

87 Common collocations



1 Verb + noun

Collocations are words that often go together. Verb + noun collocations sometimes change the meaning of the verb, e.g. *run + a business*.

VERB + NOUN	EXAMPLES
take a photo turns action a chance	<i>When do you take your final medical exams?</i> <i>In this game, you take turns to throw the dice and answer questions.</i> <i>The police need to take action against these thieves.</i>
miss the bus a penalty the point a person	<i>I was late for work because I missed the bus again.</i> <i>You've missed the point of my argument – you don't understand.</i>
run a race a shop a business	<i>Radcliffe ran a good race and won by over thirty seconds.</i> <i>My brothers and I have been running the family business for years.</i>
tell a story the truth a joke	<i>Go to bed! Your father won't tell you a story if you misbehave.</i> <i>There's no point in discussing this if you don't tell the truth.</i>
start work the car an argument	<i>Why couldn't you start the car this morning?</i> <i>I knew that he wanted to start an argument, so I refused to speak.</i>
make a mistake the bed a promise	<i>I think you've made a mistake in these accounts.</i> <i>Don't make promises if you can't do what you say!</i>

2 Verb + noun + preposition

VERB + NOUN + PREPOSITION	EXAMPLES
take part in pity on care of	<i>Aren't you going to take part in the swimming competition?</i> <i>I don't take care of the children much because I work full-time.</i>
make friends with the most of	<i>I haven't made friends with many people here.</i> <i>The weather's awful here but we're trying to make the most of it.</i>
run the risk of	<i>You run the risk of hurting yourself if you don't rest after your injury.</i>
have confidence in	<i>The company has problems, but I have confidence in my managers.</i>

3 Adjective + noun

ADJECTIVE + NOUN	EXAMPLES
strong swimmer smell wind coffee	<i>I'm not a very strong swimmer.</i> <i>Last night's strong wind has blown down a lot of trees.</i>
heavy rain traffic smoker industry meal	<i>There was very heavy traffic on the motorway last night.</i> <i>The heavy industry outside the town creates employment.</i>
great difficulty time interest success	<i>I had a great time at your party – thanks for inviting me.</i> <i>The athletics team had great success at the Olympics.</i>
good/bad habit luck news	<i>Biting your nails is a really bad habit – I wish you'd stop.</i>
light meal rain coat	<i>The weather wasn't too bad – just a little light rain most days.</i>

⚠ You often can't translate directly from other languages. Always check in a good dictionary:
 ✗ *We had a little **thin rain** yesterday.* ✓ *We had a little **light rain** yesterday.*