Notes on Collocations in E4VPA
(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* [✗]
- *to watch a movie* [✓] vs *to look at a movie* [✗]
- *ancient monuments* [✓] vs *antique monuments* [✗]
- *opera house* [✓] vs *opera home* [✗]
- *home theatre* [✓] vs *house theatre* [✗]
- *performing arts* [✓] vs *performative arts* [✗]

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. Some of the most common types are:

- **adv** + **adj** ➡ *absolutely stunning*
- **adj** + **n** ➡ *fine arts; still life; rave reviews*
- **n** + **n** ➡ *box office; action movie*
- **n** + **v** ➡ This *novelist wrote* more than thirty books.
- **v** + **n** ➡ *to perform a song*
- **v** + **adv** ➡ *to dance barefoot*

LEXICAL COLLOCATIONS

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

GRAMMATICAL COLLOCATIONS

N.B.: Metaphors and metonymies, as well as phrases containing sound repetition, such as alliteration or paronomasia, are referred to as **AESTHETIC COLLOCATIONS**:

- *blue Monday*
- *black Friday*
- *red carpet*
- *the golden age*
- *to make a mistake*
- *to face facts*

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