

The aim of this leaflet

The aim of this leaflet is to introduce you to materials that you may find useful if you want to learn phrases or units of language that are longer than just one word. This can be a useful approach to learning vocabulary: much of English consists of 2-word, 3-word, 4-word etc. units, and if you can learn multi-word units (e.g. *Easier said than done* or *I'll see what I can do*) it will improve your ability to communicate.

Useful materials in the Language Commons

Vocabulary textbooks

There are many materials on the *Vocabulary* shelf. Recommended materials:
English Vocabulary in Use, units 74-91

Dictionaries

- For examples of how words are used in context:
COBUILD English Dictionary, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*

- For groups of similar words together (these help you to see the difference between similar words):
Longman Language Activator, *Longman Lexicon of Contemporary English*.

Other reference material

These reference sources give extra information about what words normally go together:
COLLINS COBUILD Dictionary Collocations

Learning tips

Here are some tips for learning phrases, that you may find useful:

- Find lots of examples of how the phrases you want to learn are used in context (use dictionaries, concordancers etc.)
- Look at *English Vocabulary in Use*, unit 74, for general advice on organising your learning of phrases
- For tips about organising your learning so that it's systematic and you don't become overloaded, see the Advice Sheet **Organizing your Vocabulary Learning (V3)**.

- For tips about remembering what you have learned, check out the Advice Sheet **Remembering Vocabulary (V4)**.
- For further tips on learning vocabulary to improve your ability to communicate, see the Advice Sheet **Learning Vocabulary for Speaking and Writing (V8)**.

N.B. The important thing is to find out what works/does not work for you and why. Do your methods help you to learn effectively? If not, what could you do that would help you learn more effectively?

If you do use an effective technique, please contact an Adviser to let us know about it — we would like to hear from you!

Evaluating your progress

- Make an appointment to see an Adviser for advice about evaluation.
- For more information, see the Advice Sheet **Evaluating your Vocabulary Learning (V5)**.

And now...

If you would like any help or advice, or just a chat about your progress, please get in touch - **we are here to support your independent learning!** To contact us:

- Make an appointment to see an adviser. For details of advisers and their availability, please go to <https://ilang.cle.ust.hk/language-adviser-timetable/>.

- E-mail your questions to **iLANG** (lcilang@ust.hk).
- Ask at the reception counter of the Language Commons — if the receptionist cannot help you directly, s/he will pass your query on to one of the advisers.

- Browse the many physical (<https://ilang.cle.ust.hk/language-commons/#resources>) and online materials (<https://ilang.cle.ust.hk/resources-vocabulary/>) for Vocabulary.
- Join a Vocabulary activity or short course (<http://ilang.cle.ust.hk/vocabulary/>).

What else can you do?

Glossary

Collocation	When two words often go together (i.e one follows the other in speech or writing), they are said to collocate with each other. For example, an adjective that often collocates with <i>rain</i> is <i>heavy</i> . <i>Heavy rain</i> , therefore, is a collocation.
Concordancer	A computer program that searches through a large collection of texts and then lists all the examples of a particular word in context.
Idiom	An expression whose meaning is different from the meaning of the individual words. For example, ‘to have your feet on the ground’ is an idiom meaning ‘to be sensible’.
Multi-word unit	A connected collocation: a sequence of neighboring words “whose exact and unambiguous meaning cannot be derived from the meaning of its components” (Choueka, 1988). For example, “compact disk”: one could not deduce that it was a music medium by only considering the meaning of “compact” and “disk” separately.
Phrasal verb	A combination of words that is used like a verb and consists of a verb and an adverb or preposition. <i>Give in</i> or <i>come up with</i> are two examples of phrasal verbs.
Phrase	A group of words that are used together in a fixed expression
Prepositional verb	An idiomatic expression that combines a verb and a preposition to make a new verb with a distinct meaning. Note that these verbs are usually inseparable, meaning that the verb and particle generally stand together. (e.g. <i>look / look at / look for - wait / wait for - come / come through</i> .)
Proverb	A short well-known statement that gives practical advice about life (e.g. a friend in need is a friend indeed)

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