

ACTIVITIES TO TEACH COLLOCATIONS

a COLLOCATION - the combination of words formed when two or more words are often used together in a way that sounds correct

a COLLOCATE - a word that is often used with another word

- **Find a better word**

Using a collocation dictionary, look up the word 'problem' and try to find a better way of expressing each of these:

a very small problem

the real problem

a problem that happens often

a problem that nobody expected

the basic problem

the most urgent problem

a problem that can't be solved

a problem that makes you feel bad

- **Five-word stories**

Look up the word 'waste' in a collocation dictionary.

Find five verbs for each word which suggest a 'story' if they are given in a particular order, e.g., 'produce, clean up, deal with, bury, recycle waste'.

- **As easy as possible**

Learners work in small teams.

Each team is given a list of 5-7 nouns which are the same.

Learners list 5 collocates from the dictionary for each noun.

One team reads out these collocates one at a time for each noun to other teams who have to write the words down and try to guess the noun.

Collocates should be chosen so that it is easy to guess.

If the noun is guessed from one collocate the team (who gives collocates) scores 5 points, if they need 2 collocates, 4 points and so on, e.g. *animal, endangered, protected, wild, distinct species*.

- **Four corners**

Four students are given the key words and stand in the corners of the classroom.

Other students are given collocates and they move around to find out which corner they belong to

e.g. (for one corner)

cause

extinction

lead to

be in danger of

be on the brink/edge/verge of

be threatened with

face

Variation of Four Corners

- **Collocations in envelopes**

Stick envelopes with the nouns written on them to the walls.

Students work in pairs.

Each pair gets cut out collocates (use different colour for each pair) of the nouns written on the envelopes.

Each pair puts collocates into the envelopes with different nouns based on what they think the correct collocation is.

When all the pairs have got no collocates left, T removes the envelopes from the walls and gives one envelope with the collocates in it to each pair.

Each pair also gets the correct list of the words that collocate with the noun written on the envelope.

Pairs check whether all the collocates found inside the envelope fit the noun.

Pairs give feedback to the class (name the right collocates and say which pairs (see the colour) have done the task with no mistakes).

- **Lead-in to the topic (Ss guess the topic of the lesson)**

Find the collocates of the word which is the topic of the lesson (e.g. the topic of the lesson is MONEY)

Write each collocate separately on a sheet of paper (e.g. *pocket, prize, to waste, to spend, to borrow, to lend, to cost, to owe, easy, big, management, etc.*).

Give the collocates out to Ss (one word each).

Ss call out their words and try to guess the noun the given words collocate with, which is the topic of the lesson.