

A

What do we mean by word partners?

If you want to use a word naturally, you often need to know other words that are commonly used with it. These are called word partners or collocations, and they can be different from language to language. For example:

I **spent time** in Paris. (NOT I ~~passed~~ time in Paris.) I **missed the bus**. (NOT I ~~lost~~ the bus.)

We **have** children. (NOT We ~~get~~ children.)

I **made** a mistake. (NOT I ~~did~~ a mistake.)

It was a **serious injury**. (also a **serious illness**)

It's **quite likely** that we'll stay here.

[we'll probably stay here]

It **depends on** my parents. (NOT It depends ~~of~~ my parents. See [Unit 77](#).)

Language help

More word partners can be found in the *Cambridge Learner's Dictionary* for intermediate learners and the *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*.

B

Verbs and nouns

There are many verbs and nouns that are often used together.

Pavel **told** me a **joke** but I can't remember it. [told me a funny story]

I need to **lose weight**. [become less heavy; *opp* **put on weight**]

The doctor told my father that he should **go on a diet**. [eat less in order to lose weight]

It's very difficult to **predict the future**. [say what will happen in the future]

We won the game 2–1, and my brother **scored** the first **goal**¹.

My neighbour's **alarm went off**² in the middle of the night.

They **fell in love** and got married. Now Emily is **expecting a baby**³.

1



2



3



C

Adjectives and nouns

Many adjectives and nouns are often used together. These are all examples where the meaning is 'big' or 'a lot', but where we usually use a particular adjective.

We've got a **large number** of students/tourists this year. (*opp* a **limited/small** number)

I will need a **large amount** of money.

There's a **wide choice** of food available. (*opp* a **limited/narrow** choice)

Sergio has a **wide vocabulary** in English. (*opp* a **limited vocabulary**)

It's only a toy gun but it makes a very **loud noise**.

Her family is of **great importance** to her.

We went to a party last night and it was **great fun** [very enjoyable; we enjoyed it a lot].

There was **heavy traffic** on the motorway going out of town. (*opp* **light** traffic)

D

Adverbs and adjectives

The adverbs in the first three sentences mean *very*, the adverbs in the last sentence mean *fully/completely*. In each case, the adverbs and adjectives are common word partners.

I'm **terribly sorry** I'm late.

She's **well aware** of the problem. [She knows all about the problem.]

It's **vitaly important** that we get the right person for the job.

Ava is **fast asleep**, but the other two are still **wide awake**.

Exercises

74.1 Correct the mistakes.

- 1 Why does she ~~do~~ so many mistakes? *make*
- 2 My sister got a baby last month.
- 3 I'm sorry I'm late; I lost the bus.
- 4 There was an accident and Tommy has a grave head injury.
- 5 I don't know if I can come – it depends of the weather.
- 6 We passed three days in Amsterdam.
- 7 I wouldn't like to try and say the future.
- 8 My sister is waiting for a baby next month.
- 9 Axel said me a very funny joke.
- 10 She gave us a big amount of money.

74.2 Complete the text.

My mum went to see the doctor, and he told her to go on a ¹ *diet*. I think she knows that she needs to ² weight, but she's not happy about giving up chocolate. Anyway, I told her it's ³ important that she keeps to the diet, because if she ⁴ any more weight, it's quite ⁵ that she'll end up with a more ⁶ illness. Fortunately, I think she's ⁷ aware of that.

74.3 Replace *big* or *little* with a more suitable adjective.

- 1 You won't need a ~~big~~ amount of money. *large*
- 2 Why are they making such a *big* noise?
- 3 I've got quite a *big* vocabulary in French.
- 4 There is only a *little* choice of things we can buy.
- 5 We had a very *big* number of tourists this year.
- 6 I think the event had *big* importance for her.
- 7 Isabel only has a *little* vocabulary in English.

74.4 Complete the sentences and dialogues.

- 1 A: Why were they late? B: They got stuck in *heavy* traffic.
- 2 When I went into her bedroom, she was *asleep*.
- 3 A: Did you enjoy last night? B: Yes, it was *fun*.
- 4 I met Sasha in town. She told me she's *a baby* in June. Isn't that fantastic news?
- 5 A: We won 1–0. B: Who *the goal*?
- 6 Mathis *me a joke*, but I'm afraid I didn't understand it.
- 7 A: Are the boys asleep? B: No, they're still *awake*.
- 8 My neighbour's burglar alarm *at 2 o'clock this morning* and woke me up.
- 9 A: Why is she staying in Paris? B: She *in love with a French guy*.
- 10 I'm *sorry*, but I've lost your book – I'll buy you a new one.

74.5 Over to you

Look at the verbs and nouns in section B, and the adjectives and nouns in section C on the opposite page. Are they the same in your language? If possible, compare with someone else who speaks your language.