tidy when you got there? | ~ No, the place was in |

7 ABOUT YOUR LANGUAGE How would you translate the phrases above? Would you use similar adjective and noun combinations, or would they be different?



TEST YOURSELF