Notes on Collocations in E4PS
(lexical / grammatical / aesthetic collocations)

What is a collocation?

A collocation is two or more words that often go together. These combinations just sound "right" to a native English speaker, who uses them all the time. On the other hand, other combinations may be unnatural and just sound "wrong" – even if the meaning would seem the same.

Compare, for example, the following:

- *fast food* [✔] vs *quick food* [✘]
- *a quick meal* [✔] vs *a fast meal* [✘]
- *unemployment rate* [✔] vs *joblessness rate* [✘]
- *job market* [✔], *labour market* [✔] vs *work market* [✘]
- *goods and services* [✔] vs *services and goods* [✘]
- *supply and demand* [✔] vs *demand and supply* [✘]
- *assets and liabilities* [✔] vs *actives and passives* [✘]
- *credit card* [✔] vs *credit paper* [✘]
- *soft skills* [✔] vs *transversal skills* [✘]

How to learn collocations

- treat collocations as **single blocks of language**, think of them as individual blocks and learn *strongly support*, not "strongly" + "support";
- when you learn a new word, **write down other words that collocate with it** (*remember rightly*, *remember distinctly*, *remember vaguely*, *remember vividly*);
- learn collocations in groups that work for you – e.g., you could learn the **by topic** or **by a particular word**;
- you can find information on collocations (often in bold) in any good **dictionary** – both monolingual and bilingual – as well as on www.wordreference.com;
- you can also find specialised dictionaries of collocations, such as the *Oxford Collocations Dictionary* (2001), the *MacMillan Collocations Dictionary* (2010) and www.ozdic.com

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Types of collocations

There are several different types of collocations made from combinations of items from the various word-classes – being they lexical or grammatical.

LEXICAL COLLOCATIONS

- ✧ **adv** + **adj** ➡ *extremely low*
- ✧ **adj** + **n** ➡ *Political Science; developing countries*
- ✧ **n** + **n** ➡ *stock exchange; unemployment rate; travel agency*
- ✧ **n** + **v** ➡ The US *Congress approved* the tax-cutting package.
- ✧ **v** + **n** ➡ They *entered politics* in the hope of changing society.
- ✧ **v** + **adv** ➡ *to increase dramatically*

GRAMMATICAL COLLOCATIONS

- ✧ **v + preposition** ➡ *to apply for; to depend on; to focus on; to deal with; to result in; to result from; to listen to; to be composed of; to be made up of; to participate in*
- ✧ **adj + preposition** ➡ *interested in; dependent on; independent from; consistent with*
- ✧ **linking expressions** ➡ *according to / in accordance with / on the basis of/based on; as well as; as well; such as; due to / because of; in order to; so far; in compliance with; in addition; in addition to*

N.B.: Metaphors and metonymies, as well as phrases containing sound repetition, such as alliteration or paronomasia, are referred to as **AESTHETIC COLLOCATIONS**:
  - ✧ *white collars*
  - ✧ *fat cat*
  - ✧ *to make a mistake*
  - ✧ *to face the facts*