

# Seminar 4 Multi-Word Units in English

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# Set expressions (fixed expressions, idioms)

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- the word-groups consisting of two or more words, combination of which is integrated as one unit with specialised non-literal meaning of the whole
  - E.g. *to sleep like a log*, *Can a leopard change its spots?*, *to be busy as a bee*.
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# Classification according to the function

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- 1) Set expressions functioning like **nouns**  
E.g. *white elephant, a skeleton in the cupboard, brains trust, dog days*
  - 2) Set expressions functioning like **verbs**  
Special group – phrasal verbs  
E.g. *the cap fits , to bark up the wrong tree, to keep up with the Joneses; to give up, to make (sth) up, to put (sb) up*
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# Classification according to the function

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- 3) Set expressions functioning like **adjectives**. A lot of them are similes - expressions of comparison.  
E.g. *like a bull in a china shop, as old as the hills, as mad as a hatter*
  - 4) Set expressions functioning like **adverbs**  
E.g. *once in a blue moon, time and again, to drink like a fish*
  - 5) Set expressions functioning like **interjections**  
E.g. *Bless (one's) soul!, God bless me!, Hang it (all)!*
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# Phrases, Proverbs, Quotations

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## □ **Set phrases**

E.g. *Tell it to the horse marines. His bark is worse than his bite.*

## □ **Proverbs** – wise sayings, often warnings, which have been passed from generation to generation. Their advice will never be out of date (**adages**).

E.g. *It's no use crying over spilt milk. Don't count your chickens before they hatch.*

## □ **Familiar quotations**

E.g. Shakespeare: *"Frailty, thy name is woman."*  
Caesar: *"The die is cast."*

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# Collocations

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- Words can usually be **combined** (collocated) only with certain words.
  - If we want to master a language properly we should know what words of the language are most likely to occur together – what are the typical collocations.  
E. g. the noun *rain* may be collocated with adjectives: *driving, heavy, pouring, soaking, torrential, freezing, intermittent, light, steady.*
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# Classification of collocations

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- A verb + a noun/pronoun.

E.g. *reach a verdict, fly a kite, execute a will, reverse a decision, revoke a licence*

These collocations are highly important for polysemantic nouns.

E.g. *perform an operation* (in a hospital), *carry out (conduct) an operation* (on the battlefield).

- An adjective + a noun.

E.g. *warm, warmest* (not "hot"), *kind, kindest, best* (not "good") *regards; a rough estimate; a formidable challenge*

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# Classification of collocations

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- A noun + a verb.  
E.g. *alarms go off (ring, sound), blizzards rage*
  - An adverb + an adjective  
E.g. *strictly accurate, sound asleep, keenly (very much) aware*
  - A verb + an adverb.  
E.g. *amuse thoroughly, argue heatedly, appreciate sincerely*
  - A unit associated with a noun.  
E.g. *a pack of dogs, a pride of lions, a school of whales, a lump of sugar, a drop of oil*
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