

CAMBRIDGE

# ENGLISH COLLOCATIONS IN USE

How words work  
together for fluent  
and natural English

Self-study and  
classroom use

Second Edition

---

## Intermediate

Michael McCarthy  
Felicity O'Dell

Experience  
Better  
Learning

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*promising start, bring something to an end  
make a breakthrough, fail miserably  
cause alarm, adverse effects, have a major impact  
vaguely remember, blot out a memory, have a feeling  
settle a dispute, agree to differ, heated argument  
firmly believe, colour someone's judgement  
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## Illustrations

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# Exercises

## 8.1 Answer these questions using collocations from A and B.

- 1 What can happen to men as they get older? (Clue: Think of their hair.)
- 2 What can happen if you are embarrassed? (Clue: Think of your face.)
- 3 What can happen if you get bad news? (Clue: Think of your face or hair.)
- 4 What can happen to the pages of a newspaper after a long time?
- 5 What happens to strawberries as they ripen?
- 6 The poet John Milton lost his eyesight at the end of his life. What is another way of saying that?
- 7 The composer Beethoven lost his hearing at the end of his life. What is another way of saying that?
- 8 At the end of Shakespeare's play, Hamlet loses his mind. What is another way of saying that?
- 9 If it is about to rain, what might happen to the sky?

## 8.2 Look at C, D and E opposite. Correct these sentences.

- 1 Dinosaurs got extinct thousands of years ago.
- 2 When I get married, I'd like to get lots of children.
- 3 Jasmine fell depressed after failing her final exams.
- 4 Niklas has always dreamt of getting famous.
- 5 Would you be interested in growing involved in this project?
- 6 More people have got homeless this year than in any previous year.
- 7 My sister got a baby last week.
- 8 My grandfather got a heart attack last winter.

## 8.3 Replace each use of *get* with a verb from the box.

fall	become	grow	have	make
------	--------	------	------	------

As you get older, you'll begin to understand your parents better. Getting angry with them all the time doesn't help. You may not want to go to summer camp when none of your friends will be there, but your parents know you will soon get new friends there. You would all have gone on a family holiday together if your grandmother hadn't got ill, but surely you can understand why they don't want to leave her. You'll feel much more sympathetic to your parents' feelings when you get a child of your own!



## 8.4 Complete the collocations in these sentences.

- 1 I think I'd go ..... if I had to put up with such a terrible boss!
- 2 It was a wonderful sunset. The sky ..... gold and we sat on the terrace enjoying it.
- 3 Once upon a time the walls were probably cream but they have ..... brown now and badly need repainting.
- 4 When I start ..... grey, I'm definitely going to dye my hair.
- 5 As the head teacher walked into the hall, the children all ..... silent.
- 6 The noise on the street ..... louder and I looked out of the window to see what was happening.
- 7 My grandmother is a little afraid of ..... ill while she is abroad.
- 8 I was so embarrassed that I ..... bright red.

## A

**Verb collocations referring to illnesses and injuries**

In most everyday situations you can use the verbs *get* or *have* with the names of illnesses, but you will improve your written style if you can use these alternative verbs and expressions.

verb	common collocations	example
catch	a cold, the flu, a chill, pneumonia	I got soaking wet and <b>caught a cold</b> .
contract [formal]	a disease, malaria, typhoid	Uncle Jess <b>contracted malaria</b> while he was working in Africa.
develop [formal]	(lung/breast) cancer, diabetes, AIDS, arthritis, Alzheimer's disease	My grandfather <b>developed Alzheimer's disease</b> and could no longer remember things or recognise people.
suffer from	asthma, hay fever, backache	She has <b>suffered from asthma</b> all her life.
have an attack of	bronchitis, asthma, hay fever, diarrhoea	She <b>had an attack of hay fever</b> and was sneezing non-stop.
be diagnosed with	(lung/breast) cancer, AIDS, leukaemia, autism	He was <b>diagnosed with lung cancer</b> and died a year later.
suffer / sustain [formal]	(major/minor/serious/head) injuries	The driver <b>sustained serious head injuries</b> in the crash.

## B

**Fitness and good health**

Look at this magazine questionnaire and note the collocations relating to fitness.

**Are You in Good Shape?**

- 1 Do you **take** regular **vigorous exercise**?
- 2 Do you eat a **balanced diet**?
- 3 Do you care about **healthy eating**?
- 4 Do you **follow** a personal **fitness programme**?
- 5 Do you always **stick to your programme**?
- 6 In general, have you **kept fit** over the last two years?

## C

**Talking about sickness and pain**

My poor friend Gina is **terminally ill**. [She will die soon.] She suffers **excruciating/unbearable pain** most of the time. Apparently it's an **incurable illness** that runs in her family.

Dave annoys everyone at work. He takes days off even for the most **trivial/minor ailments**.

It's a **serious illness**, but probably not **life-threatening**.

For a few days it was **acutely/intensely painful**, but now it's just a **dull ache**. My doctor **prescribed** me **some tablets** and they **relieved/alleviated the pain**.

Cora was **taken ill** the other day. She's in hospital. They're not sure what it is yet.

I had a **heavy cold** and a **splitting headache**, so I wasn't in a good mood. [the opposite of a heavy cold is a **slight cold**]

**Common mistakes**

In accidents, wars, etc., **things** get **damaged** and **people** get **injured**:  
Their **car** was **slightly damaged** but luckily **no one** was **injured**.



## A

## Collocations about newspapers

collocation	example
a (news) story breaks	The singer was out of the country when the <b>story</b> about his wife <b>broke</b> .
news comes in	TV newscaster: <b>News</b> has just <b>come in</b> of an earthquake.
news leaks out	Although the two stars tried to keep their relationship secret, <b>news</b> of it soon <b>leaked out</b> .
hit the headlines	The scandal is expected to <b>hit the headlines</b> tomorrow.
make headlines	A dramatic story like that will <b>make headlines</b> world-wide.
front-page headline	The scandal was the <b>front-page headline</b> in all the newspapers.
the latest news	<b>The latest news</b> from the earthquake zone is more hopeful.
be headline/front-page news	Any story about the Royal Family will <b>be headline/front-page news</b> in Britain.
item of news	The main <b>item of news</b> today is the earthquake in Broskva City.
run a story [publish a story]	The <i>Daily Times</i> recently <b>ran a story</b> about an affair between a famous rock star and a politician.
flick through the newspaper	He <b>flicked through the newspaper</b> as he didn't have time to read it properly.

## B

## The language of news stories

**MINISTER GIVES THE GO-AHEAD TO PLANS**

In a surprising **turn of events** last night, the government agreed to plans for the development of the City. **Interested parties**<sup>1</sup> will **hold talks** throughout the week.

<sup>1</sup> people or groups who have a connection with a particular situation, event, etc.

**ANTI-SMOKING CAMPAIGN**

The Minister for Health today **outlined plans** for a national anti-smoking campaign. The government intends to **launch the campaign** in the new year.

**MINISTER QUILTS**

The Arts Minister has resigned after only six months in the **top job**. He has **attracted attention** over his **controversial decision** to re-introduce charges for museum entry.

**TOURIST TAKEN CAPTIVE**

A tourist was **taken hostage** when rebel troops **seized control** of St Pips Airport last night. The government has **lost control of** the area. Our reporter in St Pips is **keeping a close watch on** the situation and we shall be **keeping you informed** as the **news develops**.

**PEACE TALKS END IN FAILURE**

Peace **talks** between the Eastern Liberation Army and the government of Karavia **broke down** last night. Civil war is now likely.

**LIGHTNING STRIKES**

A building **caught fire** when **lightning struck** a farm in Hampshire yesterday. Fortunately there was **no loss of life**.

Common **mistakes**

Note that we say **the latest news**, NOT the last news.

- 36.3** 1 turn; keep; comes 4 hold; interested  
 2 seized; taken 5 top; controversial  
 3 struck; caught 6 launched

### Unit 37

- 37.1** 1 Emilia 4 Patrick  
 2 Hannah 5 Anthony  
 3 Lauren

- 37.2** 1 soared 4 rock-bottom/ridiculous  
 2 ridiculous price 5 went; go up / rise  
 3 reasonably priced

- 37.3** 1 make 5 raise  
 2 making; steady 6 small; tied up  
 3 tight 7 big; seriously  
 4 going; short

### Unit 38

- 38.1** 1 go; avert 3 fight  
 2 raged; opened 4 join(ed); horrors

- 38.2** 1 The war between the two countries **broke out** in 1983 after a dispute over territory in the northern province. At first there were just **minor incidents** but it soon turned into **all-out war**. The war ended after **a decisive battle** in 1987.  
 2 There was **fierce fighting** in the capital city yesterday. United Nations **peacekeeping forces** are expected to enter the city as soon as **a ceasefire is called**.  
 3 Forces sent in to **keep the peace** in the troubled region of the island had to retreat after they came **within (firing) range** of rebel artillery.  
 4 The military forces today **declared war** against the guerillas.  
 5 Armed troops were sent in to **restore order** after the riots and violence of last week.  
 6 Even though the two sides **signed a peace treaty / peace agreement** last July, fighting has started again and hopes for **a lasting peace** are fading.  
 7 As more of our soldiers were killed or **taken prisoner**, **peace activists** organised demonstrations against the unpopular war.  
 8 Representatives of the two sides are meeting in Zurich in an attempt to **bring about peace** in the troubled region. It is hoped that they will **negotiate a peace agreement** which both governments can accept.

- 38.3** 1 ... a running battle ...  
 2 ... losing the battle ...  
 3 ... put up a heroic fight ...  
 4 ... offered no resistance ...  
 5 ... fighting for (her) life ...

**38.4** *Possible answers:*

**army** – an army advances, marches, retreats; to mobilise an army; a victorious army  
**soldier** – veteran soldier; rank-and-file soldier; a wounded soldier; to serve as a soldier  
**battle** – a fierce battle; a battle of words; a battle of wits; to go into battle; to win/lose a battle  
**weapon** – deadly weapon; chemical weapon; biological weapon; to carry a weapon  
**to fight** – to fight bravely; to fight bitterly; to fight hard  
**peace** – to make peace; the peace process; a peace conference; to take part in a peace demonstration

**striking**

bearing a ~ resemblance to 18  
have a ~ appearance 18

**stroll**

gentle ~ 50  
leisurely ~ 50  
take a ~ 50

**strong**

~ aversion 59  
have ~ opinions 56  
~ preference 59  
~ smell 45  
~ sun 13  
~ tendency 32  
~ wind 13

**strongly**

argue ~ 6  
feel ~ 6  
remind someone ~ of 54  
~ advise 57  
~ believe 6  
~ condemn 6  
~ deny 6, 58  
~ disapprove of 60  
~ dislike 6  
~ influence 6  
~ object 6, 60  
~ opposed 6  
~ recommend 6  
~ suggest 6  
~ support 6

**strum** a guitar 24**studio** flat 21**study** *verb*

~ for a degree 2, 28  
~ for a diploma 28  
~ history 28  
~ a subject 28

**study** *noun*

carry out a ~ 32  
cosy ~ 21

**stupid**

absolutely ~ 6  
utterly ~ 6

**subdued** colour 43**subject**

change the ~ 48, 49  
delicate ~ 49  
do a ~ 28  
raise a ~ 49  
study a ~ 28  
take a ~ 28

**submit**

~ an application 28, 30  
~ a tender 5

**subscribe** to online journals 27pain **subsides** 3**substantial**

~ amount 46

~ meal 1, 22

~ number 46

**substantiate** a claim 58

bring on a **substitute** 25

**subtle** flavour 45

comfortable **suburbs** 16

**success**

achieve ~ 11  
brilliant ~ 52  
great ~ 52  
guarantee ~ 52

**successful**

become ~ 48  
extremely ~ 6  
highly ~ 6

**suffer**

~ from asthma 26  
~ from backache 26  
~ the consequences 34, 53  
~ from hay fever 26  
~ a heart attack 8  
~ injuries 26  
~ from pain 3

**suggest**

strongly ~ 6  
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reject a **suggestion** 58

**suitable** accommodation 21

carry a **suitcase** 11

briefly **summarise** 33

concise **summary** 32

**sun**

glare of the ~ 43  
strong ~ 13  
the ~ rises 48

ray of **sunlight** 43

**sunny**

~ day 12  
~ face 12  
~ smile 12

**sunshine**

soak up the ~ 13  
unbroken ~ 13

**supervise** work 30

in short **supply** 37

**support** *verb*

broadly ~ 32  
strongly ~ 6  
~ a claim 32

**support** *noun*

attract ~ 53  
lend ~ to 33  
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**supporting** evidence 32

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**surface**

rough ~ 44  
smooth ~ 44

go **surfing** 25

**surge**

~ of anger 4  
~ of emotion 4  
cry of **surprise** 41

**surprising**

~ amount 46  
~ number 46

**surrounding** countryside 15

sole **survivor** 10

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**sustain** injuries 26

**swallow** your pride 17

**swell** with pride 4

**swift**

~ action 47  
~ reaction 47  
~ recovery 47  
~ response 47

walk **swiftly** 50

have **sympathy** 59

play **table** tennis 25

prescribe **tablets** 26

**tackle**

~ crime 35  
~ an opponent 25  
~ pollution 39

**take**

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