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

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2 Complete the phrase in each sentence.

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

3 Complete the dialogues with a suitable phrase.

1 It looks like they're not coming. ~ No, they'll be here ..... .
2 You look miserable. ~ Yes, I'm ..... of the noise.
3 How did you assemble that bookcase without instructions? ~ Basically just ..... .
4 Do you go to that restaurant a lot? ~ No, but we like to go ..... .
5 How many came in the end? ~ Oh, I'd say 20 ..... .
6 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?**

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