

85 Two-part expressions

These phrases consist of two main words, usually joined by **and** or **or**. The word order is almost always fixed, i.e. **backwards and forwards** (NOT **forwards and backwards**). Most are made up of near synonyms or opposites, and they are more common in spoken English.

Examples	Meaning
<i>We've been going backwards and forwards all day.</i>	move from one place to another and then back again, many times SYN back and forth
<i>First and foremost we need a plan.</i>	more than anything else
<i>They'll be here sooner or later.</i>	at some time in the future, probably soon
<i>We're considering the pros and cons of moving.</i>	the reasons for and against doing sth
<i>I learnt how to use a computer by trial and error.</i>	trying different ways of doing sth until you find the best one
<i>It costs £300 a month, more or less.</i>	1 approximately
<i>I've more or less finished this book.</i>	2 almost
<i>I see my cousins now and again.</i>	sometimes but not often; occasionally SYN now and then, on and off
<i>Who is responsible for law and order?</i>	a situation in which people obey the law
<i>The children got home safe and sound.</i>	safely; not harmed, damaged, lost, etc.
<i>I'm sick and tired of this weather.</i>	bored with or annoyed about sth, and wanting it to stop SYN sick to death of sth
<i>I've almost finished packing except for a few odds and ends.</i>	inf small things of little importance SYN bits and pieces

1 Form ten phrases using words in the box, adding either **and** or **or**.

trial more the pros back sick sooner odds safe ends on
law cons forth less order tired later off error sound

2 Complete the phrase in each sentence.

- I'm sick to _____ of these exams. Thank goodness there is only one more.
- I've collected most of my stuff. I just have to get a few more bits and _____.
- We had a class discussion looking at the pros and _____ of Esperanto.
- First and _____, we have got to establish where we want to go.
- It was a terrible flight, but we finally got here safe and _____.
- I'm moving stuff into my flat, and I've been going backwards and _____ all day.
- I think we've got more or _____ everything we need.
- It's a matter of law and _____, so the decision rests with the police.

3 Complete the dialogues with a suitable phrase.

- It looks like they're not coming. ~ No, they'll be here _____.
- You look miserable. ~ Yes, I'm _____ of the noise.
- How did you assemble that bookcase without instructions? ~ Basically just _____.
- Do you go to that restaurant a lot? ~ No, but we like to go _____.
- How many came in the end? ~ Oh, I'd say 20 _____.
- Have you got everything ready for the party? ~ Yes, except for a few _____.

4 ABOUT YOUR LANGUAGE Do you have expressions like these in your language? How would you translate the examples at the top of the page?

