

ADVANCED ENGLISH

C1-C2 Collocations & Lexical Precision

Natural word partnerships for argument, work, research, policy, technology, and analysis

C1

Flexible, precise, well-structured language for demanding social, academic, and professional situations.

C2

Fine-grained control of nuance, register, implication, style, and reformulation with very little strain.

Your target

Speak and write in advanced chunks that sound natural, precise, and context-appropriate instead of assembling words one at a time.

Inside this guide

15 topic and function units, collocation families, repair tasks, register notes, a 30-day retrieval path, personal error-bank method, and final assessment.

Important accuracy note

CEFR levels describe communicative ability. They do not publish one mandatory list of punctuation rules, vocabulary items, grammar points, or idioms for C1 and C2. This guide is a practical, CEFR-aligned progression designed for advanced learners.

American English conventions are used as the default. Recognized international and British variants are noted where they materially affect meaning or style.

How to Use This Guide

Advanced progress is less about collecting more rules and more about making better choices under pressure. Work actively: notice the option, explain the effect, produce your own version, then revise it.

Step	What to do
1. Learn the chunk	Store the whole partnership, not separate words.
2. Notice	Observe grammar, register, and typical context.
3. Repair	Correct possible-but-unusual combinations.
4. Retrieve	Produce the chunk from a meaning cue.
5. Transfer	Use it in a new topic or genre.

C1 evidence

You can choose an effective form for a demanding task, sustain control across a longer response, and repair awkward wording without losing the thread.

C2 evidence

You can deliberately manipulate nuance, rhythm, register, emphasis, and implication, and can reformulate almost immediately when the first wording is not exact.

Recommended rhythm

- Study one unit every two days.
- Day A: notice, analyze, and imitate.
- Day B: retrieve, produce, and edit without looking.
- Recycle older units after 3, 7, and 14 days.

The advanced learner's trap

Knowing that an expression is grammatically possible is not enough. At C1-C2, the questions become: Is it natural here? Is it the right register? Does it imply what I intend? Is there a more precise or more economical way to say it?

C1-C2 Collocations & Lexical Precision - Skill Map

The sequence moves from reliable advanced control to deliberate stylistic control. A learner may meet any feature earlier; the distinction here is the depth, flexibility, and consistency of use.

#	Unit	C1 focus	C2 extension
1	Argument and evidence	Use frequent collocations for claims, support, and interpretation.	Choose collocations that encode evidential strength and disciplinary caution.
2	Change and trends	Describe change with precise verb-noun and adjective-noun combinations.	Differentiate gradual, abrupt, sustained, marginal, and structural change.
3	Risk, probability, and uncertainty	Use natural collocations for risk assessment and cautious prediction.	Calibrate strength across possibility, exposure, likelihood, and consequence.
4	Decision-making and trade-offs	Use collocations for choices, priorities, and consequences.	Express competing objectives and constrained optimization naturally.
5	Cause, effect, and mechanism	Use natural collocations for causal explanation.	Distinguish direct cause, contribution, trigger, driver, correlation, and consequence.
6	Agreement, disagreement, and stance	Use nuanced collocations for partial agreement and principled disagreement.	Manage interpersonal tone while preserving intellectual clarity.
7	Professional performance and responsibility	Use collocations for roles, standards, delivery, and accountability.	Distinguish operational, strategic, and evaluative workplace language.
8	Research and analysis	Use common collocations for methods, findings, and interpretation.	Differentiate robust, preliminary, inconclusive, and convergent evidence.
9	Policy, rules, and implementation	Use collocations for introducing, enforcing, revising, and complying with policy.	Express implementation quality and unintended effects precisely.
10	Conflict, negotiation, and compromise	Use natural collocations for disagreement and resolution.	Control intensity from minor friction to entrenched conflict.
11	Health, wellbeing, and public communication	Use natural non-diagnostic collocations for health, habits, access, and wellbeing.	Distinguish everyday, public-health, and clinical register where appropriate.
12	Media, communication, and public discourse	Use collocations for reporting, framing, attention, and response.	Describe information ecosystems without adopting loaded language uncritically.
13	Technology and systems	Use collocations for performance, access, integration, security, and failure.	Explain technical issues precisely to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.
14	High-frequency verb families: make/do/take/get	Extend control of common verbs into advanced abstract collocations.	Recognize when the high-frequency verb is natural and when a more specific verb improves precision.
15	Collocation editing and personal error bank	Identify and repair recurring collocation errors.	Build a personalized system that records corrected chunks, register, and contrasts.

Argument and evidence

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C1 TARGET

Use frequent collocations for claims, support, and interpretation.

C2 EXTENSION

Choose collocations that encode evidential strength and disciplinary caution.

Core idea

Advanced naturalness comes from predictable word partnerships: draw a conclusion, compelling evidence, substantiate a claim.

Notice the effect

mounting evidence

draw a distinction

support an argument

reach a conclusion

Practice

1. Build noun partners for evidence and claim.
2. Repair three combinations that are grammatical but non-idiomatic.
3. Use four collocations in one analytical paragraph.

Production challenge

Give a 90-second argument using at least eight evidence collocations.

Watch for this

Do not use 'strong evidence' when the source only offers a tentative indication.

Self-check: Can I explain why my final version is better, not merely say that it sounds better?

Change and trends

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C1 TARGET

Describe change with precise verb-noun and adjective-noun combinations.

C2 EXTENSION

Differentiate gradual, abrupt, sustained, marginal, and structural change.

Core idea

Collocations let you encode both direction and character of change.

Notice the effect

undergo substantial change

a marked increase

a gradual decline

remain broadly stable

Practice

1. Create a scale from marginal to dramatic change.
2. Match verbs with trend nouns.
3. Describe one real trend using four different collocations.

Production challenge

Summarize a trend without repeating increase/decrease more than once.

Watch for this

Avoid mixing metaphors or trend verbs that imply movement in incompatible directions.

Self-check: Can I explain why my final version is better, not merely say that it sounds better?

Risk, probability, and uncertainty

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C1 TARGET

Use natural collocations for risk assessment and cautious prediction.

C2 EXTENSION

Calibrate strength across possibility, exposure, likelihood, and consequence.

Core idea

Advanced risk language combines nouns, verbs, and modifiers in conventional ways.

Notice the effect

pose a risk

heighten the risk

remote possibility

reasonably likely

Practice

1. Build five collocations around risk.
2. Distinguish high risk from highly risky and significant risk.
3. Rewrite alarmist language into measured risk language.

Production challenge

Explain a risk scenario with at least six calibrated collocations.

Watch for this

Risk language can sound objective while containing judgment; define the basis for high/low when it matters.

Self-check: Can I explain why my final version is better, not merely say that it sounds better?

Decision-making and trade-offs

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C1 TARGET

Use collocations for choices, priorities, and consequences.

C2 EXTENSION

Express competing objectives and constrained optimization naturally.

Core idea

Decision language often relies on chunks such as weigh the options, strike a balance, make a concession, and accept a trade-off.

Notice the effect

weigh the options

strike a balance

set priorities

bear the cost

Practice

1. Create one sentence for each collocation.
2. Explain the difference between make a compromise and reach a compromise.
3. Build a mini decision tree using collocation chunks.

Production challenge

Compare two difficult options using eight decision-making collocations.

Watch for this

Collocations are not interchangeable: bear a cost and incur a cost overlap but differ in tone and context.

Self-check: Can I explain why my final version is better, not merely say that it sounds better?

Cause, effect, and mechanism

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C1 TARGET

Use natural collocations for causal explanation.

C2 EXTENSION

Distinguish direct cause, contribution, trigger, driver, correlation, and consequence.

Core idea

Advanced causal language avoids collapsing every relationship into cause.

Notice the effect

contribute to an outcome

trigger a response

a driving factor

far-reaching consequences

Practice

1. Rank causal phrases by implied strength.
2. Rewrite a causal overclaim more cautiously.
3. Create collocation families around factor, effect, and consequence.

Production challenge

Explain a complex problem using at least three different causal-strength collocations.

Watch for this

Do not use cause when the evidence supports only association or contribution.

Self-check: Can I explain why my final version is better, not merely say that it sounds better?

Agreement, disagreement, and stance

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C1 TARGET

Use nuanced collocations for partial agreement and principled disagreement.

C2 EXTENSION

Manage interpersonal tone while preserving intellectual clarity.

Core idea

Advanced discussion often requires positions between total agreement and blunt contradiction.

Notice the effect

broadly agree

strongly object

take issue with

share the view

Practice

1. Place collocations on an agreement-disagreement scale.
2. Rewrite a blunt disagreement in professional language.
3. Create three ways to qualify agreement.

Production challenge

Debate a proposition for two minutes while using at least six stance collocations.

Watch for this

Politeness does not require vagueness. State the disagreement clearly after framing it appropriately.

Self-check: Can I explain why my final version is better, not merely say that it sounds better?

Professional performance and responsibility

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C1 TARGET

Use collocations for roles, standards, delivery, and accountability.

C2 EXTENSION

Distinguish operational, strategic, and evaluative workplace language.

Core idea

Workplace English becomes more natural when common nouns arrive with their typical verbs and adjectives.

Notice the effect

meet a deadline

assume responsibility

deliver results

maintain standards

Practice

1. Build collocation families for responsibility and performance.
2. Repair literal translations from your first language.
3. Use the phrases in a performance-review paragraph.

Production challenge

Give a 90-second project update using eight professional collocations.

Watch for this

Avoid corporate phrases that add no meaning; prefer specific chunks tied to a real action or result.

Self-check: Can I explain why my final version is better, not merely say that it sounds better?

Research and analysis

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C1 TARGET

Use common collocations for methods, findings, and interpretation.

C2 EXTENSION

Differentiate robust, preliminary, inconclusive, and convergent evidence.

Core idea

Research language depends heavily on collocation: conduct a study, yield results, account for variance, replicate findings.

Notice the effect

conduct an analysis

yield consistent results

account for variation

replicate a finding

Practice

1. Match verbs to study, analysis, finding, result, and evidence.
2. Rewrite an informal research description using natural chunks.
3. Distinguish collect data, gather evidence, and obtain results.

Production challenge

Summarize a hypothetical study using ten research collocations.

Watch for this

A polished research collocation does not make weak evidence strong; preserve methodological limits.

Self-check: Can I explain why my final version is better, not merely say that it sounds better?

Policy, rules, and implementation

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C1 TARGET

Use collocations for introducing, enforcing, revising, and complying with policy.

C2 EXTENSION

Express implementation quality and unintended effects precisely.

Core idea

Policy language often uses semi-fixed verb-noun partnerships.

Notice the effect

implement a policy

enforce regulations

comply with requirements

ease restrictions

Practice

1. Build a lifecycle: introduce -> implement -> enforce -> review -> revise.
2. Use four collocations in a short policy memo.
3. Compare comply with, conform to, and adhere to.

Production challenge

Explain a policy change and its implementation challenges using eight collocations.

Watch for this

Policy language can become bureaucratic. Use plain alternatives when the audience does not need technical phrasing.

Self-check: Can I explain why my final version is better, not merely say that it sounds better?

Conflict, negotiation, and compromise

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C1 TARGET

Use natural collocations for disagreement and resolution.

C2 EXTENSION

Control intensity from minor friction to entrenched conflict.

Core idea

Conflict vocabulary is highly collocational: resolve a dispute, ease tensions, reach a settlement.

Notice the effect

resolve a dispute

ease tensions

reach a compromise

a deep-seated disagreement

Practice

1. Create an intensity scale for conflict nouns.
2. Match verbs to dispute, tension, agreement, and compromise.
3. Rewrite aggressive language into negotiation language.

Production challenge

Role-play a negotiation using at least eight target collocations.

Watch for this

Do not over-dramatize a routine disagreement with high-intensity conflict vocabulary.

Self-check: Can I explain why my final version is better, not merely say that it sounds better?

Health, wellbeing, and public communication

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C1 TARGET

Use natural non-diagnostic collocations for health, habits, access, and wellbeing.

C2 EXTENSION

Distinguish everyday, public-health, and clinical register where appropriate.

Core idea

Advanced learners need to know when a collocation sounds clinical, neutral, or conversational.

Notice the effect

seek medical advice

experience symptoms

promote wellbeing

reduce exposure

Practice

1. Classify phrases by register.
2. Rewrite a clinical sentence for a general audience.
3. Build collocations around access, care, risk, and recovery.

Production challenge

Explain a general wellness recommendation using careful, non-diagnostic language and six collocations.

Watch for this

Do not use specialized clinical collocations as if they were a diagnosis or individualized medical advice.

Self-check: Can I explain why my final version is better, not merely say that it sounds better?

Media, communication, and public discourse

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C1 TARGET

Use collocations for reporting, framing, attention, and response.

C2 EXTENSION

Describe information ecosystems without adopting loaded language uncritically.

Core idea

Media language includes chunks such as attract attention, issue a statement, fuel speculation, and shape perception.

Notice the effect

issue a statement

draw attention to

fuel speculation

shape public perception

Practice

1. Identify evaluative collocations in a headline.
2. Rewrite a loaded phrase neutrally.
3. Use reporting collocations in a short summary.

Production challenge

Summarize a public controversy in neutral language using eight media collocations.

Watch for this

Some collocations carry framing or evaluative force. Separate what happened from how a source characterizes it.

Self-check: Can I explain why my final version is better, not merely say that it sounds better?

Technology and systems

NOTICE

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C1 TARGET

Use collocations for performance, access, integration, security, and failure.

C2 EXTENSION

Explain technical issues precisely to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.

Core idea

Technology English often relies on stable chunks: deploy a system, integrate a service, encounter an error, maintain compatibility.

Notice the effect

deploy a system

encounter an error

maintain compatibility

restrict access

Practice

1. Build collocations around system, access, data, failure, and performance.
2. Translate one technical description into plain language.
3. Repair verb-noun combinations that sound translated.

Production challenge

Give a 2-minute incident update using ten technology collocations and plain explanations.

Watch for this

Jargon-heavy collocations can hide uncertainty. Explain the mechanism when the audience needs to act.

Self-check: Can I explain why my final version is better, not merely say that it sounds better?

High-frequency verb families: make/do/take/get

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C1 TARGET

Extend control of common verbs into advanced abstract collocations.

C2 EXTENSION

Recognize when the high-frequency verb is natural and when a more specific verb improves precision.

Core idea

C2-like naturalness often rests on deep control of ordinary verbs, not rare vocabulary.

Notice the effect

take precedence

make provision for

do justice to

get the impression

Practice

1. Create advanced collocations for each verb family.
2. Replace a vague get/make phrase with a precise verb where appropriate.
3. Identify combinations that must stay as fixed chunks.

Production challenge

Use eight high-frequency-verb collocations in an advanced discussion without sounding repetitive.

Watch for this

Do not eliminate common verbs simply because they are common; many are the natural choice in fixed expressions.

Self-check: Can I explain why my final version is better, not merely say that it sounds better?

Collocation editing and personal error bank

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C1 TARGET

Identify and repair recurring collocation errors.

C2 EXTENSION

Build a personalized system that records corrected chunks, register, and contrasts.

Core idea

At advanced level, error reduction can produce more noticeable gains than learning another hundred isolated words.

Notice the effect

error: do a decision -> correction: make a decision

record: phrase + context + contrast + retrieval cue

Practice

1. Collect ten errors from your own writing or speech.
2. Group them by verb-noun, adjective-noun, preposition, or intensifier.
3. Create spaced retrieval prompts.

Production challenge

Retell a familiar topic while deliberately using ten corrected collocations from your error bank.

Watch for this

Do not store only the wrong form beside the correction; repeated exposure to the error can reinforce it. Make the corrected chunk visually dominant.

Self-check: Can I explain why my final version is better, not merely say that it sounds better?

30-Day Practice Plan - Days 1-15

Each unit receives two days: first for controlled noticing, then for independent production. Keep a correction log; advanced progress comes from repeated repair of your own recurring patterns.

Day	Focus	Mode	Output
1	Argument and evidence	Notice + imitate	Analyze 3 examples and create 2 controlled imitations.
2	Argument and evidence	Retrieve + produce	Produce a 60-90 sec response or 150-word text; revise once.
3	Change and trends	Notice + imitate	Analyze 3 examples and create 2 controlled imitations.
4	Change and trends	Retrieve + produce	Produce a 60-90 sec response or 150-word text; revise once.
5	Risk, probability, and uncertainty	Notice + imitate	Analyze 3 examples and create 2 controlled imitations.
6	Risk, probability, and uncertainty	Retrieve + produce	Produce a 60-90 sec response or 150-word text; revise once.
7	Decision-making and trade-offs	Notice + imitate	Analyze 3 examples and create 2 controlled imitations.
8	Decision-making and trade-offs	Retrieve + produce	Produce a 60-90 sec response or 150-word text; revise once.
9	Cause, effect, and mechanism	Notice + imitate	Analyze 3 examples and create 2 controlled imitations.
10	Cause, effect, and mechanism	Retrieve + produce	Produce a 60-90 sec response or 150-word text; revise once.
11	Agreement, disagreement, and stance	Notice + imitate	Analyze 3 examples and create 2 controlled imitations.
12	Agreement, disagreement, and stance	Retrieve + produce	Produce a 60-90 sec response or 150-word text; revise once.
13	Professional performance and responsibility	Notice + imitate	Analyze 3 examples and create 2 controlled imitations.
14	Professional performance and responsibility	Retrieve + produce	Produce a 60-90 sec response or 150-word text; revise once.
15	Research and analysis	Notice + imitate	Analyze 3 examples and create 2 controlled imitations.

Retrieval rule

Before opening the guide, write or say what you remember from the previous unit. Retrieval before review is a stronger test than rereading.

30-Day Practice Plan - Days 16-30

Each unit receives two days: first for controlled noticing, then for independent production. Keep a correction log; advanced progress comes from repeated repair of your own recurring patterns.

Day	Focus	Mode	Output
16	Research and analysis	Retrieve + produce	Produce a 60-90 sec response or 150-word text; revise once.
17	Policy, rules, and implementation	Notice + imitate	Analyze 3 examples and create 2 controlled imitations.
18	Policy, rules, and implementation	Retrieve + produce	Produce a 60-90 sec response or 150-word text; revise once.
19	Conflict, negotiation, and compromise	Notice + imitate	Analyze 3 examples and create 2 controlled imitations.
20	Conflict, negotiation, and compromise	Retrieve + produce	Produce a 60-90 sec response or 150-word text; revise once.
21	Health, wellbeing, and public communication	Notice + imitate	Analyze 3 examples and create 2 controlled imitations.
22	Health, wellbeing, and public communication	Retrieve + produce	Produce a 60-90 sec response or 150-word text; revise once.
23	Media, communication, and public discourse	Notice + imitate	Analyze 3 examples and create 2 controlled imitations.
24	Media, communication, and public discourse	Retrieve + produce	Produce a 60-90 sec response or 150-word text; revise once.
25	Technology and systems	Notice + imitate	Analyze 3 examples and create 2 controlled imitations.
26	Technology and systems	Retrieve + produce	Produce a 60-90 sec response or 150-word text; revise once.
27	High-frequency verb families: make/do/take/get	Notice + imitate	Analyze 3 examples and create 2 controlled imitations.
28	High-frequency verb families: make/do/take/get	Retrieve + produce	Produce a 60-90 sec response or 150-word text; revise once.
29	Collocation editing and personal error bank	Notice + imitate	Analyze 3 examples and create 2 controlled imitations.
30	Collocation editing and personal error bank	Retrieve + produce	Produce a 60-90 sec response or 150-word text; revise once.

Retrieval rule

Before opening the guide, write or say what you remember from the previous unit. Retrieval before review is a stronger test than rereading.

Advanced Quick Reference

Use this page as a fast review before writing, speaking, or editing.

Feature	Advanced question to ask
Chunk	Am I retrieving the partnership as one unit?
Naturalness	Is this combination conventional, not merely grammatical?
Register	Is the chunk conversational, neutral, formal, technical, or evaluative?
Strength	Does the collocation imply more certainty or intensity than the evidence supports?
Variation	What other natural partners belong to this word family?
Error source	Is this a literal translation from another language?
Retrieval	Can I produce the chunk from the concept alone?
Transfer	Can I use it in a new domain?

Advanced English is not maximum complexity. It is maximum control.

Final Performance Assessment

This is a learning check, not an official CEFR certification. Use it to identify where your advanced control is stable and where you still depend on conscious effort.

Task A - Prepared

Create a 3-minute spoken response or 300-word text using at least five features from this guide. Revise once.

Task B - Unprepared

Answer a new prompt for 2 minutes or write 180 words in 12 minutes. Then identify three choices you would improve.

Mastery checklist

- I retrieve common advanced chunks without translating word by word.
- I can repair possible-but-unusual word partnerships.
- I can use collocations for evidence, trends, risk, decisions, policy, work, and technology.
- I can calibrate intensity and evidential strength through collocation choice.
- I maintain a personal bank of recurring collocation errors and corrected chunks.
- I can use ordinary verbs such as make, take, get, and do naturally in advanced expressions.

Dimension	1 - Developing	2 - Reliable C1 control	3 - Flexible C2-like control
Accuracy	Frequent repair is needed.	Errors are occasional and rarely obscure meaning.	Control is sustained even with complex or compressed language.
Choice	Uses a safe default.	Chooses from several effective options.	Chooses deliberately for nuance, tone, rhythm, or implication.
Reformulation	Gets stuck when wording fails.	Repairs effectively after a pause.	Recasts smoothly and precisely with minimal disruption.
Transfer	Uses features only in practiced topics.	Transfers them across familiar advanced contexts.	Transfers them naturally across unfamiliar and high-pressure contexts.

Next step

Do not repeat every unit. Repeat the three units that caused the most hesitation, then retest with a new topic.

Alignment and Further Study

This workbook uses CEFR as a proficiency framework rather than as a checklist of mandatory language items.

- **Council of Europe:** Common European Framework of Reference for Languages - Companion Volume (2020).
- **English Profile:** research on grammar, vocabulary, and learner language across CEFR levels.
- **Cambridge English:** C1 Advanced and C2 Proficiency handbooks and sample materials.
- **Corpus-informed dictionaries:** use reputable learner and general dictionaries to verify collocation, register, frequency, pronunciation, and usage labels.
- **Style references:** compare conventions across professional, academic, journalistic, and organizational style guides when punctuation or capitalization varies.

Evidence habit

At C1-C2, dictionary definitions alone are not enough. Check authentic examples, collocations, grammar patterns, register labels, and how a phrase behaves across different contexts.

Digital Nutrients study principle

Notice -> retrieve -> produce -> revise -> transfer. The goal is not to sound complicated. The goal is to express the exact meaning you intend, in language appropriate for the audience and situation.