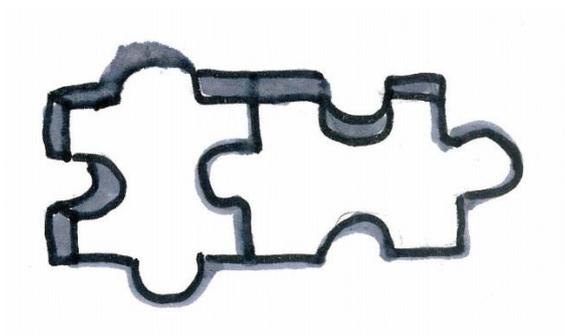


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Teaching collocations

Teaching tips and activities for business English



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Introduction

Speaking a language fluently is not about knowing individual words but about being aware of which words can be combined. One could say that words are choosy about the partnerships they are willing to form with other words. For this reason, they occur in certain combinations, for example *conveniently located* and *widely known*. These word combinations are called lexical units or collocations and are stored as "prefabricated chunks" in our mental lexicons to be ready for use¹.

According to The Oxford's Dictionary of English Grammar, there are **grammatical collocations** and **lexical collocations**. Grammatical collocations are "a type of construction where a verb, adjective, etc. must be followed by a particular preposition, or a noun must be followed by a particular form of the verb"², for example *afraid of* or *looking forward to meeting you*. Lexical collocations are "a type of construction where particular nouns, adjectives, verbs, or adverbs form predictable connections with each other"³. The following word types commonly form collocations:

- Noun-verb collocations are *to have a family, to start a family, to bring up/raise a family*
- Adjective-noun collocations are *immediate, nuclear and extended family*.
- Noun-noun collocations are *family doctor, family ties, family name*.
- Adverb-verb collocations are *conveniently located, legally binding*
- Adverb-adjective collocations are *environmentally friendly, fiercely competitive*

But, according to Michael Lewis, grammar and lexis are closely connected, which he describes as follows: "Language consists of grammaticalised lexis, not lexicalised grammar."⁴

Collocations can have different degrees of strength. **Unique collocations** are word combinations that are fixed. Examples are *shrug your shoulders* or *foot the bill*.

Strong collocations are formed by words that tend to be used together, such as *clench your fist* or *clench your teeth*.

The **collocation is medium-strong** when two words are commonly used together (although they can also collocate with other words). This makes the collocation predictable, such as *watch television* or a *hot issue*. It is usually not possible to substitute part of the idiom by a near synonym, for example, to replace *watch* by *see* or *hot* by *warm*. In addition, some of these collocations cannot be freely modified by grammatical transformations, for example, it is uncommon to talk about *greener tea*. Many words form medium-strong collocations.

Weak collocations are words that can collocate with a number of words that have the same or a similar meaning, such as an *exciting* or *interesting* film. *Big* and *small* are examples of adjectives that can be combined with a number of nouns to form weak collocations.

¹ Lewis, Michael (ed.) (2000): Teaching Collocation: Further Developments in the Lexical Approach. Hove, England. Language Teaching Publications, p. 10

² Chalker, Sylvia and Weiner, Edmund (1994): Oxford's Dictionary of English Grammar. Oxford University Press, p. 70

³ Ibidem

⁴ Lewis, Michael (1993): The Lexical Approach. Hove: Language Teaching Publications, p.vi

Specific types of collocations

Collocations fall into different categories. As Scott Thornbury writes, "Collocation is best seen as part of a continuum of strength of association: a continuum that moves from compound words (*second-hand, record player*), through multi-words units – or lexical chunks – (*bits and pieces*), including idioms (*out of the blue*) and phrasal verbs (*do up*), to collocations of more or less fixedness (*set the record straight, set a new world record*)⁵".

Phrasal verbs

Phrasal verbs are multi-word verbs, i.e. verbs that are combined with an adverb, a preposition or both. They frequently have an idiomatic meaning that is quite different from the literal meaning of the words. It is therefore important to learn the meaning of the phrasal verb as a unit (fixed meaning). In addition, learners need be aware of the grammar patterns. In the following table, some possible grammar patterns of phrasal verbs are shown⁶:

Phrasal verb	Grammar pattern
eat out	the verb is used without an object
bring back something/somebody or bring something/somebody back	the verb can have a non-human or human object
ask somebody out	the verb must have a human object
ring somebody back	the object must come before the particle
look after somebody/something	the object must come after the particle

Idioms

An idiom is a group of words whose meaning is not deducible from those of the individual words, for example, *jump on the bandwagon*. Near synonyms cannot be substituted for the components of a collocation, for example, you talk about *a dark horse* and not *a black horse*. Idioms occur in different grammatical patterns:

- Verb + noun, such as *call the shots*
- Adjective + noun, such as *a sticky wicket* (a difficult situation)
- Prepositional idioms, such as *out of the blue*

Although many idioms cannot be freely modified with additional words or through grammatical transformations, some lexical and grammatical variations are usually possible, for example:

- Active to passive: *We have to tighten our belts./When times are tough, **belts have to be tightened.***
- Singular to plural or plural to singular: ***a bull/bulls** in the china shop/*

⁵ Thornbury, Scott (2002): How to teach vocabulary. London. Pearson Education Limited, p.7

⁶ based on McCarthy, Michael and O'Dell, Felicity (2004): English Phrasal Verbs in Use. Cambridge University Press, p. 6

- Nominalisation: *It is not governments that by and large have tightened their **belts**, but taxpayers./National **belt-tightening***
- Negative to positive or positive to negative: *It's **not all plain sailing**./ Once I got used to the diet **it was plain sailing**.*
- Word(s) are added or word(s) are removed: *The ball is now **firmly** in your court!./ Any trade deal must include **rigorous level playing field provisions** ...*

Frozen similes

Frozen similes are idioms of comparison that cannot be freely modified, for example, *as dry as a bone, as quiet as a mouse, as pleased as Punch*.

Binomials

A binomial is a fixed phrase that contains two parallel units joined by a conjunction (and/or). Its order is fixed, such as *give and take, sink or swim, once and for all*.

Phrases for business English

In business English situations, such as socialising, meetings, negotiations and presentations, different types of fixed and semi-fixed phrases which have a conventionalised meaning are used, such as *This leads me to my next point; Let's now turn to ...; Shall we make a start?*

The importance of teaching collocations

As we have seen, a large part of the vocabulary comes in the form of fixed expressions and is stored in the speaker's mental lexicon. According to Michael Lewis, this lexicon is not arbitrary and vocabulary choice is predictable to a significant degree. However, non-native speakers find it difficult to predict collocations and learners need to be made aware of the words that go together in order to use them correctly. Students need to be aware of collocations in order to improve their receptive skills, i.e. to understand them when they hear or read them, and also to improve their productive control, i.e. to speak and write more naturally and correctly. Collocational competence improves fluency and helps students to avoid typical errors such as *do homework, take a test or found a family*, and to avoid semantic errors caused by confusing words that have similar or related meaning, for example *Let's sit in the shadow of the tree*. In addition, collocations are a way of saying something in a more expressive way, such as *fiercely competitive* instead of *very competitive*.

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), an influential document for language learning, language teaching, and language testing in Europe and beyond, also recognizes the importance of idioms. Its description of lexical competence includes fixed expressions, as shown in the following description of lexical elements⁷:

⁷ Council of Europe (2001: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages): Learning, teaching, assessment. Receptive, productive, mediation skills. <https://rm.coe.int/1680459f97>, p. 110-111

Lexical elements include:

Fixed expressions,

consisting of several words, which are used and learnt as wholes.

Fixed expressions include:

- sentential formulae,

including:

- phrasal idioms, often: semantically opaque, frozen metaphors

Their use is often contextually and stylistically restricted

- fixed frames, learnt and used as unanalysed wholes, into which words or phrases are inserted to form meaningful sentences

Please may I have

- other fixed phrases, such as:

phrasal verbs, e.g. to put up with, to make do (with);

compound prepositions, e.g. in front of

- fixed collocations, consisting of words regularly used together.

Idioms play also an important part in business English; for example, when interacting with native speakers, watching the news or reading the business press.

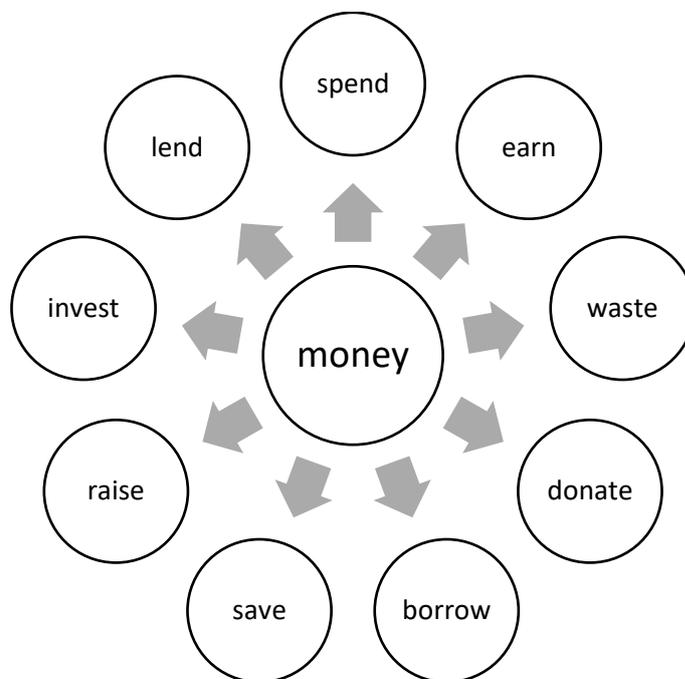
Methods of teaching and learning collocations

According to Hugh Dellar, the following procedure can help students to learn collocations⁸:

1. Understand meaning.
Translation – translate the whole unit of meaning, rather than just single words.
2. Hear/see examples of the language in context.
3. Repeat language in chunks or collocations.
4. Pay attention to the language and notice its features.
5. Use the new language in some way.
6. Repeat these steps over time/Revise.

Below you will find some ideas on how teachers can help their students to learn idioms:

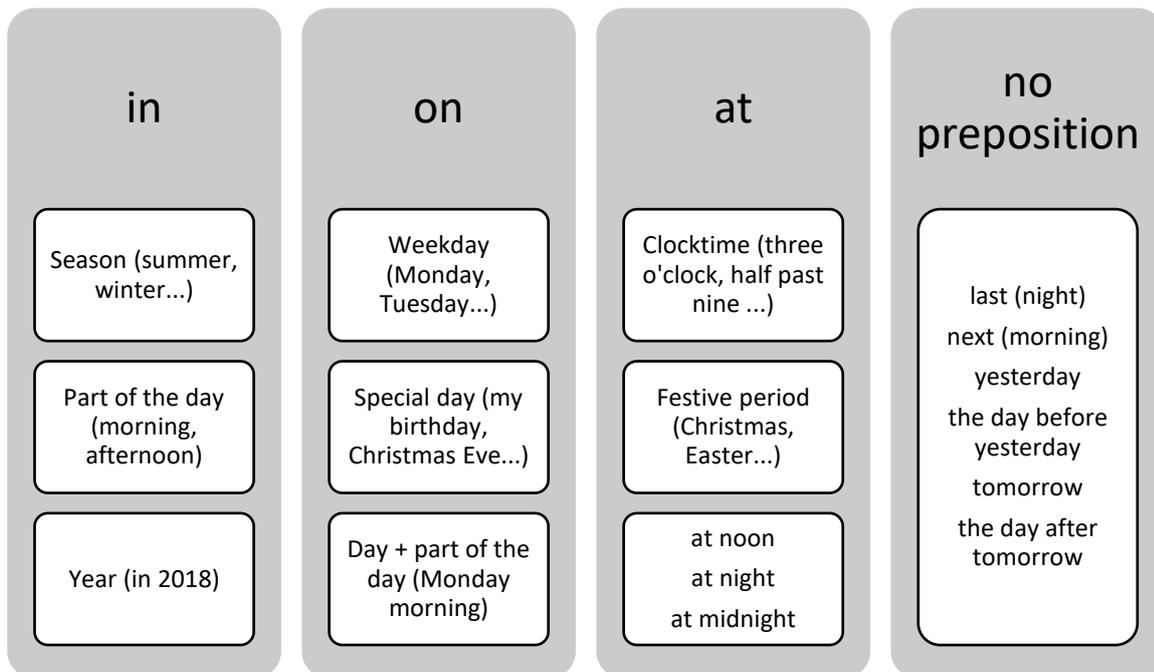
- Help students to learn idioms and remember them better by providing high-quality input (model provided by the teacher and by authentic texts) to ensure correct retrieval from memory in the classroom.
- Teach actually occurring language instead of “funny” examples.
- Raise students’ awareness and help them notice collocations in texts. Useful activities to raise awareness are translating and recording whole chunks instead of individual words.
- Show students ways of recording words that collocate with a keyword, for example verb-noun collocations or adjective-noun collocations:



⁸ Dellar, Hugh (2016): Teaching Lexically. Delta Teaching Development Series. Stuttgart, Klett-Verlag. p. 7.

a	long brief, quick, short day, overnight, weekend	trip
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- Provide examples of how grammatical collocations can be recorded:



- Teach semi-fixed expressions that consist of "a pragmatic (or 'functional') frame, which is completed by a referential slot-filler", for example, "Pass me the *book/salt/bread*, please."⁹
- Do Dictogloss.
Learners listen to a short text, note down key words, and then reconstruct the text individually or in groups paying special attention to the idioms that are used.
- Provide text templates that can be used to structure texts.

This thesis analyses the effects of _____ on the behavior of _____ .
 This thesis, applied to _____, is an in-depth analysis of ... We use data from _____
 ...

- *Teaching Lexically* suggests that students should be encouraged to read extensively at home to consolidate and extend knowledge of vocabulary¹⁰.

⁹ Lewis, Michael (1997): Implementing the lexical approach. Hove. LTP, p. 34

¹⁰ Dellar, Hugh (2016): Teaching Lexically. Delta Teacher Development Series. Stuttgart, Klett-Verlag. p. 96

- Drill collocations, chunks and whole sentences. This “provides intensive exposure to features of connected speech, may help develop both receptive and productive automaticity, with regard to particular chunks¹¹”.
- Help students remember idioms by repetition and distributed (spaced) practice.

Examples of exercises to practise collocations:

- Match a collocation/an idiom with its definition.
- Match the parts of a collocation/an idiom.
- Match a collocation/an idiom with a picture.
- Use kinesthetic activities, such as dominoes.
- Put events or processes into chronological order, for example *establish a company, manage the company, take over another company, dissolve the company*.
- Delete the word that does not collocate with a given word, for example, *attend, go to, start, finish, leave, ~~visit~~ school*
- Write a text using idioms.
- Practise discourse markers in role-plays.

Conclusion

Knowledge of collocations is an essential prerequisite for speaking and writing a language fluently. Teachers can improve their students' colloquial competence by making them aware of the correct use of collocations, showing them how to record and study collocations, and giving students ample opportunity to practise collocations in class.

¹¹ Dellar, Hugh: Teaching Lexically. Delta Teacher Development Series, p. 110

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Activities to practise business English collocations

Teachers may copy and use the following materials and worksheets for students in their class. For all other uses, permission in writing is required.

Verb-noun collocations in Business English

Tick all the expressions you know. Write a suitable noun that can be used with all the words in a group.

1) _____

acknowledge
confirm
bring forward/advance
cancel
change/modify
despatch/ship/send
lose
phone about
place
postpone
prepare
process
receive
win/obtain
a repeat ~

2) _____

employ/take on/hire
headhunt
interview
look for
promote
recruit
make redundant
sack/fire/dismiss
supervise
train

white-collar/blue-collar ~
skilled/semi-skilled/unskilled ~

3) _____

issue
make out
send
get/receive
pay
settle

4) _____

(re)launch
buy/purchase
deal in/trade in improve
design
despatch/ship/send
develop
distribute
export ≠ import
invent
make
manufacture
market
modify
promote
customise
standardise
recommend
sell
show/demonstrate
specialise in
supply
test/trial
test-market
~ specifications
~ features
~ range
end/finished ~

5) _____

be responsible for
reorganise
join
work in
the head of a
the marketing/accounts/advertising/export/sales ~

6) _____

arrange/organise
be in/attend
bring forward ≠ postpone
call/convene
adjourn
cancel/call off
chair
conduct
have
hold
interrupt
open/close

resume
schedule
take the minutes at
vote at

7) _____
automate
streamline
modernise
supervise
plan
hold up
transfer
~ site
~ capacity
~ levels

8) _____
attend
be in touch with
attract
a prospective ~
contact
deal with
look after
meet
phone
serve
visit/call (up)on

9) _____
ask for
prepare
make
revise
withdraw
accept ≠ reject
object to

10) _____
analyse
break in
capture
come on the
deregulate
dominate
enter
flood

gain a foothold in a
lose
penetrate
price oneself out of the
saturate

11) _____
win
lose
increase

12) _____
accept
agree on
ask for
cut/reduce
raise/increase
fix
maintain
negotiate
offer
pay
quote
~ list
~ range
a wholesale ~
a retail ~
a competitive ~
cost ~

13) _____
meet/face/encounter
fierce/great/strong/cut-throat

14) _____
get down to
do ~ with
be in
go out of
start/ establish a
manage/ run a
close (down) a
initiate a ~ relationship
form a ~ relationship
a ~ lunch
a ~ trip
a ~ card

15) _____
form/set up/start
(up)/establish/create/found
manage/run
nationalise ≠ privatise
reorganise, restructure
take over
merge a ~ with another
invest in
join
buy out
close down
dissolve
downsize

16) _____
go on/make
organise
plan
cancel

Verb-Noun Collocations in Business English

Key:

1) an order 2) a worker 3) an invoice 4) a product 5) a department 6) a meeting
7) production 8) a customer/client 9) an offer 10) a market 11) an order 12) a price
13) competition 14) business 15) a company 6) a business trip

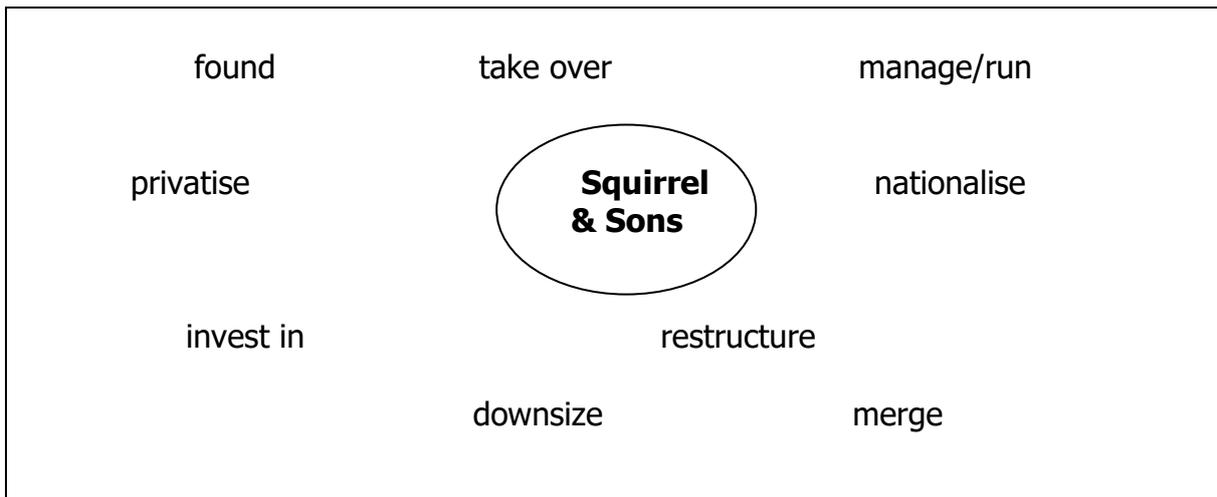
Verb-Noun Collocations in Business English

Questions:

- Describe your job duties.
- What phases are involved when organising and holding a meeting?
- What steps have to be followed before an order can be dispatched?
- What steps are involved in the recruitment process/in filling a vacancy?

A company history

Squirrel & Sons has recently been taken over by World Ltd. Write about the company's turbulent history using the following verbs:



Verb-Noun Collocations in Business English

CUT THE CARDS TO PLAY DOMINOES

a price	<i>place</i>	an order	<i>develop</i>
a product	<i>postpone</i>	a meeting	<i>penetrate</i>
a market	<i>look after</i>	a customer	<i>cancel</i>
an order	<i>set up</i>	a company	<i>attend</i>
a meeting	<i>deregulate</i>	a market	<i>price oneself out of</i>
a market	<i>take over</i>	a company	<i>increase</i>
a price	<i>acknowledge</i>	an order	<i>postpone</i>
a meeting	<i>contact</i>	a customer	<i>cancel</i>
a meeting	<i>negotiate</i>	a price	<i>promote</i>
a product	<i>cancel</i>	an order	<i>JOKER</i>
JOKER	<i>take the minutes at</i>	a meeting	<i>quote</i>

Adjective-Noun Collocations in Business English

Words to promote products and services

PUT EACH WORD IN THE SAME LINE AS THE WORDS THAT HAVE A SIMILAR MEANING.

good-looking, real, cutting edge, synthetic, deluxe, dedicated, tailored to the customer's needs, the leading manufacturer, adaptable, We have expertise in..., without fault, strong, trendy, trustworthy, delicious, time-saving, excellent, bargain

<i>a new design</i>	<i>novel</i>	<i>innovative</i>
high-tech	state-of-the art	
authentic		genuine
	man-made	(artificial)
customized	specifically geared towards the customer	
committed		highly motivated
an attractive	beautiful	
the industry leader		top producer
prices	competitive	good value for money
exclusive		up-market
We are experts in...		We have experience in...
perfect	flawless	
prime	first-class	
reliable	dependable	
wear-resistant	hard-wearing	durable
sturdy		tough
adjustable	flexible	
efficient		fast
	aromatic	mouth-watering
fashionable	stylish	

1. Find a noun that is described by each group of adjectives.
2. Write a short promotional text for a product.

KEY AND EXAMPLES

Words to promote products and services

new	novel	innovative
high-tech <i>production facilities</i>	state-of-the art	cutting edge
authentic <i>materials</i>	real	genuine
synthetic <i>fibers</i>	man-made	(artificial)
customized <i>solutions</i>	specifically geared towards the customer	tailored to the customer's needs
committed <i>staff</i>	dedicated	highly motivated
an attractive <i>design/product</i>	beautiful	good-looking
the industry leader	leading <i>manufacturer</i>	top <i>producer</i>
<i>bargain</i> prices	competitive <i>prices</i>	good value for money
an exclusive <i>product, restaurant</i>	deluxe	up-market
We are experts in...	expertise	We have experience in...
a perfect <i>performance</i>	flawless	without fault
prime quality/service	first-class	excellent
reliable <i>service</i>	dependable	trustworthy
wear-resistant <i>wheels</i>	hard-wearing	durable
sturdy <i>bikes</i>	strong	tough
adjustable <i>sizes</i>	flexible	adaptable
an efficient <i>process</i>	time-saving	fast
delicious <i>food</i>	aromatic	mouth-watering
fashionable <i>clothes</i>	stylish	trendy

Noun-Noun Collocations in Business English

TICK THE WORDS YOU KNOW. LOOK UP THE WORDS YOU DON'T KNOW.

market	leader research share segment forces penetration	the domestic an overseas the common labour stock bear bull	market
sales	~person campaign figures force pitch target literature promotion ~manship	work	~place ~shop ~load ~aholic permit day/week ~force
business	card trip hours lunch ~man/~woman meeting plan letter	wage	-earner freeze levels negotiations packet -price spiral
trade	journal ~mark name union bloc agreement deficit surplus fair war barriers balance	end- by- finished waste (GNP) gross national	product
		consumer	goods durables price index ~friendly protection credit spending

blue-collar white-collar skilled unskilled semi-skilled factory manual clerical	workers	wholesale retail market	price
		price	range index war label/tag
hard	currency disk copy sell method ~ware	financial	list services adviser year paper
soft	currency sell-method loan landing (of the economy) ~ware	customer	relations satisfaction loyalty
corporation income value-added	tax	tax	~payer office declaration refund evasion fraud incentive haven

Questions:

What is a sales pitch?

What is the difference between the domestic, overseas and Common market?

What is a soft currency and what is a hard currency?

What is a soft sell method and what is a hard sell method?

How can you achieve customer satisfaction and loyalty?

What is a tax haven?

CUT THE CARDS TO PLAY DOMINOES

<i>price index</i>	market	<i>leader</i>	sales
<i>person</i>	domestic	<i>market</i>	retail
<i>prices</i>	market	<i>research</i>	overseas
<i>market</i>	gross national	<i>product</i>	soft
<i>currency</i>	sales	<i>campaign</i>	market
<i>research</i>	sales	<i>figures</i>	wholesale
<i>price</i>	trade	<i>balance</i>	consumer
<i>spending</i>	soft	<i>landing</i>	work
<i>~place</i>	sales	<i>target</i>	wage
<i>-earner</i>	trade	<i>journal</i>	sales

<i>campaign</i>	soft	<i>loan</i>	work
<i>~load</i>	sales	<i>pitch</i>	wage
<i>-freeze</i>	trade	<i>~mark</i>	sales
<i>target</i>	work	<i>~aholic</i>	sales
<i>literature</i>	value added	<i>tax</i>	trade
<i>fair</i>	unskilled	<i>worker</i>	credit
<i>note</i>	blue-collar	<i>worker</i>	business
<i>plan</i>	end	<i>product</i>	trade
<i>bloc</i>	tax	<i>incentive</i>	retail
<i>price</i>	trade	<i>barriers</i>	tax

<i>payer</i>	trade	<i>deficit</i>	product
<i>range</i>	tax	<i>-free</i>	JOKER
<i>JOKER</i>	price	<i>range</i>	soft
<i>loan</i>	Joker	<i>Joker</i>	consumer
<i>goods</i>	trade	<i>union</i>	white-collar
<i>worker</i>	hard	<i>currency</i>	skilled
<i>worker</i>	tax	<i>haven</i>	consumer
<i>durables</i>	hard	<i>copy</i>	hard
<i>disk</i>	credit	<i>card</i>	consumer

Adverb-Adjective Collocations in Business English

DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

What shops and services are **conveniently located** to where you live?

Which brands are **highly popular** with young people?

What electronic devices will be **commonly used** in the future?

What do you do when your mailbox is **temporarily unavailable**?

Have you been **adversely affected** by any cuts to public services?

In what principles do you **firmly believe**?

Is cash still **widely accepted** everywhere?

Do your teachers/professors/boss **promptly reply** to your emails?

What topics do you find **highly interesting**?

Is a contract always **legally binding**?

WHAT DO THE FOLLOWING BODY IDIOMS MEAN?

Head

- to make headway
- to put ideas into somebody's head
- Heads will roll
- to bury one's head in the sand
- to be promoted over the heads of others
- to keep one's head above water

Eye

- to see eye to eye with somebody
- There is more than meets the eye.
- to open somebody's eyes
- to not believe one's eyes
- eye-catching

Brow

- high-brow
- low-brow

Nose

- under somebody's nose
- to be nosy
- to pay through the nose

Ears

- to be all ears
- to be up the ears in work/debt
- to play it by ear

Mouth

- to take the words out of somebody's mouth
- to make somebody's mouth water
- by word of mouth

Tooth/teeth

- to get one's teeth in it
- to have a sweet tooth

Tongue

- to have a sharp tongue
- on the tip of one's tongue
- a slip of tongue

Hand

- a show of hands
- live from hand to mouth
- have the upper hand
- to be an old hand
- to give somebody a hand

Neck

- to be neck and neck
- at breakneck speed
- be a pain in the neck

Throat

- cut-throat competition

Thumb

- a rule of thumb
- to give the thumbs up/down

Finger

- to keep one's fingers crossed
- to point the finger at somebody

Leg

- to pull somebody's leg
- Break a leg!

Foot/Feet

- to foot the bill
- to drag one's feet
- to stand on one's own two feet
- to get cold feet

Back

- behind somebody's back
- to have one's back to the wall
- to turn your back on somebody/something

Questions about body idioms

Do you sometimes have an English word on the tip of your tongue and just can't remember it?

Do you have a sweet tooth?

How did you pull somebody's leg?

What makes your mouth water?

Are you up to your ears in work or studies?

Who, in your opinion, is a pain in the neck?

When are you all ears?

Who foots the bill when you go for a drink with friends?

Can you remember a slip of tongue you have made?

Play body idiom dominoes

Copy the set of cards twice and cut out the cards. Students play in groups of three to six players. Each player receives the same number of cards and the body part cards are put on the table face up. The game is played in rounds. The first player chooses a body part card. Players can discard all cards with an expression where the body idiom is used. Before discarding a card, the player reads the sentence with the body idiom aloud. The other players confirm that the idiom is correctly used. Then another player picks another body card and the round starts anew. The first player who has discarded his or her last card is the winner.

FOOT/FEET	LEG	FINGER	HAND
TONGUE	EAR	EYE	HEAD

CARD GAME CARDS

Science has made ~ way in the battle against AIDS.	After the scandal, some ~ will roll in management.	It's unfair: John has been promoted over the ~ of others.
Keep your ~ above water with an emergency savings account.	I don't always see ~ to ~ with Susan.	The conflict resolution seminar has opened my ~.
The new design is ~ - catching.	Tell me the news: I'm all ~.	Sorry, I can't join you tonight. I'm up to my ~ in work.
I couldn't believe my ~ when I heard that John had been promoted.	It's on the tip of my ~ but I can't remember the name.	I made an embarrassing slip of ~ : I had a cold and I said that my nose was full of Germans instead of germs!
Be careful with Sarah: She has a sharp ~ !	During the meeting: Can we have a show of ~ now?	Pam returned empty ~ from her salary negotiation.
People are poor here: they live from ~ to mouth.	Let's keep our ~ crossed that we will win the order!	You needn't point the ~ at me. It's not my fault that something has gone wrong.
You can't be serious! You are pulling my ~ !	To an actor before the performance: Break a ~!	Jim wanted to work abroad, but when he was offered a job he got cold ~.
Who will ~ the bill for climate change?	It's important for young people to learn how to stand on their own two ~.	We don't have time to prepare. Let's play it by ~.

Collocations – Colour Idioms in Business English

Colour idioms

to tell a **white** lie

to sell something on the **black** market

the **black** economy

the **greenhouse** effect

to roll out the **red** carpet for somebody

blue-chip stocks

the **yellow** pages

to be \$ 9,000,000 in the **red**

white-collar workers and **blue**-collar workers

the **greenback**

a **blueprint**

to give somebody the **green** light

to be in the **pink**

a **grey** area

to turn **red** with embarrassment

white goods and **brown** goods

WHAT DO THE FOLLOWING COLOUR IDIOMS MEAN?

red

be \$1,000 in the red
red tape
roll out the red carpet for sb
red-faced

green

give the green light
a greenhorn
greenwashing
green politics
the greenhouse effect

black

black coffee
black market
black knight
to blackmail sb.
to be \$1,000 in the black
to blacklist somebody

golden

a golden chance/opportunity
a golden rule
a golden handshake
a golden parachute
the golden age/year

silver

every cloud has a silver lining

blue

out of the blue
a blueprint
a blue-collar worker
blue-chip stocks

pink

pink money
a pink-collar worker
to give sb. the pink slip

white

a white knight
a white collar worker
a white lie
a white elephant

grey

a grey area
the grey market

rosy

paint a rosy picture
The future looks rosy.

WRITE A SUITABLE COLOUR IDIOM FOR EACH DEFINITION.

Something negative

- to threaten somebody or to put pressure on a person or group
- illegal trading in goods, currencies or services
- bureaucracy
- somebody who is embarrassed because s/he has made a mistake
- dismiss or fire an employee
- a costly useless project
- a list of people or organisations one should not deal with because they cannot be trusted.

People

- a person who works in an office
- somebody who works in production
- a person who has no experience

Money

- a dollar bill
- a guarantee of salary so that (senior) executives do not lose income if their company is taken over by another
- a large sum of money given to employees when they leave the company
- to have money in one's bank account
- to be in debt
- money spent by the gay community

Nature

- a zone of farmland, parks and open country surrounding a town or city
- the rise in temperature of the earth's atmosphere caused by an increase of gases in the air
- politics that care about the environment

Investment

- shares that are thought to be a safe investment
- a person or organisation that rescues a company from an unfavourable takeover bid (= when another company wants to buy it).
- a person or company that tries to buy another company that does not want to sell.

Something good

- unexpected good side of something bad
- an important day because something good happened
- the best years of people or things
- describe a situation positively

Others

- welcome important guests by treating them specially
- suddenly, unexpectedly
- to give permission to start or continue with a project
- to have extreme views to see something either completely good or bad
- a detailed plan
- a very important principle which should be followed
- a harmless lie told in order not to hurt somebody
- an area that is not clear

CAN YOU EXPLAIN THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES?

The car manufacturer's reputation has been ruined after it used software to cheat on emissions tests. **Greenwashing** would be putting it mildly.

Fred Summerkorn, who stepped down as CEO last week, could receive a €50 million **golden handshake**.

The President has tried to **cut through government red tape** to save money and foster economic growth.

The **greenbelt** around the city is an oasis of parks, lakes, paths and golf courses.

Airlines are thinking about plans **to put** disruptive drunk passengers **on a flying blacklist**.

"**White collar workers** have been the most rapidly expanding sector of the labor force in the twentieth century United States." (Mark McCulloch)

Hollywood's **golden age** was in the 1930s and 1940s.

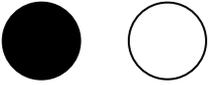
Some weak performances by stocks in the Dow Jones Index are a reminder that even **blue chips** are at risk.

Some politicians **paint an overly rosy picture** of the economy.

- LOOK OUT FOR EXAMPLES OF COLOUR IDIOMS IN BUSINESS TEXTS AND THE NEWS IN ENGLISH.
- WRITE SOME SENTENCES ABOUT CURRENT NEWS ISSUES USING COLOUR IDIOMS.

Colour Idioms

CUT THE CARDS TO PLAY DOMINOES.

	I'm broke. My account is €500.- in the ~.		Management has given the ~ light for the project.
	I don't take sugar and milk. I drink ~ coffee.		The company was saved by a ~ knight.
	Out of the ~ , I was promoted.		Jim does not have much experience. He's a ~ .
	There is a lot of bureaucracy. We have to cut through ~ tape.		This company is not trustworthy. It should be ~- listed.
	During a recession more workers get the ~ slip.		We have got the contract! Here it is in ~
	We need a plan or ~print for our product launch.		There are no clear rules. It is a ~ area.
	This airport is a useless investment. It's a ~ elephant.		We need more politicians to protect the environment.

	Remember our ~ rule: Better now than never!		Too many women still choose ~-collar jobs.
	Many executives negotiate a ~ handshake with their company.		The company's finances are sound and its numbers are in the ~.
	Buy safe ~-chip stocks.		We should roll out the ~ carpet for our best customer.
	You should take the job. It's a ~ chance.		The future of the smartphone market is good. It looks ~.
	~-collar jobs in manufacturing are disappearing.		We need to change our lifestyles to reduce the ~house effect.
	The mistake left the manager ~-faced.		The ~ age of the music industry is over.