

Collocations are words that combine well together, making set phrases. “Do your homework”, “a brief period”, “a bunch of flowers” — all of these are collocations, accepted combinations of words. It is one of the fundamental aspects of natural English. Good knowledge of collocations makes your speech sound effortless and cohesive.

## Why you should learn collocations

- Proper use of collocations makes your speech and writing more natural. You say Do me a favour, not make me a favour
- Gives you more freedom to paraphrase your ideas correctly. Examples: *to get a job, to find a job, to look for a job*
- Collocations are tough to guess if you don't know them. It takes a very developed “feel” of the language to guess them correctly

## Types of collocations

- **Noun+noun.** (a flock of birds, a giant of a man, file and rank)
- **Noun+adjective.** (a major problem, a key point, a plausible outcome)
- **Noun+verb.** (I like to **watch TV**; he shut the door)
- **Verb+adverb.** (to step lightly; he easily defeated him; they barely moved)
- **Adverb+adjective** (I was **pleasantly surprised** to learn that)

This is a list of basic collocation groups. There are some more, but for now we shall concentrate on those above.

There are two ways to learn new collocations. You can use specialized dictionaries and dedicated textbooks for that. Alternatively, you may want to note any collocations in text you read and write them down. Of course, you have to be experienced enough to be able to recognize them.

This article contains the most basic collocations. They are grouped by words rather than types. I believe such grouping makes more practical sense. **To make sense** is a collocation too by the way.

Some verbs have explanations (in brackets), mostly more complex ones. All of the verbs have illustrative examples.

### Collocations with "do"

- Do a favour** — *Do me a favour, stop pestering me with your problems*
- Do one's best** (try very hard to achieve smth.) — *I did my best and we won*
- Do the dishes/cleaning/laundry** — *Have some tea, I have to do the dishes*
- Do one's hair** (to comb, wash, arrange hair) — *I want my hair done*
- Do damage/harm** — *Last night's storm did much damage to the house*
- Do an experiment** — *They have done some experiments on animals*

### Collocations with "make"

- Make a fuss** (to cause argument, commotion) — *She made a fuss over the fact that the waitress didn't smile at her*
- Make noise** — *The noise her rusty old car was making could be terrible*
- Make a choice** — *The choice had to be made as soon as possible*
- Make a mistake** — *Making such mistakes is unacceptable*
- Make a phone call** — *She has to make a few calls before noon*
- Make a decision** — *Making this decision wasn't easy for either of us*
- Make an effort** (to attempt, to try to do something) — *They made an effort to reach out to them*

### Collocations with "get"

- Get upset** — *He got upset because of your behaviour*
- Get better** (to recover e.g. from illness) — *Our dog is getting better*
- Get angry** — *You shouldn't get angry at him, he's too young*
- Get married** — *Nowadays people get married in their thirties*
- Get permission** — *I got the permission to leave from my boss*
- Get drunk** — *Last Friday we got so drunk I don't remember anything*
- Get up** (to wake up or to stand up) — *Get up, it's time to go*
- Get lost** (to lose one's way) — *Once she got lost in the woods there*
- Get away** (to run away or to remain unpunished) — *I don't understand how does he manage to get away with his behaviour*

### Collocations with "go"

- Go hiking/jogging/sightseeing** — *Would you like to go jogging with me early in the morning?*
- Go to bed** — *After the army I go to bed at 10 pm sharp*
- Go missing** (to get lost) — *The lady went missing two days ago*
- Go abroad** (go to another country) — *We don't go abroad very often*

**Go mad** (become crazy) — *There's something wrong with Jack, I think he went completely mad*

**Go quiet** (become silent) — *Suddenly, the street went completely quiet*

Collocations with "catch"

**Catch a cold** (get or suffer from cold) — *He forgot his cap and caught terrible cold last night*

**Catch a taxi/bus/train** — *Hurry up or we won't be there in time to catch our train!*

**Catch smb red-handed** (catch committing crime) — *The robbers were caught red-handed by the police*

**Catch sight of smb** (notice someone) — *I caught sight of you yesterday evening in the mall*

**Catch smb's eye** (to attract attention) — *The girl by the arcade machine really caught my eye*