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THE IMPORTANCE OF COLLOCATIONS AND THEIR USAGE

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Abstract: The article below is about the importance of collocations and their usage, that's how words work together for fluent and natural English.

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Collocation means a natural combination of words; it refers to the way English words are closely associated with each other. For example, do and **homework go** together, also do and mistakes; tall goes with man/woman and high with mountain. While using collocation in one's speech listener can easily understand and speaker's speech may not be boring. It does speech meaningful and interesting. We need to learn collocations because they will help us to speak and write English in a more natural and accurate way. People will probably understand what we mean if we talk about 'making our hometown' or say 'my uncle is very high man' but our language will sound unnatural and might perhaps confuse. Did we mean that our uncle is two metres tall or did we mean that he has a high position in government or business?

Learning collocation will also help you to increase your range of vocabulary. For example, you will find it easier to avoid words like very or nice or beautiful or get by choosing a word that fits the context better and has a more precise meaning. This is particularly useful if you are talking a written exam in English and want to make a good impression on the examiner.in addition, learning collocation is an important part of learning the vocabulary of a language. Some collocations are fixed, or very strong, for example take a photo, where no word other than take collocates with photo to give a similar meaning, for example **keep to/stick** to the rules. Here are some more examples of collocations.

I must **make an effort** and study for my next exams. (not ~~do~~ an effort)

Did she **watch TV** last night? (not ~~look~~ at TV)

This car was a very **powerful engine**. It can do 200 km an hour. (not ~~strong~~ engine)

There are some **ancient monuments** nearby. (not ~~antique~~ monuments)

Sometimes a pair of words may not be absolutely wrong, and people will understand what is meant, but it may not be natural, normal collocation. If somebody says, I did a few mistakes, they will be understood, but a fluent speaker of English would probably say **I made a few mistakes.** Apart from this, idioms are also close to collocations. They are group of words in a fixed order that have a meaning that cannot be guessed by knowing of the individual words.

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For example, **pass the buck** is an idiom meaning **'to pass responsibility for a problem to another person to avoid dealing with it oneself'.** We can deal with idioms in detail in the book English idioms in Use.

We also use from compounds and idioms in order to full our speech with deep and beautiful meaning. What is compound? Compounds are units of meaning that formed with two three or more words. Sometimes the words are written separately, sometimes they have a hyphen and sometimes they are written as one word without any hyphen and space. Usually the meaning of compound can be guessed by knowing the meaning of the individual words. Some examples of compounds here you can see: **car park**, **post office**, **narrow-minded**, **shoelaces**, **teapot**…...It is not always easy to separate collocations and compounds and, where they are useful for learners or an important part of the vocabulary of topic, we include some compounds in this article too.

 Coming to idioms, they are also same as compounds and collocations. Idioms are groups of words in a fixed order that have a meaning that cannot be guessed by knowing the meaning of the individual words. For example, **pass the buck** is an idiom meaning 'to pass responsibility for a problem to another person to avoid dealing with it oneself'.

Before learning and using collocations we should realize why it is important to us. Learning collocations is a good idea because they can:

a) give you the most natural way to say something: smoking is **strictly forbidden** is more natural than smoking is strongly forbidden.

b) give you alternative ways of saying something, which may be more colorful/expressive or more precise: instead of repeating it was **very** cold and **very** dark, we can say it was **bitterly** cold and **pitch** dark.

c) Improve your style in writing: instead of saying poverty **causes crime** you can say **poverty breeds** crime, instead of saying a **big meal** you can say a **substantial meal.** You may not need or want to use these in informal conversation, but in writing they can give your text more variety and make it read better.

In English, we also give link to the collocation with phraseology. In corpus, linguistics, a collocation is a series of words or terms that co-occur more often than would be expected by chance. In phraseology, a collocation is a type of compositional phraseme, meaning that it can be understood from the words that make it up. This contrast with an idiom, where the meaning of the whole cannot be inferred from its parts, and may be completely unrelated. An example of a phraseological collocation is the expression strong tea.

While the same meaning could be conveyed by the roughly equivalent powerful tea, this adjective does not modify tea frequently enough for English speakers to become accustomed to its co-occurrence and regard it as idiomatic or unmarked. (by way of counterexample, powerful is idiomatically preferred to strong when modifying a computer or a car.)

There are about six main types of collocations:

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Adjective + noun,

noun + noun (such as collective nouns),

verb + noun,

adverb + adjective,

verbs + prepositional phrase (phrasal verb),

and verb + adverb.

Collocation extraction is a computational technique that finds collocations in a document or corpus, using various computational linguistic elements resembling data minig.

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