

Verbs and nouns

These exercises include collocations for emphasis with verbs and nouns. It is common to emphasise verbs with a strong adverb and nouns with a strong adjective.

5 Form collocations by replacing the words *very much* or *a lot* in the sentences with one of the adverbs from the box.

categorically • widely • dismally • bitterly • thoroughly

- 1 The quality of clothing **varies** a lot in the different shops.
The quality of clothing varies widely in the different shops.
- 2 She very much **resents** having to look after the children while her husband travels round the world.
- 3 She has **failed** very much in her attempt to give up smoking.
- 4 We very much **enjoyed** our weekend in Cambridge.
- 5 He very much **denies** that he was involved in the theft.

6 Match the sentence halves to form emphatic collocations with nouns.

- 1 We skied at **breakneck**
 - 2 Disaster workers say there is an **acute**
 - 3 The new medication has led to a **dramatic**
 - 4 Since January, there has been a **sharp**
 - 5 She has had offers from over the world following the **roaring**
- a **increase** in the number of people out of work.
 - b **success** of her first solo album.
 - c **shortage** of food and medicines.
 - d **speed** all the way back to the village.
 - e **improvement** in her general health.

7 Complete the sentences using the collocations from Exercises 5 and 6. Make sure you use the correct form of the verbs.

- 1 The success rate for this treatment _____ from patient to patient.
- 2 He has _____ passing secrets to enemy agents.
- 3 Since taking up running, there has been a _____ in her fitness levels.
- 4 She is often forced to work at the weekends, and she _____ it.
- 5 We wanted to go out, so we did all the housework at _____.
- 6 Illness amongst nursing staff has led to an _____ of hospital beds.
- 7 I _____ the show, and I will recommend it to my friends.
- 8 Since the start of the economic crisis there has been a _____ in unemployment.
- 9 I tried to make friends with Ulli, but I _____ – he hardly speaks to me now.
- 10 After the _____ of her first album, she is being asked to do concerts all over the world.

8 Look at the two versions of a text. The rewritten version includes the collocations from Exercises 5 and 6. Notice how much better the style is when collocations are used. Rewrite the texts 1–3 using the collocations in brackets.

Since the new tennis coach arrived, the performance of our younger players has got much better. Unfortunately there can be a big difference in the quality of coaches. The last one seemed promising when we interviewed him, but he turned out to be lazy and the children hated him. Luckily, this one is doing really well. Since his arrival I'm happy to report that the club has been very successful.

Since the new tennis coach arrived, there has been **a dramatic improvement** in the performance of our younger players. Unfortunately, the quality of coaches can vary widely. The last one seemed promising when we interviewed him, but he turned out to be lazy and the children hated him. Luckily, this one is doing really well. Since his arrival, I'm happy to report that the club has been **a roaring success**.



- 1 Apparently, there has been a big rise in the number of viewers tuning in to watch Michael Rook in the police drama serial *Unmarked Cars* recently. It seems that the great popularity of his latest movie has encouraged people to watch him on the small screen too. I watched the latest episode myself, and I liked it very much.



(sharp increase, roaring success, thoroughly enjoy)

- 2 I hate living in this street. The traffic is terrible, and lorries come round this corner really fast. It's a wonder nobody has been killed. I've written to the council many times, but my attempts to get them to introduce a speed limit have not been at all successful. Despite all the evidence, they insist that there is no problem.



(breakneck speed, fail dismally, categorically deny)

- 3 Strikes among drivers of large fuel lorries have led to a very serious lack of petrol in this country. Because of this, prices have gone up a lot. Of course, many people really need to drive, especially if they live in rural areas, and they are very upset at having to pay so much.



(acute shortage, sharp increase, bitterly resent)

9 Rewrite the sentences in a more emphatic way, using the collocations you have learned above.

- 1 The car was coming fast towards us.
- 2 The weather has got better this week.
- 3 Her organic food company has been very successful.
- 4 We had a nice time at her party.
- 5 There isn't enough food.
- 6 He's fed up at having to stay at home while his brother goes out.

CLASSROOM EXTRA

For homework, ask your students to keep a look out when they read, and to try to find some more collocations where one of the words is there to add emphasis.