

PROSPERITY EDUCATION

ENGLISH COLLOCATIONS IN CONTEXT

B2 – C1

David Bohlke

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To infinity and beyond.

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Introduction

If you've been studying English even for a short period of time, you've probably already come across a *considerable number* of collocations. Perhaps you encountered some the last time you *sat for an exam*. Are you confident that you're learning them correctly? Or do they make you *hopelessly confused*? Is it hard for you to *make time* to really learn them? Well, this *user-friendly* book *takes an in-depth look* at collocations.

What are collocations?

Collocations are groups of two or more words that tend to be used together. They are common in English and sound 'right' to native speakers. Examples include *heavy rain*, *make a decision* and *wildly optimistic*. If a speaker instead says *large rain*, *do a decision* and *excitedly optimistic*, the listener will likely understand the gist of what's been said, but the phrases will sound strange – even wrong. A native speaker would never combine words in this way.

There is not always a grammatical reason why some words go together in English while others do not. That is what makes learning and remembering collocations a challenge. There is often not a clear reason why a native speaker says *fast food*, for example, but not *quick food*.

Another reason why learning collocations can be a challenge is that many words in English have several collocations. For example, the word *friend(s)* can be used in *true friend*, *trusted friend*, *long-lost friend*, *circle of friends*, *make friends*, *meet through friends*, *send a friend request* and in many other ways too.

Why learn collocations?

When you learn collocations your language will sound more natural, and you will be more easily understood. Using collocations correctly will help to show others your true level of English. And if you know a lot of collocations, you will also have multiple ways of expressing yourself!

In addition, a good knowledge of collocations will help you if you are preparing to take standardised exams like IELTS or TOEFL. Collocations are common in these types of exams. If you need to speak or write as part of an exam, your language will sound much more natural if you use collocations correctly.

English Collocations in Context

Types of collocations

There are many types of collocations. Some of the most common types are:

<i>adverb + adjective</i>	I think he's <i>painfully shy</i> . I've been <i>incredibly busy</i> lately. My classmates are <i>exceptionally friendly</i> .
<i>adjective + noun</i>	The father is often the <i>main breadwinner</i> . What I'm offering has a <i>competitive advantage</i> . A <i>common thread</i> in her work is the use of colour.
<i>noun + noun</i>	I have <i>brand loyalty</i> for certain things. I'd start by thinking about your <i>target audience</i> . A community family is not made up of <i>blood relatives</i> .
<i>verb + noun</i>	At night we might <i>do a puzzle</i> . They often <i>slash prices</i> on big-ticket items. Don't feel pressured to <i>declare a major</i> right away.
<i>verb + adverb</i>	I don't think he <i>dresses appropriately</i> . She <i>works tirelessly</i> during the week. Look, I <i>control</i> it <i>remotely</i> .
<i>verb + prepositional phrase</i>	The house <i>is in the suburbs</i> . Make sure you <i>are on time</i> . That style of dress <i>is in fashion</i> .
<i>adjective + prepositional phrase</i>	She's <i>low on cash</i> . I'm not <i>active on social media</i> . I've been eating a lot of food that is <i>high in fat</i> lately.

Learning collocations

When you come across a new collocation, think of it as a 'chunk' of language. It's easier for our brains to remember and use language in chunks rather than as single words.

Here are some other tips that may be helpful in learning collocations:

- Read a lot. It's an excellent way to see collocations in context.
- Try to recognise collocations when you see or hear them.
- Use coloured highlighter pens to mark different types of collocations.
- Write down other words that collocate with the new collocation.
- Practise using new collocations soon after learning them.

How to use this book

This book can be used as a classroom text, but it's primarily a book for self-study. It contains 40 units on everyday topics commonly found in coursebooks. In the odd-numbered units, the collocations are presented through two dialogues. In the even-numbered units, the collocations are presented through a variety of texts.

Each unit presents approximately 15 collocations in context. It's suggested that you first read the dialogues and texts, and then try to use the context to guess any unfamiliar collocations. If you cannot guess, check their meaning in a dictionary. Feel free to make notes on the dialogues and texts, and in the margins.

Try to learn each whole collocation, but pay attention to the individual words. After you have read and understood the dialogues/texts, move onto the two self-check exercises. Refer back to the collocations in the dialogues/texts as needed. Once you have completed the self-checks, check the Answer key at the back of the book (pages 113–122).

If you choose to keep a separate vocabulary notebook, note down any new collocations. You may wish to organise them by topic or by structure.

Within the appendices, there is a section named **Collocation expansion** (pages 123–133), which features additional collocations related to each unit's topic. These are not practised in the book, but it's a good idea to look over these collocations as well. This book contains more than 2,200 collocations when these are included, all of which are indexed on pages 141–161.

Additional ideas for self-study

- Create a mind map. Draw lines from the topic and list the collocations.
- Write true sentences. Use the collocations in personalised sentences.
- Draw pictures. Create a literal representation of each collocation.
- Create flash cards. Write a collocation on one side and its definition on the other.
- Write your own conversation. Make up a dialogue that contains several collocations in context.
- Do a news search. Find real-world examples in the News sections of your search engine.
- Test yourself. Create a quiz on the collocations, and then take it a few weeks later.

Unit 1

Friends

- Costas:** How's college life so far?
- Jill:** It's great.
- Costas:** Have you **made friends**?
- Jill:** Sure. My classmates are **exceptionally friendly**. But I haven't really made friends with anyone in my dorm. They are **not particularly friendly**.
- Costas:** Really?
- Jill:** I mean, they're nice enough but there isn't anyone I would consider a true friend. I talk to everyone and I want people to like me, but it's hard.
- Costas:** Can I give you some **friendly advice**?
- Jill:** Of course.
- Costas:** Don't try so hard. Just be yourself. It can take time to **develop a friendship**.
- Jill:** I suppose. It's not that I don't know people here. I have a lot of **casual acquaintances**. And I have a couple of friends from high school here as well, so we get together sometimes.
-
- Lacy:** Have you seen Chris lately?
- Ian:** I haven't talked to him in ages. Actually, we're not **on speaking terms**.
- Lacy:** What? What happened? You guys used to **get on famously**.
- Ian:** I know. We hung out almost every weekend. He was a very **close friend**. Then we had a huge falling out. It's a long story, but basically he **divulged a secret** I had told him, and then said he didn't.
- Lacy:** That's sad to hear. Things like that can really **destroy a friendship**.
- Ian:** It's so true. I was hoping we could somehow **repair our friendship**, but that seems more and more unlikely unless he reaches out to me.
- Lacy:** So you never see him?
- Ian:** Well, I do **cross paths with him** from time to time because we have the same **circle of friends**. We just avoid each other.
- Lacy:** Well, hopefully he'll come around.
- Ian:** Thanks. I hope so, too.

English Collocations in Context

Self-check 1

Circle the correct words.

Do you want to **1) make / develop** friends at university? Maybe these tips can help ...

- Start friendly conversations with the people you cross **2) friends / paths** with at school and get to know them. They may start out as **3) speaking / casual** acquaintances, but in time they may become **4) friendly / close** friends.
- Join a club. It's a great way to enlarge your circle of **5) advice / friends**. If someone is not **6) famously / particularly** friendly for some reason, don't worry. Find someone who is and get to know them.
- Don't rush things. It won't be helpful to push too hard because you will just come across as needy. It takes time to **7) develop / divulge** a friendship.

Self-check 2

Complete the descriptions with words from the box. Two words are not used.

destroy	divulge	exceptionally	famously	friend
friendly	make	repair	speaking	true

- 1 I want to be friends again. Do you think there is any way we can _____ our friendship?
- 2 Kal and I have not been on _____ terms since he started that rumour about me.
- 3 I didn't mean to _____ our friendship. I wish I could take back the untruthful things I said.
- 4 My new neighbour is _____ friendly. I think she and I might start hanging out together.
- 5 Ben and Zac have always gotten on _____. And they seem to do everything together.
- 6 I'm not one who would ever _____ a secret, but I have to tell you something important.
- 7 Can I give you some _____ advice? Stay away from Jenn and her friends.
- 8 Thanks for your honesty. I know it was a hard thing to say, but it's a sign of a(n) _____ friend.

Unit 2

Family

The Ever-changing Family



What constitutes a family has undergone some major shifts over the past few decades. In much of the world there simply is no 'typical' family anymore. 'Different is the new normal', says sociologist Philip Cohen. It's clear today that there are more types of families than ever.

A **nuclear family**, sometimes also known as a **traditional family**, consists of two parents and their children living **under the same roof**. The father is often the **main breadwinner**. This is the idea of family that many people in the industrial world think of. However, in much of the world this type is in decline.

A **single-parent family** consists of one parent with one or more children. A parent may have **gotten divorced**, or they may have **become a widow** or **widower**. In other cases the parent may have never **gotten married** at all. In many parts of the world this type of family is on the rise. This family type has also become more accepted than it was once was.

An **extended family** is the most common type of family in the world. This type includes at least three generations: parents, their grandparents and their children. Other family members such as aunts, uncles and cousins may also live in the same household. In some cases the **family members** choose to live together, and in other cases they share a home out of economic necessity.

A **blended family** is formed when divorced or widowed parents get married for a second time.

English Collocations in Context

Two families merge into one. At least one parent has children who are not **biologically related** to their spouse. This type has become more common over the years. It very often includes **adopted children**.

A childless family is a family where the parents don't have children. The parents either cannot have children or they choose not to **bring children in the world**. For those who choose not to have children, their decision may be due to economic reasons, or just a personal preference.

A community family is not made up of **blood relatives**. It's made up of friends and other people who have filled the role of family members without being related. In this type, you choose your family.

Self-check 1

Complete the descriptions with words from the box. Two words are not used.

adopted blended blood divorced extended
members nuclear related roof single

The childless family

The family 1) _____ in this family includes only the parents.

The 2) _____-parent family

This family type consists of one unmarried parent with one or more children.

The 3) _____ family

There are at least three generations in this family type, all living under the same

4) _____.

The community family

This family type is made up of people who are not biologically 5) _____.

The 6) _____ family

This family type consists of parents and their children.

The 7) _____ family

If a parent with one or more children gets 8) _____ (or widowed) and then marries someone else, they create this family type.

Self-check 2

Each sentence has an error. Replace the ~~crossed-out~~ word.

- 1 The main ~~relative~~ _____ in my family is my mother. She works outside the home and my father stays home with the kids.
- 2 My aunt became a ~~divoree~~ _____ after the death of her husband of 30 years. A few years after his death, she chose to marry again.
- 3 More and more young people are waiting to ~~have~~ _____ married until after they finish their studies.
- 4 Two parents and their children are known as a ~~blended~~ _____ or nuclear family in many cultures, but that is description may soon change.
- 5 People often ask me why my partner and I chose not to get _____ children into the world. Why can't people understand that not everyone wants kids?
- 6 My wife and I have several ~~nuclear~~ _____ children. We couldn't have our own children, so this was a wonderful option for us.
- 7 We have a huge household. Besides my ~~adopted~~ _____ relatives like my parents and children, it includes my wife's extended family.



Unit 3

Social media

- Hannah:** Thanks for accepting my friend request.
- Jin-ho:** Oh, sure. I'm not that **active on social media**, but I get on sometimes.
- Hannah:** I sometimes feel like I'm **addicted to social media**.
- Jin-ho:** What do you mean?
- Hannah:** I just spend a lot of time online. I'm always checking **trending topics** and **commenting on threads**. I also like to post things.
- Jin-ho:** What do you post?
- Hannah:** I mostly **post photos**. You know, just pictures of me, of friends, whatever I'm doing.
- Jin-ho:** I guess that's what most people use social media for. I don't know. I'm just not that into it. I'm more of a private person I guess.
- Hannah:** I can understand that. It's easy to waste time.
- Jin-ho:** I did see a funny video the other day. It was of a cat that was jumping rope.
- Hannah:** I saw that! It **went viral** and everybody was **sharing the link**.
-
- Trent:** Can you help me with something?
- Carmen:** Sure.
- Trent:** I'm finally on social media but I'm having some trouble. I know you are on several **social media sites**.
- Carmen:** You're on social media? I never thought I'd see the day.
- Trent:** Don't laugh! I resisted for a long time, but I'm finally giving in.
- Carmen:** Sorry. So what are you trying to do?
- Trent:** Well, I **took a selfie** but I can't figure it out how to **upload the photo**.
- Carmen:** Oh, that's easy, Just click this ... and then this. There.
- Trent:** Oh, that was easy! And how do I **add friends**?
- Carmen:** Look here. These are people you know who already have accounts. Just click this and it will **send a friend request**.
- Trent:** How do I **check my messages**?
- Carmen:** All your messages are here. See? I'd suggest you go here and **manage your settings**. I'll walk you through it if you like.
- Trent:** That would be great.

Self-check 1

Unscramble the words to make sentences. There is one extra word in each set that is not needed.

1 phone / my / with / selfie / took / I / a / made

_____.

2 your / to / media / messages / check / easy / it's

_____.

3 addicted / settings / media / is / social / to / Gia

_____.

4 very / to / social / is / Omar / active / on / media

_____.

5 settings / viral / you / your / should / manage

_____.

6 on / never / threads / Emiko / comments / trending

_____.

Self-check 2

Circle the correct words.

- 1 A lot of videos go **active** / **viral**, but then they disappear just as quickly.
- 2 I rarely **trend** / **post** photos but my friends and family often tag me in theirs.
- 3 If I send a friend **request** / **thread**, how do I know if the person has received it?
- 4 If you want to **comment** / **upload** a photo, just make sure that it's not too big.
- 5 I want to share a **link** / **media** with you. It's for a job that has recently been advertised.
- 6 I don't **add** / **manage** friends very often. I'm already friends with my close friends.
- 7 How do you decide which social media **site** / **settings** to join?
- 8 Understanding **trending** / **viral** topics on social media is important for internet marketers.

Unit 4

Home

What Is Home?



I've recently graduated from college and have started a new job in a new city. I live in a small, **modest flat**. I don't own it. I **pay rent**. I don't really consider this flat a home, only a place to live for a short time. I've just **put down a deposit** on a **starter home**. I'm going to be a **first-time buyer**! The house is in a **middle-class neighbourhood**, not far from where I work. That will be my home. – *Noirin, 25, Australia*

You can have more than one home. I know someone who still considers their **childhood home** their home. When they **go home** to their parents' house, they say they feel like they **are truly home**. I can see how they would feel that way, especially if they had a happy childhood filled with wonderful memories. But not everyone is so lucky. Some people have lost their homes and are homeless. I wonder how they would answer this question. – *Khalid, 42, Morocco*

I live with my husband and two children in a **single-family home**. This is where we have decided to **put down roots**. It's perfect for our family. It's **in the suburbs**. We have a big kitchen, a living room, a dining room, two bathrooms and three bedrooms. This is our first home, but we hope this will also be our **forever home**. We want to raise our kids here, grow old here, and retire here. I can see lots of grandchildren filling the house in our later years! – *Greta, 28, Germany*

To me home is not about the building. Not everyone has a **home of their own**. Home is where you can feel comfortable, loved and respected. It's where your happiest memories lie. It's where you can dream. It's more about the people and the environment you are in. It's certainly not about a place or having **all the comforts of home**. I guess to me home is an idea, a concept. The saying 'Home is where the heart is' says it all. – *Rafael, 18, Colombia*

Self-check 1

Match the parts. Then use the phrases to complete the sentences.

in	buyer
put down	neighbourhood
home	the suburbs
middle-class	a deposit
first-time	of home
all the comforts	of my own

- 1 We live in a(n) _____. People of average income can afford to buy here.
- 2 You don't have to pay for a new home in full, but you need to _____.
- 3 If you are a(n) _____, it's important that you study the housing market.
- 4 I live with my family but I'm saving up to buy a(n) _____.
- 5 Our flat has _____. Our family is very comfortable living there.
- 6 We're tired of living in the city. We'd like to live _____ someday.

Self-check 2

Circle the correct words.

- 1 I have a **forever / modest / childhood** flat in the city centre.
- 2 I don't want to move anymore, It's time for me to **have / pay / put down** roots.
- 3 I love to visit my **childhood / starter / forever** home. Mom cooks my favourite foods.
- 4 Is it wasteful to **be / pay / buy** rent, or should I consider buying a home?
- 5 I thought this was your **truly / forever / comfort** home. Why did you decide to sell it?
- 6 It's been a very long day, I think I'll **have / go / put down** home soon.
- 7 We have a(n) **own / suburbs / single-family** home, but we want something bigger.
- 8 Only when I see my family am I **truly / starter / middle-class** home.
- 9 This is a great **deposit / starter / childhood** home for a young family.

Self-check

Answers

Unit 1

Self-check 1

1 make; 2 paths; 3 casual; 4 close; 5 friends; 6 particularly; 7 develop

Self-check 2

1 repair; 2 speaking; 3 destroy; 4 exceptionally; 5 famously; 6 divulge; 7 friendly; 8 true

Unit 2

Self-check 1

1 members; 2 single; 3 extended; 4 roof; 5 related; 6 nuclear; 7 blended; 8 divorced

Self-check 2

1 breadwinner; 2 widow; 3 get; 4 traditional; 5 bring; 6 adopted; 7 blood

Unit 3

Self-check 1

1 I took a selfie with my phone. 2 It's easy to check your messages.
3 Gia is addicted to social media. 4 Omar is very active on social media.
5 You should manage your settings. 6 Emiko never comments on threads.

Self-check 2

1 viral; 2 post; 3 request; 4 upload; 5 link; 6 add; 7 site; 8 trending

Unit 4

Self-check 1

1 middle-class neighbourhood; 2 put down a deposit; 3 first-time buyer;
4 a home of my own; 5 all the comforts of home; 6 in the suburbs

Self-check 2

1 modest; 2 put down; 3 childhood; 4 pay; 5 forever; 6 head; 7 single-family; 8 truly; 9 starter

English Collocations in Context

Unit 5

Self-check 1

1 college; 2 off; 3 program; 4 for; 5 receive; 6 fees; 7 university; 8 out

Self-check 2

1 attend; 2 live; 3 hit; 4 pay off; 5 graduate; 6 declare; 7 take; 8 sit for

Unit 6

Self-check 1

1 develop good eating habits; 2 work up an appetite; 3 make a shopping list;
4 grab a bite to eat; 5 satisfy your sweet tooth; 6 have a balanced diet;
7 shop on an empty stomach; 8 cook from scratch

Self-check 2

1 quick; 2 fast; 3 check; 4 home-cooked; 5 junk; 6 go-to; 7 packaged; 8 ready-made

Unit 7

Self-check 1

1 has the same eyes; 2 has shoulder-length hair; 3 is in his early 20s; 4 has red hair;
5 is in good shape; 6 is fashionably dressed; 7 has a full head of hair

Self-check 2

1 slim; 2 youthful; 3 young; 4 bald; 5 broad; 6 strongly; 7 athletic; 8 old

Unit 8

Self-check 1

1 travel off season; 2 go abroad; 3 score a deal; 4 plan a trip; 5 take in the sights;
6 book a flight; 7 obtain a visa

Self-check 2

1 holiday; 2 take; 3 track; 4 reserve; 5 travel; 6 on; 7 inclusive; 8 at

Appendix

Collocation expansion

This section features additional collocations related to each unit's topic. These are not practised in the book, but it's a good idea to look over these collocations as well. All collocations are indexed on pages 141–161.

Unit 1

mutual / social acquaintance; **good / dear / lifelong / trusted** friend; **childhood / old / family / long-lost** friend; **bunch / group / network** of friends; **bonds / offer / gesture / token** of friendship; **become / stay / remain** friends; be on **good / bad / friendly** terms with someone; **form / strike up / build / nurture / renew** a friendship; **wreck / spoil / ruin** a friendship; **seek / enjoy** someone's company; **keep / share / reveal** a secret; **genuinely / extremely** friendly; not be **exactly / especially** friendly

Unit 2

birth **mother / parents**; adoptive **mother / father / parents**; foster **child / children / mother / father / parents**; **biological / close-knit / tight** family; family **gathering / reunion / dynamics / unit**; be **family / flesh and blood**; **birth / divorce** rate; get **engaged / married** to someone; get **separated / divorced** from someone; **raise / bring up** a child; take after one's **mother / father**; live with one's **partner / spouse / significant other**; have a child **on one's own / out of wedlock**

Unit 3

social media **activity / platform / trends / troll / influencer**; like **a post / a photo / a page / a video / an image / a meme / a GIF**; share **a post / a photo / a page / a video / an image / a meme / a GIF**; upload **a post / a photo / a page / a video / an image / a meme / a GIF**; post **a link / a message / an update / a photo / a video / an image**; go **online / on the internet**; **friend / follow / unfriend** someone; update one's **status / profile**; attach a **file / document / photo**; **accept / refuse** a friend request; manage your **devices / accounts**; **private / direct / instant** message; virtual **event / learning / network**

Appendix

Speaking and writing prompts

Some exams ask students to speak or write about a topic. These sample prompts can be helpful in practising and developing your productive skills. Try to use collocations in your responses to sound more natural.

Unit 1 Friends

Tell me about your best friend.

What's important in a friendship?

What's a good way to make new friends?

Unit 2 Family

Do you come from a big or small family?

What do you like to do with your family?

Is yours a typical family? If so, how? If not, why not?

Unit 3 Social media

What social media sites do you belong to?

How do you use social media?

What are some positive and negative aspects of social media?

Unit 4 Home

Describe your neighbourhood.

What is your house or flat like?

What type of home would you like to live in someday?

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Main collocations

Collocation	Unit	Collocation	Unit	Collocation	Unit
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a million and one things to do	15	be a numbers person	13	brand loyalty	35
a morning person	15	be active on social media	3	break the law	33
absolutely thrilled	19	be addicted to social media	3	bright sunshine	12
accomplish a goal	34	be born with talent	11	bring children into the world	2
aches and pains	18	be fashionably dressed	7	broad shoulders	7
acquire skills through something	11	be filled with fear	19	burst out laughing	39
add friends	3	be going bald	7	buy off the rack	20
adopt technology	29	be good as new	17	buying power	35
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advances in technology	29	be in good shape	7	casual acquaintance	1
advertise a product	35	be in one's early 20s	7	casual attire	20
advertising budget	35	be in the black	10	casual restaurant	23
all the comforts of home	4	be made redundant	16	catastrophic consequences	24
all-inclusive resort	8	be not a cloud in the sky	12	catch the attention of someone	23
apply for a job	16	be on time	21	catchy song	35
ask for the bill	23	be out of fashion	20	cause for celebration	28
at an alarming rate	24	be out of shape	18	cause pollution	30
at first glance	38	be something to behold	36	celebrate a holiday	28
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attract investors	31	big mistake	27	check one's messages	3
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bargain hunter	10	bitterly cold	12	childhood home	4
barren landscape	14	blended family	2	circle of friends	1
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Collocation expansion

Collocation	Unit	Collocation	Unit	Collocation	Unit
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a change in the weather	12	advertising campaign	35	ask someone the time	21
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a fixed schedule	15	aerobic exercise	18	attach a document	3
a flexible schedule	15	affordable destination	8	attach a file	3
a heavy sleeper	17	affordable home	4	attach a photo	3
a light sleep	17	afternoon routine	15	attend a concert	28
a light sleeper	17	age of discovery	37	attend a festival	28
a long sleep	17	age of exploration	37	attend a module	5
a people person	13	air quality	30	attend a play	28
a restful sleep	17	air travel	8	attend a tutorial	5
a sound sleep	17	allocate one's budget	31	attend an exhibit	36
a spell of bad weather	12	allow extra time for	21	attend an opening	36
a spell of good weather	12	something		attend class	5
a surge in advertising	35	amateur artist	36	attention-grabbing	22
a surge in views	35	amount of energy	30	headline	
a warm spell	12	an ideas person	13	awful news	22
abrasive personality	13	anniversary party	28	awful weather	12
absolutely delighted	19	anonymous source	22		
absolutely exhausted	19	appreciate art	36	bachelor's degree	5
abstract art	36	arid conditions	14	bad behaviour	34
academic life	5	arid desert	14	bad news	22
accept a friend request	3	arid land	14	balanced coverage	22
accept the	34	art colony	36	balanced ecosystem	24
consequences		art connoisseur	36	balanced story	22
accept the results	34	art gallery	36	banner headline	22
accidental discovery	37	art treasures	36	be a night owl	17
act impulsively	34	artistic ability	11	be at a latitude of	14
act sensibly	34	artistic freedom	36	be at a longitude of	14
add a service charge	23	artistic licence	36	be a bit overweight	7
address the listener	26	ask for a discount	10	be bad at something	11