

Evaluating ideas

Introduction

When using high frequency words, it is very helpful to notice and use some of the words they often occur with (these are known as *collocations*). Using accurate collocations will enable learners to achieve greater fluency as they manipulate chunks of language. There are several different types of collocation. This worksheet focuses on the basic combinations.

You can do the activities before or during an exercise relating to any of the main IELTS skills, particularly writing and speaking.

Aims of worksheet:

- To show students that learning how familiar words typically occur together can increase their flexibility and fluency in writing and speaking.
- To enable learners to 'find their way' around the *Macmillan Collocations Dictionary*, by looking for answers in a limited section of the book and noticing how the information is organized.

Time and materials

- Allow the following times for the activities:
activities 1 and 3 – 15 minutes; activity 2 – 10 minutes; activity 4 – 30 to 50 minutes.
- Students need access to the *Macmillan Collocations Dictionary (MCD)* to complete the exercises.

Procedures

1. Hand out copies of the worksheet and make sure each student or group of students has a copy of the *Macmillan Collocations Dictionary*, as the answers to the questions are all in there.
2. Working in groups, ask the students if they know and use all the words that typically occur with the adjectives *helpful*, *beneficial* and *harmful*.
3. Ask them to complete each exercise and discuss the answers in their groups, then gather the class together to discuss.

Activity 1

Working in pairs, then checking answers with another pair.

Answers

1. enormously - yes
extremely - yes
immensely - yes
2. incredibly, really, so, terribly, tremendously
3. so, terribly
4. yes
5. to, in

Activity 2

Working in pairs, then checking answers with another pair.

Answers

beneficial: all adverbs
harmful: only *especially*, *extremely* and *particularly*

Activity 3

Working in groups of 4.

You may want to elicit adjectives the class know before getting them to do the exercise. Allocate one of the nouns to each student, to find the correct adjectives and then share them with the group. Encourage the students to dictate and explain the answers to each other, rather than just showing them in the dictionary.

Answers

1. enormous, great, lasting, long-term, measurable, obvious, real, significant, substantial, tangible
2. considerable, high, immense
3. considerable, crucial, enormous, immense, particular, profound, special
4. adverse, damaging, deleterious, detrimental, devastating, harmful, ill, negative, undesirable

Activity 4

Working as a class.

Students should ask you the questions (you complete the answers in whatever way you want), then do the same in pairs. Allow them to glance at, but not read the questions and answers. As a follow up, ask students to write a short paragraph relating to the subjects in the questions.

Answers

1. enormous
2. especially
3. immensely
4. absolutely

Follow up

1. Have students construct sentences on the board relating to a topic they are writing / speaking about. Ask if they are surprised at the differences in the use of adverbs. Use this to explain the need to check how words occur together rather than assuming that if a word works with one adjective, it will work with all.
2. Point out the wealth of combinations students can use to enrich their writing and speaking. Encourage dictionary use during their writing and redrafting, just like spell check.