Collocation: which words go together

VOCABULARY PRACTICE
INTERMEDIATE | B1-B2

Name: _____ Date: _____

1 Tick the correct category for each collocation type.

Collocation | Verb+noun | Adj+noun | Adverb+adj | Noun+noun

1 heavily influenced [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
2 raise awareness [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
3 bitterly disappointed [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
4 fierce competition [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
5 traffic jam [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
6 draw a conclusion [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
7 deeply concerned [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
8 climate change [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

2 Correct the collocation mistake in each sentence.

1 She made a strong influence on the decision. _____
2 He did a conclusion quickly. _____
3 The company faced heavy competition of. _____
4 They raised the awareness about of the issue. _____
5 She was strongly disappointed with the result. _____
6 He is deep worried about his health. _____
7 There was a big traffic of jam. _____
8 They discussed climate of change. _____

3 Choose the more natural collocation.

1 heavily influenced / strongly influenced (for describing significant impact).
2 raise awareness / lift awareness.
3 bitterly disappointed / sourly disappointed.
4 fierce competition / angry competition.
5 draw a conclusion / pull a conclusion.
6 deeply concerned / thickly concerned.

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4 Complete the sentences with words from the box.

awareness | competition | conclusion | concerned | disappointed | heavily | influenced | jam

1 The campaign aimed to raise 1 _____ about the issue.
2 She was 2 _____ 3 _____ by her mentor's advice.
3 The company faced fierce 4 _____ in the market.
4 He drew a hasty 5 _____ from limited evidence.
5 They were bitterly 6 _____ by the news.
6 We got stuck in a traffic 7 _____ for hours.
7 Scientists remain deeply 8 _____ about the trend.

5 Read the text and answer the questions briefly.

Why collocation matters for fluency

Language researchers increasingly emphasise that mastering collocation, the natural pairing of words that native speakers use automatically, matters as much for fluency as grammatical accuracy. A learner who says 'make a mistake' rather than the grammatically correct but unnatural 'do a mistake' sounds noticeably more fluent, even though both phrases are grammatically valid in isolation. Native speakers rarely consciously notice collocation because they absorb these patterns unconsciously through extensive exposure, whereas learners often need explicit study to internalise word pairings that don't follow predictable logical rules, since collocation is largely a matter of convention rather than grammar.

1 What do language researchers increasingly emphasise? _____
2 What example does the text give of natural versus unnatural collocation? _____
3 Why does using natural collocation make a learner sound more fluent? _____
4 Why do native speakers rarely consciously notice collocation? _____
5 What do learners often need to internalise these word pairings? _____
6 What is collocation largely a matter of, rather than grammar? _____

6 Rewrite each phrase using the correct collocation.

1 He was greatly affected by the decision. HEAVILY INFLUENCED _____
2 She reached a quick judgement. DREW A CONCLUSION _____
3 They tried to make people more aware. RAISE AWARENESS _____
4 The two companies competed intensely. FIERCE COMPETITION _____

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OVER TO YOU

Write a 100-120 word account of a recent event or decision, using at least ten natural collocations (heavily influenced, raise awareness, fierce competition, etc.).

[ ] Use at least ten target collocations. [ ] Include polite, precise wording. [ ] Organise the account clearly.

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ANSWER KEY

1 Categories

1 Adverb+adj 2 Verb+noun 3 Adverb+adj 4 Adj+noun 5 Noun+noun 6 Verb+noun 7 Adverb+adj 8 Noun+noun

2 Corrections

1 had a strong influence 2 drew a conclusion quickly 3 heavy competition
4 raised awareness about the issue 5 bitterly disappointed 6 deeply worried
7 a big traffic jam 8 discussed climate change

3 Suitable collocations

1 heavily influenced 2 raise awareness 3 bitterly disappointed 4 fierce competition 5 draw a conclusion 6 deeply concerned

4 Sentences

1 awareness 2 heavily 3 influenced 4 competition 5 conclusion 6 disappointed 7 jam 8 concerned

5 Reading - suggested answers

1 That mastering collocation matters as much for fluency as grammatical accuracy.
2 'Make a mistake' versus 'do a mistake'.
3 Even though both are grammatically valid, natural collocation sounds noticeably more fluent.
4 Because they absorb these patterns unconsciously through extensive exposure.
5 Explicit study.
6 Convention.

6 Rewriting - possible answers

1 He was heavily influenced by the decision. 2 She drew a conclusion.
3 They tried to raise awareness. 4 There was fierce competition.

Over to you

Answers will vary. Check range, respectful register and clear organisation.