

DIGITAL NUTRIENTS



ENGLISH COLLOCATIONS

MASTERY GUIDE

A2 → B1 → B2

Speak naturally, not just correctly.

Learn which words naturally go together, notice them in context, retrieve them under pressure, and use them in your own speaking and writing.

30-day practice path • graded word banks • speaking drills • exercises • answer key

Created for Digital Nutrients learners | 2026

How to Use This Guide

This guide trains collocations as usable language chunks - not as a giant list to memorize.

What is a collocation?

A collocation is a pair or group of words that native and proficient speakers commonly use together. For example: make a decision, heavy rain, deeply concerned, and responsible for.

The six-step learning loop

1. Learn	Meet a small set of useful collocations.
2. Notice	See how the words behave inside full sentences.
3. Choose	Distinguish natural combinations from possible-but-unusual ones.
4. Correct	Repair common collocation errors.
5. Build	Create your own sentences from prompts.
6. Speak & Recall	Retrieve collocations quickly without translating word-by-word.

About the A2, B1, and B2 labels

Important accuracy note

CEFR describes communicative ability; it does not publish one official master list of collocations for each level. The level labels in this guide are instructional estimates based on frequency, usefulness, complexity, and the type of communication learners typically handle at each stage.

Best practice

Study 8-12 new collocations at a time, not 50 at once.

Always learn the whole phrase: learn make a decision, not only decision.

Say examples aloud. Collocations are partly a speaking-and-listening skill.

Recycle old collocations after 1 day, 3 days, 7 days, and 14 days.

When you make an error, save the corrected chunk as one unit.

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Part 1 - Foundations

1. Collocations: words that prefer each other

Many sentences can be grammatically possible but still sound unusual because the words are not normally combined that way. Collocations help you choose the combinations English speakers expect.

Collocation	Meaning / Use	Example
make a decision	decide something	We need to make a decision today.
heavy traffic	many vehicles / slow roads	We were late because of heavy traffic.
strong coffee	coffee with a powerful taste	I need a cup of strong coffee.
deeply disappointed	very disappointed	She was deeply disappointed by the result.
pay attention	focus	Please pay attention to the instructions.

Think in chunks

Do not store make and decision separately and rebuild the phrase every time. Store make a decision as one reusable unit.

2. Main collocation patterns

Pattern	Examples
Verb + noun	make progress, take a break, catch a bus
Adjective + noun	heavy rain, close friend, serious problem
Noun + noun	job interview, traffic jam, language learner
Adverb + adjective	highly effective, deeply concerned, completely wrong
Verb + adverb	apologize sincerely, strongly agree, work closely
Adjective + preposition	interested in, proud of, responsible for
Verb + preposition	depend on, deal with, apply for

3. Correct vs. natural

Unnatural / nonstandard	Natural collocation	Natural example
do a mistake	make a mistake	I made a mistake in the report.
strong rain	heavy rain	Heavy rain is expected tonight.
take a decision	make a decision	We finally made a decision.
very exhausted	completely exhausted	I was completely exhausted after the trip.
open the light	turn on the light	Could you turn on the light?

A useful warning

Some combinations vary by region and variety of English. For example, take a decision is standard in some British and international contexts, while make a decision is more broadly common. Learn the variety you need, but recognize alternatives.

Foundation Check

Choose the more natural option.

1. We need to (make / do) a plan before Friday.
2. There was (heavy / strong) traffic downtown.
3. Please (pay / give) attention to the final question.
4. She is (deeply / strongly) disappointed with the result.
5. I need to (catch / take) the 7:30 bus. (Both can be possible; which one focuses on successfully getting it?)

A2 | UNIT 1

Daily Routines

Build automatic chunks for everyday actions.

CORE WORD BANK

Collocation	Meaning / Use	Example
have breakfast	eat the morning meal	I usually have breakfast at seven.
take a shower	wash yourself in a shower	I take a shower before work.
get dressed	put on clothes	He gets dressed quickly.
go to work	travel to your workplace	She goes to work by bus.
take a break	stop briefly to rest	Let's take a short break.
make dinner	prepare the evening meal	I make dinner after work.
go to bed	begin sleeping for the night	I usually go to bed before midnight.
get enough sleep	sleep as much as needed	I do not get enough sleep during exams.
spend time	use time doing something	I spend time with my family on Fridays.
do the dishes	wash plates and utensils	I do the dishes after dinner.

Exercise A - Complete the collocation

Write the missing word.

1. I usually ___ breakfast at 7:00. _____
2. After exercising, I ___ a shower. _____
3. We should ___ a short break. _____
4. He ___ time with his children every evening. _____
5. Who ___ the dishes in your home? _____

Exercise B - Repair the collocation

Rewrite each phrase naturally.

1. do breakfast → _____
2. make a shower → _____
3. take dressed → _____
4. make a break → _____

Exercise C - Speak

Describe your morning routine using at least 4 collocations from the unit.

What routine helps you get enough sleep?

A2 | UNIT 2

Home & Social Life

Talk naturally about home, friends, invitations, and plans.

CORE WORD BANK

Collocation	Meaning / Use	Example
clean the house	make the home clean	We clean the house on Saturday.
make the bed	arrange the bed after sleeping	Please make your bed.
do the laundry	wash clothes	I do the laundry twice a week.
have guests	receive visitors at home	We are having guests tonight.
invite someone over	ask someone to visit your home	I invited my neighbors over for tea.
make plans	decide what you will do	We made plans for the weekend.
meet a friend	see a friend at a planned time	I am meeting a friend after class.
have a good time	enjoy yourself	We had a good time at the picnic.
keep in touch	continue communicating	Let's keep in touch after the course.
close friend	a friend you know very well	Mona is one of my closest friends.

Exercise A - Complete the collocation

Write the missing word.

- I need to ___ the laundry tonight. _____
- We are ___ guests for dinner. _____
- Let's ___ plans for Saturday. _____
- I hope we can ___ in touch. _____
- She is a very ___ friend. _____

Exercise B - Repair the collocation

Rewrite each phrase naturally.

- make the laundry → _____
- do plans → _____
- strong friend → _____
- stay a good time → _____

Exercise C - Speak

Describe a good weekend with friends or family. Use 4 collocations.

Tell a short story about a close friend.

A2 | UNIT 3

Travel & Getting Around

Use common chunks for transportation and trips.

CORE WORD BANK

Collocation	Meaning / Use	Example
catch a bus	successfully get on a bus before it leaves	We need to catch the next bus.
miss a train	arrive too late for a train	I missed the train by two minutes.
book a room	reserve a hotel room	We booked a room near the station.
pack a bag	put needed things in a bag	I packed my bag last night.
take a trip	travel somewhere for a short period	We took a trip to the coast.
go abroad	travel to another country	She wants to go abroad next year.
ask for directions	request help finding a place	We asked for directions at the station.
heavy traffic	a lot of slow-moving traffic	There was heavy traffic on the highway.
arrive on time	arrive at the expected time	Please arrive on time for the tour.
get lost	not know where you are	We got lost in the old city.

Exercise A - Complete the collocation

Write the missing word.

1. We need to ___ a room before the holiday. _____
2. I ___ the train, so I had to wait an hour. _____
3. There was ___ traffic this morning. _____
4. Please ___ on time. _____
5. We ___ lost near the museum. _____

Exercise B - Repair the collocation

Rewrite each phrase naturally.

1. strong traffic → _____
2. reserve a bag → _____
3. lose the train → _____
4. ask directions → _____

Exercise C - Speak

Describe a trip that went well or badly. Use 4 collocations.

What do you do if you get lost in a new city?

A2 | UNIT 4

Study & Work Basics

Build chunks for school, study, and simple workplace English.

CORE WORD BANK

Collocation	Meaning / Use	Example
do homework	complete assigned school work	I do my homework after dinner.
take notes	write important information	Take notes while you listen.
ask a question	request information	May I ask a question?
give an answer	respond to a question	He gave the correct answer.
take a test	complete a test as a student	We are taking a test tomorrow.
make a list	write several items in order	Make a list of new words.
start work	begin working	I start work at nine.
finish a task	complete a piece of work	She finished the task early.
work hard	work with effort	They work hard every day.
get a job	obtain employment	He hopes to get a job soon.

Exercise A - Complete the collocation

Write the missing word.

1. Please ___ notes during the lesson. _____
2. I have to ___ my homework. _____
3. She wants to ___ a job in customer service. _____
4. Can I ___ a question? _____
5. We need to ___ this task by noon. _____

Exercise B - Repair the collocation

Rewrite each phrase naturally.

1. make homework → _____
2. write notes → _____
3. do a question → _____
4. take a job → _____

Exercise C - Speak

Describe your study or work routine. Use 4 collocations.

What helps you finish a task on time?

A2 | UNIT 5

Health, Weather & Feelings

Describe everyday health, weather, and emotions more naturally.

CORE WORD BANK

Collocation	Meaning / Use	Example
feel sick	feel unwell	I feel sick this morning.
catch a cold	become ill with a cold	I caught a cold last week.
get better	recover	I hope you get better soon.
take medicine	use medicine	Take this medicine with food.
get some rest	rest for a while	You should get some rest.
feel tired	experience tiredness	I feel tired after work.
heavy rain	a lot of rain	Heavy rain started after midnight.
strong wind	wind moving with force	There was a strong wind near the coast.
bright sunshine	strong clear sunlight	We woke up to bright sunshine.
good mood	a positive emotional state	She is in a good mood today.

Exercise A - Complete the collocation

Write the missing word.

- I think I am ___ a cold. _____
- You should ___ some rest. _____
- The forecast says there will be ___ rain. _____
- I hope you ___ better soon. _____
- He is in a very good ___. _____

Exercise B - Repair the collocation

Rewrite each phrase naturally.

- take a cold → _____
- strong rain → _____
- heavy wind → _____
- make rest → _____

Exercise C - Speak

Describe what you do when you feel sick or tired.

Describe yesterday's weather using natural collocations.

B1 | UNIT 6

Goals & Progress

Talk about effort, improvement, and achievement.

CORE WORD BANK

Collocation	Meaning / Use	Example
set a goal	choose a target	Set a realistic goal for this month.
achieve a goal	successfully reach a target	She achieved her goal of passing B1.
make progress	improve or move forward	You are making steady progress.
make an effort	try seriously	He made an effort to speak English daily.
face a challenge	experience a difficult situation	New learners often face this challenge.
overcome a problem	successfully deal with a problem	They overcame several technical problems.
develop a skill	improve an ability over time	Practice helps you develop speaking skills.
gain confidence	become more confident	She gained confidence after joining discussions.
build a habit	create a repeated behavior	Build a habit of reviewing vocabulary.
reach a target	achieve a measured result	The team reached its sales target.

Exercise A - Complete the collocation

Write the missing word.

1. You are ___ good progress. _____
2. Try to ___ a realistic goal. _____
3. Daily speaking can help you ___ confidence. _____
4. He made an ___ to arrive earlier. _____
5. The team finally ___ its target. _____

Exercise B - Repair the collocation

Rewrite each phrase naturally.

1. do progress → _____
2. win confidence → _____
3. make a challenge → _____
4. arrive a target → _____

Exercise C - Speak

Describe one goal you are working toward. Use set a goal, make progress, make an effort, and gain confidence.

B1 | UNIT 7

Communication & Relationships

Use natural chunks for conversations, disagreement, and relationships.

CORE WORD BANK

Collocation	Meaning / Use	Example
have a conversation	talk with someone	We had a long conversation after class.
express an opinion	say what you think	Everyone had a chance to express an opinion.
make a point	state an important idea	She made a good point about cost.
ask for advice	request a recommendation	I asked my teacher for advice.
give advice	recommend what someone should do	He gave me useful advice.
keep a promise	do what you promised	I try to keep my promises.
break a promise	fail to do what you promised	He broke his promise to call.
strong relationship	a healthy or important connection	Trust helps build a strong relationship.
lose touch	stop communicating	We lost touch after university.
reach an agreement	agree after discussion	The two sides reached an agreement.

Exercise A - Complete the collocation

Write the missing word.

1. Can I ___ you for advice? _____
2. She ___ a very good point. _____
3. We finally ___ an agreement. _____
4. They ___ touch after moving away. _____
5. Trust helps create a ___ relationship. _____

Exercise B - Repair the collocation

Rewrite each phrase naturally.

1. say an opinion → _____
2. do a point → _____
3. win an agreement → _____
4. strongly relationship → _____

Exercise C - Speak

Describe a disagreement that ended well. Use express an opinion, make a point, and reach an agreement.

B1 | UNIT 8

Problems & Solutions

Describe difficulty, causes, responses, and results.

CORE WORD BANK

Collocation	Meaning / Use	Example
cause a problem	create a problem	The delay caused a serious problem.
solve a problem	find an answer to a problem	We need to solve this problem quickly.
deal with a problem	handle a problem	She deals with customer problems calmly.
find a solution	discover an answer	We finally found a solution.
take action	do something in response	The company took action immediately.
make a mistake	do something incorrectly	Everyone makes mistakes.
learn from a mistake	gain useful knowledge from an error	Try to learn from your mistakes.
serious issue	an important problem	Data loss is a serious issue.
avoid a problem	prevent a problem from happening	Backups help avoid problems.
reduce the risk	make danger less likely	This change reduces the risk of failure.

Exercise A - Complete the collocation

Write the missing word.

1. We need to ___ action now. _____
2. Did you ___ a solution? _____
3. The update ___ a serious problem. _____
4. Everyone ___ mistakes sometimes. _____
5. Training can ___ the risk of errors. _____

Exercise B - Repair the collocation

Rewrite each phrase naturally.

1. do action → _____
2. make a solution → _____
3. do a mistake → _____
4. low the risk → _____

Exercise C - Speak

Describe a problem you solved. Use take action, find a solution, and reduce the risk.

B1 | UNIT 9

Learning & Language

Use collocations for study strategies and language development.

CORE WORD BANK

Collocation	Meaning / Use	Example
improve your English	make your English better	Reading aloud can improve your English.
expand your vocabulary	learn more usable words and phrases	Extensive reading expands your vocabulary.
practice regularly	practice often and consistently	You need to practice regularly.
pay attention	focus carefully	Pay attention to word stress.
make sense	be understandable or logical	This explanation makes sense.
learn by heart	memorize exactly	Do not learn every sentence by heart.
look up a word	search for a word in a dictionary	Look up unfamiliar words after reading.
make a note	write a short reminder	Make a note of useful collocations.
common mistake	an error many people make	This is a common mistake among learners.
clear explanation	an easy-to-understand explanation	The teacher gave a clear explanation.

Exercise A - Complete the collocation

Write the missing word.

1. Please ___ attention to the ending. _____
2. This sentence does not ___ sense. _____
3. Try to ___ your vocabulary through reading. _____
4. I need to ___ up that word. _____
5. That is a very ___ mistake. _____

Exercise B - Repair the collocation

Rewrite each phrase naturally.

1. give attention → _____
2. grow vocabulary → _____
3. search up a word → _____
4. make senseful → _____

Exercise C - Speak

Explain how you improve your English. Use expand your vocabulary, pay attention, and practice regularly.

B1 | UNIT 10

Work, Decisions & Responsibility

Speak more naturally about jobs, duties, meetings, and choices.

CORE WORD BANK

Collocation	Meaning / Use	Example
make a decision	choose after thinking	We need to make a decision today.
take responsibility	accept responsibility	She took responsibility for the mistake.
meet a deadline	finish by the required date	Can we meet the Friday deadline?
attend a meeting	go to a meeting	I attended a meeting this morning.
gain experience	get useful experience over time	Internships help students gain experience.
apply for a job	submit a request for employment	He applied for three jobs.
earn a salary	receive regular pay	She earns a competitive salary.
heavy workload	a large amount of work	The team has a heavy workload this month.
work closely	cooperate with frequent contact	Designers work closely with engineers.
make a contribution	add something valuable	Everyone can make a contribution.

Exercise A - Complete the collocation

Write the missing word.

1. Can we ___ the deadline? _____
2. She decided to ___ responsibility. _____
3. He is going to ___ for the job. _____
4. The department has a very ___ workload. _____
5. We work ___ with the support team. _____

Exercise B - Repair the collocation

Rewrite each phrase naturally.

1. catch a deadline → _____
2. do responsibility → _____
3. make experience → _____
4. strong workload → _____

Exercise C - Speak

Describe a busy work week. Use meet a deadline, take responsibility, and heavy workload.

Arguments & Evidence

Build precise chunks for opinions, essays, debates, and presentations.

CORE WORD BANK

Collocation	Meaning / Use	Example
raise a question	cause a question to be considered	The results raise an important question.
support an argument	provide evidence for a position	Use data to support your argument.
challenge an assumption	question something accepted without proof	The study challenges a common assumption.
draw a conclusion	form a judgment from evidence	We cannot draw a firm conclusion yet.
reach a conclusion	arrive at a judgment	The researchers reached a similar conclusion.
provide evidence	give facts or information that support a claim	The report provides strong evidence.
strong argument	a convincing line of reasoning	She presented a strong argument.
compelling evidence	very persuasive evidence	There is compelling evidence for the change.
widely accepted	accepted by many people	This explanation is widely accepted.
strongly disagree	disagree with force or certainty	I strongly disagree with that interpretation.

Exercise A - Complete the collocation

Write the missing word.

- The evidence ___ an important question. _____
- We should not ___ a conclusion too quickly. _____
- The author ___ a common assumption. _____
- The report ___ compelling evidence. _____
- I ___ disagree with that claim. _____

Exercise B - Repair the collocation

Rewrite each phrase naturally.

- make a conclusion → _____
- powerful evidence → _____
- highly disagree → _____
- ask an assumption → _____

Exercise C - Speak

Give a 45-second opinion and use support an argument, provide evidence, and draw a conclusion.

Change, Trends & Impact

Describe developments, effects, and long-term change.

CORE WORD BANK

Collocation	Meaning / Use	Example
bring about change	cause change to happen	Technology can bring about rapid change.
undergo a change	experience a change	The industry has undergone major changes.
have an impact	affect something	Sleep has a major impact on memory.
make an impact	have a noticeable effect	The campaign made a significant impact.
play a role	have a function or influence	Culture plays a role in communication.
drive growth	cause growth	Demand is driving growth in the sector.
sharp increase	a fast, large increase	There was a sharp increase in prices.
steady decline	a gradual consistent decrease	The region saw a steady decline in unemployment.
growing concern	increasing worry	Privacy is a growing concern.
long-term effect	an effect lasting a long time	The policy may have long-term effects.

Exercise A - Complete the collocation

Write the missing word.

- The new law could ___ about major change. _____
- Demand is ___ growth. _____
- There was a ___ increase in costs. _____
- Trust ___ a major role in teamwork. _____
- The decision may have a long-term _____. _____

Exercise B - Repair the collocation

Rewrite each phrase naturally.

- make about change → _____
- strong increase → _____
- do a role → _____
- long effect → _____

Exercise C - Speak

Describe a major change in technology. Use have an impact, play a role, and growing concern.

B2 | UNIT 13

Risk, Problems & Consequences

Use precise collocations for risk, threats, and outcomes.

CORE WORD BANK

Collocation	Meaning / Use	Example
pose a threat	create a possible danger	Misinformation can pose a threat to public trust.
pose a risk	create a possible danger	Weak passwords pose a security risk.
minimize the risk	reduce risk as much as possible	Testing helps minimize the risk of failure.
take a risk	do something despite possible danger	Entrepreneurs often take calculated risks.
serious consequences	important harmful results	The error could have serious consequences.
far-reaching consequences	effects that influence many areas or last a long time	The ruling may have far-reaching consequences.
address a problem	deal with a problem directly	The proposal addresses the main problem.
tackle an issue	make a determined effort to solve an issue	We need to tackle the issue at its source.
potential drawback	a possible disadvantage	Cost is a potential drawback.
unintended consequence	a result that was not planned	The policy created unintended consequences.

Exercise A - Complete the collocation

Write the missing word.

- Weak security can ___ a threat. _____
- We need to ___ the issue directly. _____
- The policy may have serious _____. _____
- Testing can ___ the risk of failure. _____
- Cost is a potential _____. _____

Exercise B - Repair the collocation

Rewrite each phrase naturally.

- make a threat → _____
- attack an issue → _____
- strong consequences → _____
- small the risk → _____

Exercise C - Speak

Discuss one risk of social media or AI. Use pose a threat, minimize the risk, and unintended consequence.

B2 | UNIT 14

Professional & Academic English

Strengthen formal and workplace naturalness.

CORE WORD BANK

Collocation	Meaning / Use	Example
conduct research	carry out systematic research	The team conducted research in three countries.
carry out an analysis	perform an analysis	We carried out a detailed analysis.
meet a requirement	satisfy a requirement	The product meets all safety requirements.
allocate resources	assign resources for a purpose	We need to allocate resources carefully.
provide feedback	give comments intended to improve something	Managers should provide timely feedback.
reach a consensus	achieve broad agreement	The committee reached a consensus.
take into account	consider when making a decision	We must take cost into account.
highly effective	very effective	The intervention was highly effective.
closely related	strongly connected	The two variables are closely related.
fully aware	completely informed or conscious	Staff are fully aware of the policy.

Exercise A - Complete the collocation

Write the missing word.

- The committee finally ___ a consensus. _____
- Please ___ cost into account. _____
- The team ___ research on user behavior. _____
- These two issues are closely _____. _____
- The method proved highly _____. _____

Exercise B - Repair the collocation

Rewrite each phrase naturally.

- make research → _____
- do into account → _____
- strongly related → _____
- very effective → _____

Exercise C - Speak

Give a short professional update using conduct research, provide feedback, and take into account.

B2 | UNIT 15

Abstract Ideas & Natural Precision

Use higher-level chunks for nuanced speaking and writing.

CORE WORD BANK

Collocation	Meaning / Use	Example
underlying cause	deeper cause beneath the obvious one	We need to identify the underlying cause.
key factor	one of the most important influences	Cost is a key factor in the decision.
fundamental difference	a basic and important difference	There is a fundamental difference between the models.
broader context	the larger situation surrounding something	Consider the statement in its broader context.
mutually beneficial	good for both sides	They developed a mutually beneficial partnership.
closely linked	strongly connected	Income and access are closely linked.
widely recognized	recognized by many people	The problem is widely recognized.
deeply rooted	existing strongly for a long time	The custom is deeply rooted in local culture.
highly likely	very probable	Further changes are highly likely.
strongly associated	connected in a statistically or conceptually strong way	The behavior is strongly associated with stress.

Exercise A - Complete the collocation

Write the missing word.

1. We need to find the ___ cause. _____
2. Cost is a ___ factor in the final decision. _____
3. The two trends are closely ___. _____
4. The custom is deeply ___ in tradition. _____
5. Further delays are highly ___. _____

Exercise B - Repair the collocation

Rewrite each phrase naturally.

1. deep cause → _____
2. important factor → _____
3. deeply linked → _____
4. strongly likely → _____

Exercise C - Speak

Explain a complex issue using underlying cause, key factor, broader context, and closely linked.

Part 5 - High-Frequency Verb Families

A small number of common verbs create hundreds of useful English collocations. Learn them as families.

MAKE

make a decision	make a mistake	make progress
make an effort	make a difference	make a plan
make a promise	make a point	make a contribution
make an appointment	make money	make sense

DO

do homework	do the dishes	do the laundry
do your best	do business	do research
do exercise	do a good job	do damage
do someone a favor		

DO quick recall

Cover the table. Say or write 5 natural collocations with do in 20 seconds.

1. 1-minute challenge: How many do collocations can you produce without repeating one?

TAKE

take a break	take a shower	take notes
take action	take responsibility	take a risk
take part	take place	take time
take into account	take advantage of	take care

TAKE quick recall

Cover the table. Say or write 5 natural collocations with take in 20 seconds.

1. 1-minute challenge: How many take collocations can you produce without repeating one?

HAVE

have breakfast	have a conversation	have a good time
have difficulty	have access	have an impact
have a chance	have experience	have a problem
have a feeling		

GET

get dressed	get lost	get better
get a job	get permission	get ready
get married	get involved	get in touch
get some rest	get the impression	

GET quick recall

Cover the table. Say or write 5 natural collocations with get in 20 seconds.

1. 1-minute challenge: How many get collocations can you produce without repeating one?

GIVE

give advice	give an answer	give permission
give a presentation	give an example	give someone a chance
give priority to	give rise to	

KEEP

keep in touch	keep a promise	keep calm
keep quiet	keep track of	keep a record
keep an eye on	keep someone informed	

KEEP quick recall

Cover the table. Say or write 5 natural collocations with keep in 20 seconds.

1. 1-minute challenge: How many keep collocations can you produce without repeating one?

PAY

pay attention	pay a bill	pay a fine
pay a fee	pay a visit	pay respect
pay the price		

CATCH

catch a bus	catch a train	catch a cold
catch someone's attention	catch a glimpse	catch fire
catch your breath		

MAKE vs. DO vs. TAKE: the high-confusion zone

Verb	Useful tendency	Examples
make	create / produce / cause	make a plan, make progress, make a mistake
do	perform an activity or task	do homework, do the laundry, do research
take	perform/receive an action; accept/control something	take a break, take notes, take responsibility

Do not over-trust rules

The tendencies above help, but collocations are conventional. English says make a decision and take responsibility because that is what speakers have established - not because a perfect rule predicts every phrase.

Family Challenge

Choose MAKE, DO, or TAKE.

- ___ a decision
- ___ your best
- ___ a risk
- ___ research
- ___ progress
- ___ responsibility
- ___ a mistake
- ___ notes
- ___ the laundry
- ___ an effort

Part 6 - Naturalness Toolkit

Adjective + noun collocations

Adjective	Common partners
heavy	rain, traffic, workload, responsibility
strong	coffee, wind, argument, relationship
serious	problem, issue, concern, injury
close	friend, relationship, connection, attention
high	price, level, standard, risk
deep	sleep, concern, understanding, regret
key	factor, role, issue, point
major	change, problem, challenge, impact
growing	concern, demand, pressure, awareness
wide	range, variety, choice, gap

Choose the natural partner

Circle the stronger collocation for general English.

1. (heavy / strong) rain
2. (strong / heavy) coffee
3. (close / near) friend
4. (serious / hard) problem
5. (key / mainest) factor
6. (growing / increasingly) concern

Adverb + adjective collocations

Adverb	Natural partners
highly	effective, unlikely, successful, competitive, controversial
deeply	concerned, disappointed, rooted, divided, grateful
closely	related, linked, connected, associated
widely	accepted, recognized, available, used, known
fully	aware, prepared, responsible, committed
strongly	recommended, opposed, associated, influenced
completely	different, wrong, unacceptable, exhausted
perfectly	clear, normal, reasonable, acceptable

Why “very” is not enough

Very is useful, but proficient English uses more specific intensifiers: highly effective, deeply concerned, strongly opposed, completely exhausted. These combinations sound more precise and natural.

Adjective + preposition collocations

Adjective	Preposition	Example
interested	in	I am interested in language learning.
good	at	She is good at explaining difficult ideas.
afraid	of	He is afraid of making mistakes.
proud	of	They are proud of their progress.
responsible	for	Who is responsible for this task?
aware	of	Are you aware of the change?
familiar	with	I am familiar with the software.
capable	of	The system is capable of handling the load.
relevant	to	That example is relevant to the discussion.
dependent	on	The result is dependent on several factors.

Verb + preposition collocations

Verb	Preposition	Example
depend	on	The schedule depends on the weather.
deal	with	She deals with complaints professionally.
apply	for	He applied for the position.
belong	to	This book belongs to me.
focus	on	Let's focus on the main issue.
result	in	The delay resulted in extra costs.
contribute	to	Exercise contributes to better health.
benefit	from	Students benefit from regular feedback.
refer	to	The term refers to a specific process.
consist	of	The course consists of six units.

Register: casual, neutral, and formal chunks

Casual	Neutral	More formal	Example
find out	learn / discover	determine / establish	We need to determine the cause.
help with	help with	assist with	Could you assist with the review?
talk about	discuss	address / examine	The report examines the issue.
show	show	demonstrate / indicate	The results indicate a clear trend.
think about	consider	take into account	We must take cost into account.
deal with	deal with	address / tackle	The proposal addresses the problem.

Natural does not mean “formal”

A phrase can be natural and casual, natural and neutral, or natural and formal. Choose the register that fits the situation instead of upgrading every sentence to academic language.

Literal-translation traps

Common transfer	Natural English	Note
open/close the light	turn on/off the light	Use turn on/off for lights and many devices.
make a party	have/throw a party	Have is neutral; throw a party is more informal.
do a mistake	make a mistake	Make is the standard partner.
take a decision	make a decision	Make is safest across general international English; take is also used in some varieties.
strong rain	heavy rain	Strong normally collocates with wind, coffee, argument, etc.
give an exam	take/sit an exam (student); give/administer an exam (teacher)	Role changes the collocation.
say me	tell me	Tell normally takes a person directly; say usually does not.
married with	married to	The standard preposition is to.
discuss about	discuss	Discuss is normally transitive: discuss the issue.
explain me	explain it to me	Explain usually takes the thing first, then to + person.

Variation note: Some classroom “errors” are standard in other English varieties. Aim for broad, high-frequency patterns while recognizing regional variation.

Part 7 - Speaking & Retrieval Training

Recognition is not mastery. The real test is whether you can retrieve a collocation while speaking.

1. Ten-Second Partner

Teacher or partner says a base word. You have 10 seconds to give 3 natural partners. Example: heavy → rain, traffic, workload.

2. Verb Burst

Say MAKE, DO, TAKE, HAVE, or GET. Produce 5 collocations in 20 seconds.

3. One-Word Substitution

Start with a correct chunk, then change one word without breaking naturalness. Example: serious problem → serious issue → serious concern.

4. Repair Race

Hear an unnatural phrase and repair it immediately. do a mistake → make a mistake.

5. Topic Constraint

Speak for 45 seconds on one topic while using 4 required collocations.

6. Register Shift

Say the same idea casually, neutrally, and formally. talk about the problem → discuss the problem → address the issue.

7. Collocation Chain

Use the last noun or verb to trigger a new collocation. make progress → steady progress → steady decline → sharp decline.

8. Delayed Recall

Study 10 chunks. Close the guide. Recall them after 2 minutes, then again after 20 minutes.

Self-correction phrases for speaking

Repair phrase	Use	Example
Let me rephrase that.	Use when you want a more natural sentence.	"I did a mistake - let me rephrase that. I made a mistake."
A better way to say that is ...	Use when upgrading your wording.	"A better way to say that is heavy traffic."
What I mean is ...	Use when meaning was unclear.	"What I mean is that the risk is relatively low."

Repair phrase	Use	Example
I should say ...	Use for a quick correction.	"I did research - I should say I conducted research."
The word I'm looking for is ...	Use when retrieving vocabulary.	"The word I'm looking for is 'drawback.'"

Final naturalness speaking challenge

60 seconds - no reading

Choose one prompt below. Plan for 30 seconds, then speak for 60 seconds. Use at least 6 collocations and 1 self-correction phrase. Record yourself if possible.

1. What is one habit that has had a major impact on your life?
2. What is a serious problem in your city, and how should people address it?
3. Which is more important for success: natural ability or consistent effort?
4. How has technology brought about change in education or work?
5. Describe a difficult goal you achieved and the challenges you faced.

Part 8 - 30-Day Collocation Mastery Plan

Aim for 15-25 focused minutes per day. The plan repeatedly shifts from recognition toward spontaneous production.

Day	Focus	Task
1	Baseline	Read Part 1. Record a 60-second answer to: "Describe your normal day." Mark any phrase you translated word-by-word.
2	A2 Daily Routines	Study Unit 1. Complete Exercises A-B. Speak for 45 seconds without looking.
3	A2 Home & Social	Study Unit 2. Create 8 personal sentences. Review Day 2 chunks.
4	A2 Travel	Study Unit 3. Do a Repair Race with 8 phrases.
5	A2 Study & Work	Study Unit 4. Use 6 collocations in a mini-story about school or work.
6	A2 Health & Feelings	Study Unit 5. Do a 20-second recall burst for weather and health.
7	A2 Review	Without the guide, recall 25 A2 collocations. Re-study only the ones you miss.
8	B1 Goals	Study Unit 6. Give a 60-second goal update using 5 collocations.
9	B1 Communication	Study Unit 7. Role-play a disagreement that ends in agreement.
10	B1 Problems	Study Unit 8. Explain a problem → action → solution → result.
11	B1 Learning	Study Unit 9. Explain your English-learning method using 6 chunks.
12	B1 Work	Study Unit 10. Give a short workplace update.
13	MAKE / DO	Study the MAKE and DO families. Do two 20-second Verb Bursts.
14	TAKE / HAVE / GET	Study three verb families. Write a 12-sentence story using at least 8 chunks.
15	Midpoint Recording	Repeat the Day 1 speaking prompt. Compare fluency, hesitation, and natural chunks.

Days 16-30

Day	Focus	Task
16	B2 Arguments	Study Unit 11. Give a short opinion with evidence and a conclusion.
17	B2 Change	Study Unit 12. Describe one social or technological trend.
18	B2 Risk	Study Unit 13. Explain one risk and how to minimize it.
19	B2 Professional	Study Unit 14. Give a formal project update.
20	B2 Abstract Precision	Study Unit 15. Explain an underlying cause of a real problem.
21	Adjective + Noun	Study the adjective+noun bank. Do Ten-Second Partner with heavy, strong, serious, key, major.
22	Adverb + Adjective	Study the intensifier bank. Replace very in 10 sentences with natural collocations.
23	Prepositions	Review adjective+preposition and verb+preposition chunks. Create 12 personal examples.
24	Register	Take 8 casual statements and restate them neutrally and formally.
25	Translation Traps	Review the transfer-error table. Build a personal “Do Not Translate Literally” list.
26	Collocation Chain	Build three chains of at least 8 linked collocations.
27	Topic Constraint	Choose 3 topics. Speak for 45 seconds each using 4 required collocations.
28	Delayed Recall	Select 20 difficult chunks. Test yourself immediately, after 20 minutes, and at the end of the day.
29	Mock Conversation	Hold or record a 5-minute conversation. Aim for natural chunks, not perfect grammar.
30	Final Recording	Repeat the Day 1 prompt. Count correctly used collocations and set a new 30-day target.

30-Day Progress Tracker

Skill	Can-do statement	Self-rating
Recognition	I can identify natural collocations when I see or hear them.	Day 1: ___ / 5 Day 15: ___ / 5 Day 30: ___ / 5
Repair	I can correct common unnatural combinations.	Day 1: ___ / 5 Day 15: ___ / 5 Day 30: ___ / 5
Controlled production	I can use target collocations in prepared sentences.	Day 1: ___ / 5 Day 15: ___ / 5 Day 30: ___ / 5
Spontaneous production	I can retrieve collocations during unrehearsed speaking.	Day 1: ___ / 5 Day 15: ___ / 5 Day 30: ___ / 5
Register control	I can choose casual, neutral, or formal chunks appropriately.	Day 1: ___ / 5 Day 15: ___ / 5 Day 30: ___ / 5
Self-correction	I can repair a collocation mistake without stopping the conversation.	Day 1: ___ / 5 Day 15: ___ / 5 Day 30: ___ / 5

Part 9 - Master Collocation Bank

Use this section for review, games, speaking prompts, and personal sentence building. It is a teaching bank, not an official CEFR list.

A2 - Daily Life

have breakfast	take a shower	get dressed
make the bed	do the dishes	do the laundry
go shopping	make dinner	take a break
go to bed	get enough sleep	spend time

A2 - Travel & Places

catch a bus	miss a train	book a room
pack a bag	take a trip	go abroad
ask for directions	heavy traffic	arrive on time
get lost	take a taxi	visit a place

A2 - Study & Work

do homework	take notes	ask a question
give an answer	take a test	make a list
start work	finish a task	work hard
get a job	have a class	learn a language

A2 - Health & Feelings

feel sick	catch a cold	get better
take medicine	get some rest	feel tired
good mood	bad mood	strong wind
heavy rain	bright sunshine	feel better

B1 - Goals & Growth

set a goal	achieve a goal	make progress
make an effort	face a challenge	overcome a problem

develop a skill

gain confidence

build a habit

reach a target

improve performance

gain experience

B1 - Communication

have a conversation

express an opinion

make a point

ask for advice

give advice

keep a promise

break a promise

strong relationship

lose touch

reach an agreement

make a suggestion

give an example

B1 - Problems & Decisions

cause a problem

solve a problem

deal with a problem

find a solution

take action

make a mistake

learn from a mistake

serious issue

avoid a problem

reduce the risk

make a decision

take responsibility

B1 - Work & Learning

meet a deadline

attend a meeting

apply for a job

earn a salary

heavy workload

work closely

make a contribution

expand your vocabulary

pay attention

practice regularly

look up a word

clear explanation

B2 - Argument & Evidence

raise a question

support an argument

challenge an assumption

draw a conclusion

reach a conclusion

provide evidence

strong argument

compelling evidence

widely accepted

strongly disagree

firmly believe

valid point

B2 - Change & Impact

bring about change

undergo a change

have an impact

make an impact

play a role

drive growth

sharp increase

steady decline

growing concern

long-term effect

rapid growth

significant change

B2 - Risk & Consequences

pose a threat

pose a risk

minimize the risk

take a risk

serious consequences

far-reaching consequences

address a problem

tackle an issue

potential drawback

unintended consequence

mitigate risk

adverse effect

B2 - Professional & Academic

conduct research

carry out an analysis

meet a requirement

allocate resources

provide feedback

reach a consensus

take into account

highly effective

closely related

fully aware

widely recognized

strongly associated

B2 - Abstract Precision

underlying cause

key factor

fundamental difference

broader context

mutually beneficial

closely linked

deeply rooted

highly likely

growing awareness

major implication

clear distinction

reasonable assumption

Part 10 - Classroom & Self-Study Games

Collocation Bingo

Choose 16 chunks from the Master Bank. Put them in a 4×4 grid. A partner reads meanings or situations; mark the matching chunk.

Forbidden Partner

Give a base word, but ban its most obvious partner. Example: heavy - you may not say rain. Learners must find another natural partner.

Natural or Suspicious?

Read two phrases: one natural and one suspicious. Learners vote, then explain the correction.

Upgrade Ladder

Start with an A2 phrase and express a more precise B1/B2 idea. Example: big problem → serious problem → major issue / growing concern.

Speed Sort

Sort cards into MAKE, DO, TAKE, HAVE, GET, GIVE, KEEP, PAY, or CATCH in 60 seconds.

Story Constraint

Draw 5 collocations at random. Tell one coherent story using all five.

Register Switch

Say a casual expression. Partner gives a neutral or formal alternative.

One-Minute Teacher

Choose 3 collocations and teach them to someone else using meaning, example, and one common mistake.

Answer Key

Speaking tasks are open-ended. Model answers are not the only correct answers; the key focuses on collocation accuracy.

Foundation Check

1. make a plan
2. heavy traffic
3. pay attention
4. deeply disappointed
5. catch the bus = successfully get it before it leaves; take the bus = use that mode of transport

Unit 1 - Daily Routines

Exercise A: 1) have; 2) take; 3) take; 4) spends; 5) does

Exercise B: do breakfast → have breakfast; make a shower → take a shower; take dressed → get dressed; make a break → take a break

Unit 2 - Home & Social Life

Exercise A: 1) do; 2) having; 3) make; 4) keep; 5) close

Exercise B: make the laundry → do the laundry; do plans → make plans; strong friend → close friend; stay a good time → have a good time

Unit 3 - Travel & Getting Around

Exercise A: 1) book; 2) missed; 3) heavy; 4) arrive; 5) got

Exercise B: strong traffic → heavy traffic; reserve a bag → pack a bag; lose the train → miss the train; ask directions → ask for directions

Unit 4 - Study & Work Basics

Exercise A: 1) take; 2) do; 3) get; 4) ask; 5) finish

Exercise B: make homework → do homework; write notes → take notes; do a question → ask a question; take a job → get a job

Unit 5 - Health, Weather & Feelings

Exercise A: 1) catching; 2) get; 3) heavy; 4) get; 5) mood

Exercise B: take a cold → catch a cold; strong rain → heavy rain; heavy wind → strong wind; make rest → get some rest

Unit 6 - Goals & Progress

Exercise A: 1) making; 2) set; 3) gain; 4) effort; 5) reached

Exercise B: do progress → make progress; win confidence → gain confidence; make a challenge → face a challenge; arrive a target → reach a target

Unit 7 - Communication & Relationships

Exercise A: 1) ask; 2) made; 3) reached; 4) lost; 5) strong

Exercise B: say an opinion → express an opinion; do a point → make a point; win an agreement → reach an agreement; strongly relationship → strong relationship

Unit 8 - Problems & Solutions

Exercise A: 1) take; 2) find; 3) caused; 4) makes; 5) reduce

Exercise B: do action → take action; make a solution → find a solution; do a mistake → make a mistake; low the risk → reduce the risk

Unit 9 - Learning & Language

Exercise A: 1) pay; 2) make; 3) expand; 4) look; 5) common

Exercise B: give attention → pay attention; grow vocabulary → expand your vocabulary; search up a word → look up a word; make sensefull → make sense

Unit 10 - Work, Decisions & Responsibility

Exercise A: 1) meet; 2) take; 3) apply; 4) heavy; 5) closely

Exercise B: catch a deadline → meet a deadline; do responsibility → take responsibility; make experience → gain experience; strong workload → heavy workload

Unit 11 - Arguments & Evidence

Exercise A: 1) raises; 2) draw/reach; 3) challenges; 4) provides; 5) strongly

Exercise B: make a conclusion → draw/reach a conclusion; powerful evidence → compelling/strong evidence; highly disagree → strongly disagree; ask an assumption → challenge an assumption

Unit 12 - Change, Trends & Impact

Exercise A: 1) bring; 2) driving; 3) sharp; 4) plays; 5) effect

Exercise B: make about change → bring about change; strong increase → sharp increase; do a role → play a role; long effect → long-term effect

Unit 13 - Risk, Problems & Consequences

Exercise A: 1) pose; 2) address/tackle; 3) consequences; 4) minimize/reduce; 5) drawback

Exercise B: make a threat → pose a threat; attack an issue → tackle/address an issue; strong consequences → serious consequences; small the risk → minimize/reduce the risk

Unit 14 - Professional & Academic English

Exercise A: 1) reached; 2) take; 3) conducted; 4) related; 5) effective

Exercise B: make research → conduct/do research; do into account → take into account; strongly related → closely related; very effective → highly effective - preferred formal collocation

Unit 15 - Abstract Ideas & Natural Precision

Exercise A: 1) underlying; 2) key; 3) linked; 4) rooted; 5) likely

Exercise B: deep cause → underlying cause; important factor → key factor - more compact/typical in formal English; deeply linked → closely linked; strongly likely → highly likely

MAKE / DO / TAKE Challenge

1. make a decision
2. do your best
3. take a risk
4. do/conduct research
5. make progress
6. take responsibility
7. make a mistake
8. take notes
9. do the laundry
10. make an effort

Naturalness Toolkit - sample answers

1. heavy rain
2. strong coffee
3. close friend
4. serious problem
5. key factor
6. growing concern

Personal Collocation Notebook

The highest-value collocations are the ones you actually need. Add phrases from conversations, work, classes, videos, and reading.

Collocation	Meaning	My example	Register	Review dates

Personal Collocation Notebook - continued

Collocation	Meaning	My example	Register	Review dates

Personal Collocation Notebook - continued

Collocation	Meaning	My example	Register	Review dates

NATURAL ENGLISH IS BUILT ONE CHUNK AT A TIME.

Learn it. Notice it. Retrieve it. Use it.



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