



Learn English Through
Stories.

U Series

Advanced Collocations

Adapted and modified by

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Banta Learning Collocations in Texts by K S Sandhu

Tania's Island Adventure

Tania had always had a gift for languages. From childhood, new words seemed to come naturally to her, so when she told her friends she wanted to study Chinese at university, nobody was surprised. They knew she would excel in such a demanding subject.

That summer, Tania decided to visit a remote island off the Scottish coast. She had read about its ancient castle and longed to explore it. Access, however, depended entirely on the tides. At high tide, the sea covered the narrow causeway, and the only way to reach the island was by boat. Tania planned her trip carefully to arrive when the water was low, allowing her to walk across safely.

The island was busier than she expected. The little café by the harbour was extremely crowded. "You grab a seat and I'll get our drinks," her friend said, pushing through the queue. Tania found a table near the window and watched the fishing boats rocking gently in the bay.

While she waited, her thoughts turned to the future. Her university exams were approaching, but once they were over, she would turn her thoughts to planning a real holiday – perhaps even a trip to China to practise the language she loved.

Later, in the café, Tania overheard two women talking about health. "Far more people these days manage to win the battle against cancer," one said. Tania nodded quietly; she knew relatives who had faced that serious challenge and come through stronger.

The next day she met an old classmate who had recently entered politics. "Why did you choose it?" she asked. He replied, "Most politicians claim they want to make a difference, and I genuinely believe I can." Tania admired his passion, even though she knew the role would pose many difficult challenges.

Before leaving, Tania received exciting news: a language school had offered her a summer job teaching English – pending a successful result in her final teaching exam the following week. Although she still lacked experience, she felt passionate about the work and was ready to rise to the challenge.

On her final morning, as she crossed the now-exposed causeway, Tania reflected on the trip. She realised she must never underestimate the value of good friends. Ultimately, friendship was far more important than career ambitions or exam results.

Back home, Tania made a firm decision. She would jump at the chance to improve her English even more. She resolved to make an effort to notice collocations in every text she read, to get hold of a good dictionary, and to write down at least three collocations for each new word she wanted to commit to memory. She would look back over old homework to avoid past mistakes and make a point of using natural word combinations when speaking or writing.

Above all, she promised herself to read and listen to as much English as possible. That way, she would be exposed to authentic language patterns. Every week she would revise the collocations in her vocabulary file. By following these steps consistently, Tania hoped to achieve greater fluency – and one day speak Chinese with the same natural ease.

Questions:

Question 1: Why was nobody surprised when Tania said she wanted to study Chinese at university?

Question 2: What happens at high tide on the island, and how does it affect visitors?

Question 3: What does Tania plan to do once her university exams are over?

Question 4: According to the story, why does Tania believe she should never underestimate the value of good friends?

Question 5: Name three things Tania decides to do regularly to improve her English collocations and fluency.

Answers:

Answer 1: Because Tania has always had a gift for languages / new words come naturally to her.

Answer 2: At high tide the sea covers the causeway, so the only way to get to the island is by boat.

Answer 3: She will turn her thoughts to planning a real holiday (possibly even a trip to China to practise the language).

Answer 4: Because ultimately friendship is far more important than career ambitions or exam results.

Answer 5: Any three of the following:

- Make an effort to notice collocations in every text she reads
- Get hold of a good dictionary (to check other collocations)
- Write down at least three collocations for each new word she wants to commit to memory.
- Look back over old homework to avoid past mistakes.
- Make a point of using good/natural collocations when writing or speaking.
- Read and listen to as much English as possible (to be exposed to authentic language patterns).
- Revise the collocations in her vocabulary file every week.

4

Finding and working on collocations in texts

A Finding collocations

You can expand your collocation vocabulary by training yourself to notice collocations whenever you read. Note the collocations in these three examples of texts from different sources – a newspaper feature, a film review and a website for London tourists.

LOCAL SPOTLIGHT

As a **newly qualified** teacher at a comprehensive school in Wiltshire, every day Joe **faces the challenge** of **gaining the respect** of a class of 15-year-olds. Joe, 26, admits it is a **tough challenge** but thinks he is **winning the battle**. Joe, who teaches English and media studies, and coaches a school football team, will **qualify fully** in July, **pending the results**¹ of his lesson assessments. With this **milestone passed**², and the increased financial stability it will bring, Joe will **turn his thoughts to** buying his first home.

¹ (formal) as long as he achieves successful results ² major life event behind him

The Interpreter

★★★★

STARRING
Nicole Kidman
Sean Penn

She has a **gift for languages**, which brings her to the UN. She wants to **make a difference**. She is idealistic in that single-minded, dedicated manner associated with freedom fighters. Silvia (Nicole Kidman) remains an enigma. When Tobin Keller (Sean Penn) begins to investigate her, he is faced with a blank sheet. She is beautiful, blonde, lissom and lithe. She lives alone, has no lover, rides a Vespa throughout New York and works all day, **providing simultaneous translation** for delegates. She has an odd accent, which, like everything else about her, is **difficult to pin down**³.

³ hard to fix or place



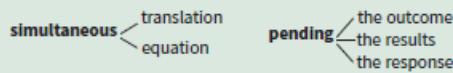
Entertaining children in London

Covent Garden's buskers and jugglers **provide** no-cost **entertainment** in a car-free setting, and you've always **got the chance** of being plucked from the crowd to help out with a trick. Don't **underestimate the value** of London's public transport as a **source of fun**, either. The #11 double-decker from Victoria, for instance, will trundle you past the Houses of Parliament, Trafalgar Square and the Strand on its way to St Paul's Cathedral for a modest sum. The driverless Docklands Light Railway is another guaranteed **source of amusement** – **grab a seat** at the front of the train and pretend to be the driver, then **take a boat** back to the centre of town from Greenwich.

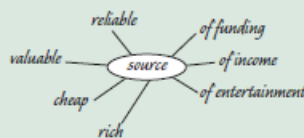
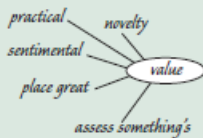
Remember you will also hear collocations in conversations, lectures, songs and films. Try to get into the habit of recording any interesting collocations that you notice.

B Recording collocations

When working on collocations in a text, use your dictionary to find more relating to one or both parts of the original collocation. You can record strong collocations in collocation forks:



and weak ones in collocation bubbles (because there are so many more of them):



Exercises

4.1 Complete each sentence using a collocation from A.

- 1 Tania has always had a so I'm not surprised she wants to study Chinese at university.
- 2 At high tide the sea covers the causeway and the only way to get to the island is to
- 3 It's very crowded in this café. You and I'll get our drinks.
- 4 Once my exams are over I'll planning a holiday.
- 5 Far more people these days manage to against cancer.
- 6 Most politicians say they enter politics because they want to
- 7 Try not to having good friends. Ultimately, friendship is far more important than work.
- 8 He's got the job – a successful in his driving test tomorrow.
- 9 Although they lack experience, doctors are often very enthusiastic and passionate about their work.

4.2 Complete the collocations. The first letters are given to help you. Use a dictionary such as the Cambridge Online Dictionary if necessary.



to j... a... t...
to p... u... t...
to g... t...
to s... a...
to b... l... w... a...

chance

to f... a...
to p... a...
a d...
to r... t...
a s...

challenge

4.3 Check these expressions (a) in a good dictionary and (b) using a search engine. Which two are collocations and which two are not?

- 1 learn by head 2 learn by heart 3 lose a chance 4 miss a chance

4.4 Answer these questions.



- 1 Name three milestones in your life that you have already passed.
- 2 Are you already fully qualified? If so, as what? If not, when will you be?
- 3 What are some typical sources of income?
- 4 What is the toughest challenge you have ever faced?
- 5 What qualities would be needed by someone providing simultaneous translation?
- 6 What are some examples of things that have sentimental value for you?

4.5 Here is one student's plan for work on collocations. Complete the gaps, using a dictionary if necessary. Then tick the ideas you can use yourself.



- (1) an effort to notice collocations in any English text I read.
- (2) hold of a good dictionary to check other collocations for words that I want to learn.
- Write down at least three collocations for each new word I want to (3) to memory.
- Look back over old homework to see where I have (4) mistakes with collocations and (5) my best to (6) those mistakes in future.
- (7) a point of using good collocations when I have to write or speak in English.
- Read and listen to as much English as (8) because that will expose me to natural collocations.
- Every week revise the collocations I have (9) a note of in my vocabulary file.

Answers

Unit 4

- 4.1**
- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 gift for languages | 6 make a difference |
| 2 take a boat | 7 underestimate the value of |
| 3 grab a seat | 8 pending; result |
| 4 turn my thoughts to | 9 newly qualified |
| 5 win the battle | |
- 4.2** to jump at the chance / pass up the chance / get the chance / stand a chance / be in with a chance to face a challenge / to pose a challenge / a direct challenge / to rise to the challenge / a serious challenge
- 4.3** The correct collocations are *learn by heart* and *miss a chance*.
- 4.4** *Author's answers:*
- 1 Three milestones in my life that I have already passed include graduating from university, getting my first job and getting married.
 - 2 I am fully qualified as a teacher.
 - 3 Typical sources of income are wages or salaries, income from investments, rental income and business profits.
 - 4 Possibly the toughest challenge I have ever faced was completing my doctoral thesis in time.
 - 5 Someone providing simultaneous translation needs to be bilingual and to have excellent powers of concentration.
 - 6 Personal letters, photos and old diaries have sentimental value for me.
- 4.5**
- | | |
|----------|------------|
| 1 Make | 6 avoid |
| 2 Get | 7 Make |
| 3 commit | 8 possible |
| 4 made | 9 made |
| 5 do | |

Ideally you would tick all the ideas, as they are all good ways of improving your knowledge and use of collocations.