

A woman wearing a white wig and a black robe with a white collar, holding a large white scroll tied with a ribbon. She is looking upwards and to the right. The background is dark and textured.

# The Legal Profession

Unit 1B/Higher

# THE LEGAL PROFESSION – WORKING SKILLS

## THE IMPORTANCE OF COLLOCATION

Collocations are words that form natural partnerships in English. For example, we say,

'Merry Christmas!'

but

'Happy New Year!'

Why can't we say 'Merry New Year'? It's because a native wouldn't expect these words to go together. They do not form a good collocation. Legal English is full of collocations. They might be:

- **verb + noun**  
Do you **accept liability**?
- **noun + verb**  
The **gap** has **widened** between them.
- **verb + adverb**  
Could we please **discuss** this matter **rationally**?
- **adjective + noun**  
She made a **fatal error**.
- **adverb + adjective**  
This is a **highly contentious** dispute.

The key to learning accurate legal English is to have a good familiarity with collocation. Some nouns form good collocations with more than one verb. Some nouns form a good collocation with just one verb. The important thing is to start to notice accurate collocations and memorise them. For example:

to **draft** a contract  
**Good collocation:** to **honour** a contract  
 to **breach** a contract

to **write** a contract  
**Bad collocation:** to **respect** a contract  
 to **infringe** a contract

As you work through this book you will see many collocations. To help you notice and remember accurate collocations they have been put into a collocation bank for you, like this:

### Collocation bank

- to **draft** a contract
- to **honour** a contract
- to **breach** a contract

### Exercise 1

Look at these sentences. They contain collocations that are in Unit 1A. Complete the sentences with a word from the four choices on the next page.

- a Solicitors are allowed to \_\_\_\_\_ clients in court.
- b I'm afraid I can't help you. I am a commercial lawyer and this is a criminal \_\_\_\_\_.
- c What are the \_\_\_\_\_ for your case?
- d I will \_\_\_\_\_ my final law exams in June of next year.
- e My client is \_\_\_\_\_ a new factory and he needs advice about the relevant health and safety regulations.

a	A represent	B work for	C stand for	D advocate
b	A issue	B matter	C subject	D point
c	A grounds	B reasons	C motives	D basis
d	A pass	B make	C prepare	D take
e	A starting	B launching	C opening	D initiating

## THE IMPORTANCE OF PREPOSITIONS

As you work through this book you will see many prepositions. To help you notice and remember accurate prepositions in a legal context they have been put into a preposition bank for you, like this:

### Preposition bank

- an attorney **at** law  
'My daughter is an attorney **at** law in Atlanta.'
- to work **on** something  
'I'm currently working **on** a merger agreement.'
- to send a cheque **for** an amount of money  
'Please send a cheque **for** £2000.'
- subject **to** something  
'The goods are for sale at this price subject **to** availability.'

### Exercise 1

Complete these sentences with a preposition that you saw in Unit 1A.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| a The judge awarded my client €20,000 _____ damages.                                 | d Stephen works for a law firm _____ Manhattan.                                     |
| b Suing someone is a more informal way of saying starting proceedings _____ someone. | e When you are _____ dispute with someone you can start a claim in the civil court. |
| c A small claim is a claim _____ a maximum of £5000.                                 | f Could I take a look _____ your employment contract?                               |

### Exercise 2

Using the knowledge that you have about collocations and prepositions correct the language below.

'My name is Luigi and I am a lawyer **at** Milan. I work **into** a big law firm. Today I am very busy. I am **writing** a contract **to** a new client. This afternoon I am **speaking for** a different client in court. It is a **disrespect** of contract case. I think we will win the case because our **reasons** are very strong.'

'My name is Luigi and I am a lawyer \_\_\_\_\_ Milan. I work \_\_\_\_\_ a big law firm. Today I am very busy. I am \_\_\_\_\_ a contract \_\_\_\_\_ a new client. This afternoon I am \_\_\_\_\_ a different client in court. It is a \_\_\_\_\_ of contract case. I think we will win the case because our \_\_\_\_\_ are very strong.'