

The
Word
Combination
Card:



A Writer's Reference

2nd Edition

Instructor's Notes

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Language Arts Press

INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Introduction

The Word Combination Card and the accompanying Student Workbook is the result of over two years of research and hard work combined with our decades of ESL/EAP classroom teaching. From a teaching/learning perspective, the Card and Workbook are designed to do the following:

- Improve students' written fluency, precision, and clarity by demonstrating and exemplifying academic word combinations
- Teach students to identify and use language patterns effectively in written academic English through repeated exposure and systematic practice
- Help students build high-frequency academic vocabulary and develop awareness of academic register

We are particularly proud of the publishing model for *The Word Combination Card*. It is a uniquely affordable resource that, when combined with the free downloadable Student Workbook, can serve as a substantive piece of any academic writing class for college-bound ESL students.

Please let us know if you have any questions or suggestions (email: info@LanguageArtsPress.com). We would love to hear from you!

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank our families, first of all, who permitted our long work sessions in the evenings and on weekends, and who supported us in our endeavor even though they were not entirely clear about what we were creating! Secondly, we are extremely grateful to our colleagues at Montgomery College, many of whom read manuscript for this Card at various stages and helped us refine and improve the content. We are extremely fortunate to have such committed and generous workmates.

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August 2012

USING THE CARD AND WORKBOOK

Present the concept of collocations: It is essential that learners understand the concept and importance of *collocations*. A collocation is a combination of two or more words that appear together naturally in language. There are different types of collocations such as **annual salary** (adj. + n.), **implement a policy** (v. + n.), and **firmly believe** (adv. + adj.). Some are more “grammatical” in nature: **advise against doing sth** (v. + prep. + gerund + object). Collocations or word combinations help language learners to express their ideas more clearly, accurately, and efficiently.

This card contains high-frequency vocabulary in basic academic writing with high-frequency collocations highlighted and illustrated. These collocations are presented in discrete, isolated form, such as in the “Nouns and Verbs” section (section #2), for example, and are presented in an imbedded fashion, as in the “Expressing Ideas” section (section #1). We recommend that instructors guide students through samples from the Card to introduce the concept of collocations. An easy approach to this is to have students learn by doing. That is, assign a few exercises from the Workbook for students to complete at home or in class and then go over the exercises together. Having students read the one-page introduction at the beginning of the Workbook will also help with this orientation.

Familiarize students with the content and organization of the Card: In order to use this card and acquire basic academic expression, students must become familiar with the content and organization of the Card. Thus, instructors should introduce the sections of card and highlight ways that the information about collocations is presented. Again, the Workbook is an excellent resource through which students can orient themselves to the Card while they learn the material.

Train students to make the most of the Card: Instructors should help students notice target language features in the Card. This involves not only focusing on typical collocation combinations, such as those described above, but also noticing the connection between, for example, the combination of “by” and a past time with past perfect in the main clause (e.g., *By the end of the 1970s*, the U.S. and Soviet space programs *had completed* over a dozen missions.) We have tried to provide such examples frequently and in context, and many of these examples will naturally come up in class discussion as students complete the exercises in the Workbook. These exercises include a variety of progressive tasks directly related to the content of the Card, including noticing, fill-in-the-blank, editing, and open production.

Types of activities:

- *Noticing:* These receptive activities introduce target language in the Card and model this language in rich, authentic contexts. Allow students time to work alone or in pairs. Review together as a class.
- *Selecting Word Partners:* These fill-in-the-blank activities familiarize students with the targeted collocations and their contexts.
- *Constructing Sentences:* These exercises help students recognize and use larger chunks of language to put together complete sentences and develop syntactic and collocational fluency.

- *Editing*: These challenging exercises provide editing practice with the target language structures within short readings.
- *Writing*: These slightly scaffolded exercises provide students with authentic writing practice on a variety of topics highlighted in the Card.

Assign writing tasks: Finally, students should use the Card to compose and edit their writing. Students should be guided to relevant sections of the card before and during writing as well as when students need to rewrite. In instructor feedback, words or sentence patterns that are in the card could be highlighted, indicating to students that they need to rewrite and improve according to the information in the Card.

GOING BEYOND THE WORKBOOK: ADDITIONAL EXPANSION ACTIVITIES

The Word Combination Card is comprised of reference lists of must-know academic vocabulary and language patterns, plus accompanying examples of usage. Because all of these collocations and patterns are high frequency, students would benefit greatly by acquiring proficiency with all of the featured core academic language in the Card.

As noted, the Workbook exercises will help familiarize students with sections of the Card, give students practice in using the collocations and patterns in academic sentences, and give teachers the opportunity to review the sentences with students and discuss issues of usage and grammar.

Here are a few additional suggestions for using the Card to develop students' comfort and fluency with this language.

1. **Sentence writing:** Choose sections or subsections of the Card –the “A words” or the “B words” from the Nouns and Verbs section, for example – and have students write ten sentences for homework, with each sentence containing at least one item from the list. You may also choose to focus on one of the patterns in the Expressing Ideas sections of the Card, such as Cause-Effect or Exemplification. This type of activity also works well as an in-class pair/group activity. Always debrief as a class, reviewing as many example sentences as possible.
2. **Grammar focus:** Have students write sentences in which they must incorporate one word/collocation from the Card as well as a given grammar structure or sentence pattern. For example, you could have students write ten sentences, with each sentence containing an adjective clause and at least one word from the Key list.
3. **Theme focus:** Preview a section of the Card and identify a subset of words or patterns which relate to a particular theme of the class (or better, have *the students* identify these words!). The word lists included at the end of these Instructor's Notes may help you to form these vocabulary subsets more easily. You can use these subsets as lists for the exercise types above or the games below.

4. Games:

- i. Sentence writing game: Have teams review a given subset of words (e.g., the “A” and “B” words from the Nouns and Verbs section). Announce words from this list one by one, giving students a minute (or less) to compose a correct original sentence with that word. Debrief. Correct sentences earn a point. Adding a theme or a grammar structure into the mix adds to the challenge.
- ii. Sentence completion game: For a faster moving activity than the above game, use only the verbs from the Nouns and Verbs section, for example, and start the sentence for the students. For example, you can begin the sentence with “The teacher...” or “The president...” and add a verb from the Key Collocations list in the tense of your choice (e.g., “The teacher advised...” or “The teacher decided...” or “The teacher prefers...”). The students, in teams, complete the sentence in writing. You can award points based on speed (i.e., the first team with a correct sentence wins a point) or correctness (i.e., all teams who composed a correct sentence within the time limit earn a point).
- iii. Scavenger hunt: Divide students into teams. Announce a word that is *not* one of the red “headwords” in the Nouns and Verbs section but rather is an important collocate such as *about* or *avoid*. The teams must find a headword that contains “about” or “avoid” among its collocations, and then the teams must compose a correct/acceptable original sentence using that headword-collocate combination. For example, for the above items, a team might write: “She wrote a *report about* the effect of cold climates on life expectancy” (the headword is *report*), or “He *avoids* health *problems* by exercising and eating well” (the headword is *problem*). Here are some collocates that would work well for this game:
 1. Prepositions: of, for, on, by, about, to, from, between, against, at
 2. Noun clause starter words: that, who, how, why, whether
 3. Adjectives: important, serious, basic, main, strong, violent, professional, financial, long-term
 4. Verbs: avoid, conduct, cause, ask for, be
- iv. Scavenger hunt II: For another type of scavenger hunt, have students read an article (from a textbook, a newspaper, an academically oriented website, etc.) and find as many words/collocations from the list as they can. You can have students compete individually or in teams. This game is especially good for working on word forms since students will have to make sure that the word in the article matches the form of the headword in the Key Collocations list (or you could allow students to use alternate parts of speech). This game reinforces the importance of these words in academic writing.

VOCABULARY LISTS

SUGGESTED APPROACH: Below are the complete wordlists from the card, including (a) *Nouns and Verbs*, (b) *Selected Topics* sections, (c) a combined list of all words, and (d) sublists of words divided according to semantic categories. Skimming over these lists can aid instructors in selecting words according to writing topics or generating topics for class assignments with a lexical and collocational focus.

List of Nouns and Verbs

ability, accept, access, activity, addition, advantage, advice, advise, age, agree, allow, analysis, appear, apply, argue, argument, ask, assist, assistance, attend, behavior, belief, believe, benefit, change, characteristic, choice, choose, communicate, communication, concept, concern, conflict, consider, contribute, contribution, country, cut, damage, danger, decide, depend, describe, difficulty, discuss, experience, explain, fear, feature, focus, follow, force, function, goal, group, growth, help, home, hope, include, information, intend, involve, issue, knowledge, lack, learn, let, life, limit, list, look, lose, loss, marriage, meeting, member, method, mistake, nation, offer, opinion, opportunity, option, order, participate, pay, plan, point, prefer, prepare, pressure, prevent, principle, priority, problem, prohibit, protect, provide, purpose, question, realize, receive, report, require, rule, sense, situation, source, stop, succeed, success, support, topic, trouble, use, view (117 words)

List of Vocabulary from Selected Topics

account, accuse, air, art, assignment, atmosphere, budget, business, campaign, cancer, candidate, class, climate, college, company, competition, computer, course, court, crime, culture, custom, debt, degree, diet, disease, drug, economic, economy, education, elect, election, employee, energy, environment, ethnic, evidence, exam, exercise, expense, experiment, family, food, funding, funds, gang, government, grade, health, illness, income, industry, injury, internet, invest, investment, law, leader, legislation, life, lifestyle, loan, market, medical, medicine, money, music, negotiate, pain, party, payment, police, policy, political, politics, pollution, population, power, price, prison, product, profit, proposal, protest, racial, rate, reform, religion, religious, research, resource, revenue, right, risk, rural, salary, sale, sales, school, skill, society, software, species, spend, stock, stress, student, supply, technology, television, test, trade, tradition, treatment, treaty, trial, university, urban, victim, violence, vote, wage, war, waste, water, web, website, weight, write (129 words)

Combined Wordlists

ability, accept, access, account, accuse, activity, addition, advantage, advice, advise, age, agree, air, allow, analysis, appear, apply, argue, argument, art, ask, assignment, assist, assistance, atmosphere, attend, behavior, belief, believe, benefit, budget, business, campaign, cancer, candidate, change, characteristic, choice, choose, class, climate, college, communicate, communication, company, competition, computer, concept, concern, conflict, consider, contribute, contribution, country, course, court, crime, culture, custom, cut, damage, danger, debt, decide, degree, depend, describe, diet, difficulty, discuss, disease, drug, economic, economy, education, elect, election, employee, energy, environment, ethnic, evidence, exam, exercise, expense, experience, experiment, explain, family, fear, feature, focus, follow, food, force, function, funding, funds, gang, goal, government, grade, group, growth, health, help, home, hope, illness, include, income, industry, information, injury, intend, internet, invest, investment, involve, issue, knowledge, lack, law, leader, learn, legislation, let, life, lifestyle, limit, list, loan, look, lose, loss, market, marriage, medical, medicine, meeting, member, method, mistake, money, music, nation, negotiate, offer, opinion, opportunity, option, order, pain, participate, party, pay, payment, plan, point, police, policy, political, politics, pollution, population, power, prefer, prepare, pressure, prevent, price, principle, priority, prison, problem, product, profit, prohibit, proposal, protect, protest, provide, purpose, question, racial, rate, realize, receive, reform, religion, religious, report, require, research, resource, revenue, right, risk, rule, rural, salary, sale, sales, school, sense, situation,

skill, society, software, source, species, spend, stock, stop, stress, student, succeed, success, supply, support, technology, television, test, topic, trade, tradition, treatment, treaty, trial, trouble, university, urban, use, victim, view, violence, vote, wage, war, waste, water, web, website, weight, write (245 words)

Combined Wordlists in Semantic Groups

People: candidate, student, view, employee, family, gang, group, leader, member, party, police, population, victim,

Places: class, college, company, course, court, country, home, internet, nation, prison, school, society, university, web, website,

Attitudes/Ideas: argue, argument, behavior, belief, believe, concept, concern, conflict, opinion, point

Fields of study/abstract concepts: art*, business*, communication*, competition*, computer*, crime*, culture*, disease*, economic*, economy*/**, education*, energy*, environment*/**, experience*, fear*, government*/**, health*, information*, knowledge*, law*, legislation*, marriage*, medicine*, music*, policy*, politics*, pollution*, reform*, religion*, research*, technology*, television*, violence*, war*

Verbs plus (that): agree, appear, argue, believe, decide, hope, learn, realize

Verb plus "Wh-" words: ask, consider, decide, demonstrate, describe

Problems/negative nouns: danger*, difficulty*, injury, issue, loss*, mistake, pain*, pressure*, problem, stress*, trouble*, waste*

Helping/positive actions: advise, agree, allow, assist, assistance, benefit, help, offer, participate, protect, provide, succeed

Not doing/negative actions: damage, lack, prevent, prohibit, protest, stop

Other actions: accept, access, accuse, action, activity, analysis, appear, apply, ask, attend, change, choose, communicate, consider, contribute, cut, decide, demonstrate, depend, describe, discuss, elect, focus, follow, force, hope, include, intend, invest, involve, learn, let, limit, look, lose, negotiate, pay, plan, prefer, prepare, purpose, realize, receive, require, spend, use, vote, write

Other nouns: ability*, account, addition, advantage, advice*, age*, air*, assignment, atmosphere**, budget, campaign, cancer*, characteristic, choice, climate*, contribution, custom, debt*, degree, diet, drug, election, environment**, evidence*, exam, exercise*, expense, experiment, feature, food*, function, funding, funds, goal, grade, growth, illness*, income*, industry*, investment, life*, lifestyle, limit, list, loan, market, meeting, method, money, opportunity*, option, order, payment, permit, plan, power*, price, principle, priority, product, profit*, proposal, question, rate, report, resource, revenue, right, risk*, rule, salary*, sale, sales, sense*, situation, skill, software*, source, species, stock, success, supply, support*, test, topic, trade*, tradition*, treatment*, treaty, trial, wage, water*, weight*

*=Can be used as uncountable nouns

**=generally preceded by "the"