

COLLOCATES AND COLLOCATIONS

In the dictionary, the words and expressions contained in square brackets and written in italics are extremely helpful for the user because they help to identify the most suitable translation of a word in a given context. Square brackets contain the most common **collocates** of the word. Collocates are words that are commonly used with the word that is being defined and translated.

Collocations are regular combinations of two or more words that form a privileged syntactic and lexical unit and that are based on common language usage. They are the proof that words do not combine randomly but follow rules, principles and real-life demands.

In many cases, a word has a particular meaning and requires a specific translation only when it is in collocation with certain other words. If we look up the verb *to face* in the dictionary and we consider its first meaning (*look towards*), we realize that if both subject and object of the verb are animate, the translation is *stare, essere di fronte a*, ([*person*] stare, essere di fronte a [*person, audience*]), whereas if the subject and object are inanimate, the verb is translated with *dare su* ([*building, room*] dare su [*park, beach*]). If we pass on to the second meaning (*confront*), the verb requires a different Italian translation depending on the direct object it takes, as in the following: *affrontare, fare fronte a* [*challenge, crises*], *dover pagare* [*fine*]; *essere prossimo, sull'orlo di* [*defeat, redundancy, ruin*], *trovarsi di fronte a, dover fare* [*choice*], *dover prendere* [*decision*]; *fronteggiare* [*attacker*]; *trovarsi di fronte a* [*rival, team*].

► **2.face** /feɪs/ I tr. **1** (*look towards*) [*person*] stare, essere di fronte a [*person, audience*]; [*building, room*] dare su [*park, beach*]; **to ~ north, south** [*person*] guardare a nord, sud; [*building*] essere rivolto verso nord, sud; **he turned to ~ the door, class** si girò verso la porta, la classe; **she stood facing the class** stava in piedi di fronte alla classe; **facing me, our house, there is...** di fronte a me, alla nostra casa, c'è...; **a seat facing the engine** FERR. un posto (a sedere) nel senso di marcia; **~ the front!** guarda avanti (a te)! **2** (*confront*) *affrontare, fare fronte a* [*challenge, crisis*]; *dover pagare* [*fine*]; *essere prossimo a, essere sull'orlo di* [*defeat, redundancy, ruin*]; *trovarsi di fronte a, dover fare* [*choice*]; *dover prendere* [*decision*]; *fronteggiare* [*attacker*]; *trovarsi di fronte a* [*rival, team*];

In the case of verbs, the position of collocates follows the normal syntax of the sentence: the typical subject precedes the translation of the headword, and when a verb is transitive, the typical object follows the translation. The nouns that collocate with an adjective, as well as the verbs and adjectives combining with an adverb always come before the translation. Noun headwords are not accompanied by collocates, but only by explicative glosses.

▷ **1.shallow** /'ʃæləʊ/ I agg. **1** [*container, water*] poco profondo, basso; [*hollow, grave*] poco profondo; [*stairs*] dai, con i gradini bassi; [*breathing*] leggero, superficiale; **the ~ end of the pool** la parte più bassa della piscina **2** [*character, response*] superficiale; [*writing*] piatto, privo di profondità; [*conversation*] futile; [*wit*] vacuo, inconsistente **II shallows** n.pl. bassifondi m.

▷ **roughly** /'rʌfli/ avv. **1** (*approximately*) [*calculate, describe, sketch, indicate*] approssimativamente; [*equal, equivalent*] pressapoco; [*triangular, circular*] più o meno; **~ speaking** all'incirca,

grossomodo, a occhio e croce; ~ **10%**, **100 people** più o meno il dieci per cento, cento persone; ~ **the same age, size** pressapoco la stessa età, taglia **2** (*with force*) [*push, treat, hit*] brutalmente **3** (*crudely*) [*put together, make, chop, grate*] grossolanamente.

marchio, pl. -**chi** /'markjo, ki/ m. **1** (*su animali*) brand; (*all'orecchio*) earmark **2** (*su merce*) mark **3** (*su metalli preziosi*) hallmark **4** (*segno negativo*) brand, label; ~ **d'infamia** stigma ♦♦ ~ **commerciale** own brand o label; ~ **depositato** proprietary brand o name, registered trademark; ~ **di fabbrica** trademark, maker's label; ~ **di qualità** seal of quality.

Just like sense indicator glosses, collocations are in English in the English-Italian section and in Italian in the Italian-English section, since they are meant to improve production (writing and speaking). Many typical collocations are also inserted in the **examples** that illustrate the various translations. In the dictionary, all the examples in the English-Italian section are corpus-based; they guide the user by showing natural and meaningful contexts, typical collocations and grammatical constructions, style, register and usage.

Look for instance at the examples of the adjective **fine**:

► **1.fine** /fam/ I agg. **1** (*very good*) [*performance, writer, example, specimen, quality, standard*] buono, eccellente; **to be in ~ form** essere in buona o ottima forma; **a ~ figure of a woman** ANT. o SCHERZ. una gran bella donna **2** (*satisfactory*) [*holiday*] bello; [*meal, arrangement*] buono, soddisfacente; **that's ~ bene o va bene; to be, feel ~** stare, sentirsi bene; “~, **thanks**”“(molto) bene, grazie”; “**we'll go now, OK?**” - “~” “andiamo adesso, va bene?” - “bene o d'accordo”; **that's ~ by o with me** per me va bene **3** COLLOQ. IRON. **a ~ friend you are!** bell'amico che sei! **you picked a ~ time to tell me!** hai scelto proprio il momento giusto per dirmelo! **you're, she's a ~ one to talk!** senti chi parla o parli proprio tu, parla proprio lei! **that's all very ~, but...** va tutto bene, però... **4** (*nice*) [*weather, morning, day*] bello; **it's, the weather's ~** fa bello, il tempo è bello; **to keep o stay ~** continuare a far bello; **one ~ day** un bel giorno; **one of these ~ days** uno di questi giorni o un giorno o l'altro **5** (*very thin, delicate*) [*hair, thread, line, feature, comb, fabric, spray, mist, layer*] fine, sottile; [*sieve, net*] a maglie fitte; [*mesh*] fitto **6** (*small-grained*) [*powder, soil, particles*] fine **7** (*subtle*) [*detail, distinction, judgment*] sottile; [*adjustment*] ingegnoso **8** (*delicate and high quality*) [*china, crystal*] finissimo; [*lace, linen*] fine, di pregiata fattura; [*wine*] pregiato **9** (*refined, grand*) [*lady, gentleman, clothes, manners*] raffinato, elegante, fine; **sb.'s ~r feelings** i sentimenti elevati di qcn. **10** (*commendable*) [*person*] bravo; **he's a ~ man** è un brav'uomo **11** (*pure*) [*gold, silver*] fino,

In addition to providing lexical collocations, the examples of **fine** include syntactic collocations (eg: **fine by, with me**) which occur when an adjective, a verb or a noun requires complementation with a specific preposition or particle.

Collocations and collocates are usually a problem area for students who find it difficult to see why some expressions (like ***to do war, *to make justice, *to do a question**) are not English, while others (like **to make war, to do justice, to put or ask a question**) are. Sometimes there is interference from the mother tongue, and collocational patterns which are natural to a native speaker seem completely arbitrary to the learner. Only familiarity and prolonged exposure to the language eventually give non-native speakers the “feel” for the right collocate, and in this long process, the dictionary turns out to be one of the best resources.