

# 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 <b>back and forth</b>
<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 <b>now and then, on and off</b>
<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 <b>sick to death of sth</b>
<i>I've almost finished packing except for a few odds and ends.</i>	inf small things of little importance SYN <b>bits and pieces</b>

## 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?

