

## Collocation forks (Cycle 2)

	an organization
join	the army
	the club

Make sure students translate the whole collocation and not just the verb. As you can see below, *join* could be rendered into French in three different ways depending on its collocations.

	an organization	<i>devenir membre d'un organisation</i>
join	the army	<i>s'engager dans l'armée</i>
	the club	<i>adhérer à un club</i>

### Translation

	the story
cover	your face
	the point

### Guess from the first letter

	o...
join (a/the)	a...
	c...

### Guess from the collocations

	the bill
	for the tickets
	attention

This is particularly useful with delexicalised verbs (*get, take, make, do* etc)

### Make up a story

This works well if the key word is a noun

take	
pass	(an) exam
fail	

### Highlighting impossible collocations

take	
pass	(an) exam
fail	
make	

For example: I **took** my final **exam** last week but I **failed**. Hopefully I'll **pass** next time.

**Verb + noun collocation forks**  
*for making up "stories"*

make	
save	
spend	money
waste	

set up	
do	
run	(a) business
take over	

cause	
deal with	(a) problem
solve	

make	
learn from	(a) mistake
avoid	

ask for	
give	advice
follow	

give	
do	homework
hand in	

make	
keep	(a) promise
break	

go to	
escape from	jail
get out of	

go on	
arrange	(a) trip
cancel	
return from	

get	
lose	(a) job
apply for	
find	

**Article: Ten years without books** by John Kuti

As I write this, I have half an eye on an old James Bond film that is showing on my computer. But this is a story about how I stopped watching TV and began reading again for pleasure, after ten years in which I hardly turned a page.

I suppose I was an avid reader of "literature" between the ages of nine and fourteen. I had enough time to be White Fang, Robinson Crusoe, and Bilbo Baggins and Jeeves. Of course there was room in the schoolboy's imagination for some real historical figures: Scott of the Antarctic, all of the Vikings, and Benjamin Franklin were good friends of mine.

Then, in adolescence, I began a long search for strange and radical ideas. I wanted to challenge my elders and betters, and stir up my peers with amazing points of view. Of course, the only place to look was in books. I hunted out the longest titles and the authors with the funniest names, I scoured the library for completely unread books. Then I found one which became my bible for the whole of 1982, it had a title composed of eleven long words and an author whose name I didn't know how to pronounce. It was really thick and looked dead serious. Even better, it put forward a whole world-view that would take days to explain. Perfect. I took it out of the library three times, proud to see the date-stamps lined up on the empty library insert.

Later, I went to university. Expecting to spend long evenings in learned discussion with clever people, I started reading philosophy. For some reason I never found the deep-thinking intellectuals I hoped to meet. Anyway, I was ready to impress with my profound knowledge of post-structuralism, existentialism and situationism. These things are usually explained in rather short books, but they take a long time

to get through. They were the end of my youthful reading.

Working life was hard to get used to after so much theory. It was the end of books for me. There didn't seem to be much in books that would actually get things done. To do things you had to answer the telephone and work a computer. You had to travel about and speak to people who weren't at all interested in philosophy. I didn't stop reading, you can't avoid that. I read all day. But no books came my way, only manuals and pamphlets and contracts and documents. Maybe most people satisfy their need for stories and ideas with TV and, to tell the truth, it was all I needed for ten years. In those days I only had a book "on the go" for the duration of aeroplane flights. At first I would come home and watch TV over dinner. Then, I moved the TV so I could watch it from bed. I even rigged up a switch so I could turn it off without getting out of bed. Then, one fateful day, my TV broke and my landlady took it away.

My new TV is an extra circuit board inside my computer. It's on a desk in front of a working chair and I can't see it from the bed. I still use it for the weather forecasts and it's nice to have it on while I'm typing this... but what to do last thing at night? Well, have another go with books.

Now, I just like books. I have a pile of nice ones by my bed and I'm reading about six simultaneously. I don't want to BE any of the characters. I don't care if a thousand people have already read them. I don't have to search through libraries. There are books everywhere and all of them have something to read in them. I have the strange feeling that they've been there all along, waiting for me to pick them up.

### Revisiting texts: What do they stand for?

Give your students the text they've read or part of it with the chunks you focused in earlier lessons replaced by initials, for example, **p.o.v.** for "point of view". Ask students in pairs to recall the chunks.

If they find it difficult, you can provide definitions (like in activity 1) Here is a part of the same text taken from paragraph 5 with initials instead of some collocations and multi-part verbs.

Working life was hard to get used to after so much theory. It was the end of books for me. There didn't seem to be much in books that would actually **g. t. d.**. To do things you had to answer the telephone and work a computer. You had to **t. a.** and speak to people who weren't at all interested in philosophy. I didn't stop reading, you can't avoid that. I read all day. But no books **c. m. w.**, only manuals and pamphlets and contracts and documents. Maybe most people **s.** their **n.** for stories and ideas with TV and, to **t. t. t.**, it was all I needed for ten years. In those days I only had a book "**o. t. g.**" for the duration of aeroplane flights. At first I would come home and **w. TV o. d.** Then, I moved the TV so I could watch it from bed. I even rigged up a switch so I could **t. it o.** without getting out of bed. Then, one fateful day, my TV broke and my landlady **t. it a.**

An article with more ideas for revisiting texts  
soon on the *Teaching English* website

**TASK – Strong, medium or weak?**

Match the verbs in the left column with the words they collocate (=go with) in the right column

achieve	a compromise
bear	a test
fail	a goal
reach	a film
see	a mistake
perform	the horn
shrug	an experiment
honk	shoulders
make	resemblance

Now rank the collocations from strongest to weakest.

**References & further reading**

- Hill, J. (1999). Collocational competence. *English Teaching Professional*, 11, pp 3-7
- Laufer, B. & T. Waldman. (2011). Verb-noun collocations in second language writing: a corpus analysis of learners' English. *Language Learning*, 61 (2), pp 647-672
- Lewis, M. (1997). *Implementing the lexical approach*. Hove: LTP
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- Nation, I.S.P. (2001) *Learning Vocabulary in Another Language*. Cambridge: CUP
- Nesselhauf, N. (2003). The use of collocations by advanced learners of English and some implications for teaching. *Applied Linguistics*, 24(2), pp 223–242
- Wang, Y. & P. Shaw. (2008). Transfer and universality: Collocation use in advanced Chinese and Swedish learner English. *ICAME Journal* 32, pp 201-228.

**Useful resources on the web**

- My article on the importance of revising lexis  
[www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/articles/revising-lexis-quality-or-quantity](http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/articles/revising-lexis-quality-or-quantity)
- A series of articles and activities using the Lexical approach  
[www.teachingenglish.org.uk/try/activities/lexical-approach-classroom-activities](http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/try/activities/lexical-approach-classroom-activities)
- Lesson plan – Money collocations  
[www.teachingenglish.org.uk/try/lesson-plans/vocabulary-lesson-money](http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/try/lesson-plans/vocabulary-lesson-money)
- Lexical exploitations of texts  
<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/articles/lexical-exploitation-texts>
- Delexicalised verbs  
[www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/articles/delexicalised-verbs](http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/articles/delexicalised-verbs)
- Why I won't say good-bye to the Lexical Approach  
[www.hlomag.co.uk/mar03/mart2.htm](http://www.hlomag.co.uk/mar03/mart2.htm)
- The British National Corpus  
<http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc>
- A quick and easy-to-use collocation look up  
[www.just-the-word.com/](http://www.just-the-word.com/)

Check out activities for recycling collocations on my blog Leoxicon:

[www.leoxicon.blogspot.com](http://www.leoxicon.blogspot.com)