



Learn English Through
Stories.

U Series

Advanced Collocations

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Banta's Great Adventure by K S Sandhu

Banta Singh had lived in Birmingham, UK, for over twenty years. He worked hard in a factory, but one day he decided to fulfil a lifelong dream and set off on a journey around the world. He wanted to broaden his horizons, make new friends and gain valuable experience in different cultures. With a sense of adventure burning inside him, he packed his bags, booked his flights and set out from Birmingham Airport.

His first stop was Canada. After a long-haul flight, Banta arrived in Toronto on a crisp autumn morning. He immediately fell in love with the city's vibrant atmosphere. He went on a guided tour of Niagara Falls, where the roaring waters took his breath away. In the evenings, he caught up with old friends from Punjab who had settled there years ago. In the evenings, he caught up with old friends from Punjab who had settled there years ago. They shared stories over butter chicken and naan at their favourite Indian restaurant, and Banta gained a deeper understanding of how immigrants build a new life in a welcoming country. Canada felt familiar yet exciting, a place where he could breathe fresh air and take in spectacular views.

From there, Banta headed for the United States. He crossed the border into New York and stayed in a bustling hostel in Manhattan. The city never slept, and Banta soaked up the energy of Times Square. He took a stroll through Central Park, made the most of every moment and even tried his hand at street food. One highlight was going on a road trip along the East Coast, where he took stunning photographs of the skyline and made lasting memories. America impressed him with its sheer size and endless opportunities, but he also noticed how people rushed around in a constant hurry.

Next came Australia. After another long flight, Banta landed in Sydney. The bright sunshine and crystal-clear harbour welcomed him. He went sightseeing at the Opera House and climbed the Harbour Bridge for breath taking views. Then he ventured further to the Outback, where he came face to face with kangaroos and vast red deserts. Australia taught him about wide open spaces and a laid-back lifestyle. He made friends easily with locals who offered warm hospitality, and he developed a real appreciation for nature's beauty. The only downside was the long distances between places, but that just added to the thrill.

Finally, Banta returned to his roots by flying to India. Although he had family ties there, it felt like coming home in a different way. In Delhi, he immersed himself in the chaotic yet colourful streets, savouring spicy street food and bargaining at markets. He visited ancient monuments like the Taj Mahal, where the magnificent architecture left him speechless. In his ancestral village in Punjab, relatives gave him a warm welcome and prepared delicious home-cooked meals. India reminded him of his origins while showing how much he had changed through travel.

After months away, Banta returned to Birmingham. He felt tired but enriched. He had broadened his mind, collected unforgettable experiences and made lifelong friends across four continents. His journey had not only been about visiting new places but about gaining a fresh perspective on life. Now, whenever friends asked about his trip, he would smile and say, "Travel really does open your eyes to the world."

1

What is a collocation?

A

What are collocations?

A collocation is a combination of two or more words which frequently occur together. If someone says, 'She's got *yellow hair*', they would probably be understood, but it is not what would ordinarily be said in English. We'd say, 'She's got **blond hair**'. In other words, *yellow* doesn't collocate with *hair* in everyday English. *Yellow* collocates with, say, *flowers* or *paint*.

Collocations are not just a matter of how adjectives combine with nouns. They can refer to any kind of typical word combination, for example verb + noun (e.g. **arouse someone's interest, lead a seminar**), adverb + adjective (e.g. **fundamentally different**), adverb + verb (e.g. **flatly contradict**), noun + noun (e.g. **a lick of paint, a team of experts, words of wisdom**). There is much more about different grammatical types of collocation in Unit 3.

Phrasal verbs (e.g. *come up with, run up, adhere to*) and compound nouns (e.g. *economy drive, stock market*) are sometimes described as types of collocations. In this book we consider them as individual lexical items and so usually include them here only in combination with something else, e.g. **come up with a suggestion, run up a bill, adhere to your principles, go on an economy drive, play the stock market**. However, it is not always easy to separate collocations and compounds and, where they are useful for learners as an important part of the vocabulary of a topic, we include some compounds in this book too.

It can be difficult for learners of English to know which words collocate, as natural collocations are not always logical or guessable. There is, for example, no obvious reason why we say **making friends** rather than *getting* friends or **heavy rain**, not *strong* rain.

Learners also need to know when specific collocations are appropriate. This is usually referred to by linguists as knowing which register to use. **Alight from a bus** is a formal collocation used in notices and other official contexts. In everyday situations we would, of course, always talk about **getting off a bus**. There is more about register and collocation in Unit 6.

B

Why is it important to learn collocations?

An appreciation of collocation will help you to:

- use the words you know more accurately
In other words, you'll **make** (NOT *do*) fewer **mistakes**.
- sound more natural when you speak and write
By saying, for example, **of great importance**, rather than *of big or high importance*, you won't just be understood, you will – quite rightly – sound like a fluent user of English.
- vary your speech and, probably more importantly, your writing
Instead of repeating everyday words like *very, good or nice*, you will be able to exploit a wider range of language. You would gain more marks in an exam, for instance, for writing *We had a blissfully happy holiday in a picturesque little village surrounded by spectacular mountains* than for *We had a very happy holiday in a nice little village surrounded by beautiful mountains*, even though both sentences are perfectly correct.
- understand when a skilful writer departs from normal patterns of collocation
A journalist, poet, advertiser or other inventive user of language often creates an effect by not choosing the expected collocation. For example, a travel article about the Italian capital might be entitled *No place like Rome*, a reference to the popular expression **There's no place like home**.

Exercises

1.1 Match the two parts of these collocations.

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1 adhere to | rain |
| 2 arouse | different |
| 3 blond | of wisdom |
| 4 come up with | your principles |
| 5 flatly | an economy drive |
| 6 fundamentally | a seminar |
| 7 go on | someone's interest |
| 8 heavy | contradict |
| 9 lead | hair |
| 10 a lick | the stock market |
| 11 play | of paint |
| 12 words | a suggestion |

1.2 Correct the underlined collocation errors with words from the advice in B. Be careful, you might find the words in the text, as well as in the examples.

- Exam candidates often make faults in their use of verbs like *do*, *make*, *go* and *get*.
- Try to use a longer range of language when you write.
- Exam candidates who use collocations well gather better marks.
- You have to know what normal collocation patterns are before you can lose them.
- The writer used colloquial language to form an effect.

1.3 Look at these sentences from a hotel brochure. Improve the style by replacing the words in italics with the word in brackets that forms the best collocation. (Use each word only once.)

- Our new family hotel is set in a *nice* location and all the rooms have *nice* furnishings and *nice* views over the surrounding countryside. (stylish / secluded / breathtaking)
- Visitors will enjoy the *good* atmosphere in either of our *good* dining rooms, both serving *good* food to both residents and non-residents. (delicious / relaxing / spacious)
- We organise tours to *beautiful* surrounding villages where you'll have the opportunity to take some *beautiful* photographs and sample the *beautiful* local cuisine. (mouth-watering / picturesque / stunning)

1.4 Write F (formal), I (informal) or N (neutral) in the brackets at the end of each sentence. In each pair of sentences, there is one neutral sentence and one formal or informal sentence. Underline the collocations that are noticeably formal or informal.

- a Passengers must not alight from the bus while it is in motion. ()
b Passengers must not get off the bus while it is moving. ()
- a Let's grab a bite before we get down to work. ()
b Let's have something to eat before we start work. ()
- a SFTS has the right to bring the agreement to an end with three months' notice. ()
b SFTS reserves the right to terminate the agreement with three months' notice. ()
- a She thinks her boyfriend is planning to pop the question tonight. ()
b She thinks her boyfriend is planning to ask her to marry him tonight. ()

1.5 Correct the four collocation errors in this paragraph.

The yellow-haired boy said he had joined the English class to get some new friends. He also said that he wanted to learn about collocations because it would be of big importance in helping him to do fewer mistakes when writing in English.

Key

Unit 1

- 1.1**
- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 adhere to your principles | 7 go on an economy drive |
| 2 arouse someone's interest | 8 heavy rain |
| 3 blond hair | 9 lead a seminar |
| 4 come up with a suggestion | 10 a lick of paint |
| 5 flatly contradict | 11 play the stock market |
| 6 fundamentally different | 12 words of wisdom |
- 1.2** The underlined words in these sentences can sometimes be changed in other ways but the answers given reflect collocations in B.
- mistakes
 - wider
 - gain
 - depart from
 - create
- 1.3** This is the most appropriate way to complete this exercise although some other collocations are also possible, as indicated.
- Our new family hotel is set in a **secluded** location and all the rooms have **stylish** furnishings and **breathhtaking** views over the surrounding countryside.
(*Breathhtaking* could also go with *location* but *secluded* could not go with *views*.)
 - Visitors will enjoy the **relaxing** atmosphere in either of our **spacious** dining rooms, both serving **delicious** food to residents and non-residents.
(*Relaxing* could also perhaps go with *dining rooms* but *spacious* could not go with *atmosphere*.)
 - We organise tours to **picturesque** surrounding villages where you'll have the opportunity to take some **stunning** photographs and sample the **mouth-watering** local cuisine.
(*Stunning* could go with *villages* but *picturesque* could not go with *photographs*.)
- 1.4**
- a Passengers must not alight from the bus while it is in motion. F
b Passengers must not get off the bus while it is moving. N
 - a Let's grab a bite before we get down to work. I
b Let's have something to eat before we start work. N
 - a SFTS has the right to bring the agreement to an end with three months' notice. N
b SFTS reserves the right to terminate the agreement with three months' notice. F
 - a She thinks her boyfriend is planning to pop the question tonight. I
b She thinks her boyfriend is planning to ask her to marry him tonight. N
- 1.5** The **blond-haired** boy said he had joined the English class to **make** some new friends. He also said that he wanted to learn about collocations because it would be of **great** importance in helping him to **make** fewer mistakes when writing in English.