Idiomatic expressions & collocations — free worksheet

Sentences with a gap; choose the word that completes the idiom or collocation.

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1. Idioms and Collocations in Everyday Situations

Idiomatic expressions & collocations · Idiomatic expressions and collocations across everyday situations: work, study, travel, health, technology, relationships, money and home

For questions 1–8, choose the word (A, B, C or D) that best completes the idiom or collocation in each sentence.

1. Everyone on the team needs to pull their _____ if we're going to finish the project on time.

A) share B) effort C) weight D) load

2. I really need to brush _____ on my French before the business trip next month.

A) back B) up C) over D) through

3. After the long flight to Tokyo, she was suffering from terrible jet _____ and slept for most of the day.

A) shock B) strain C) lag D) delay

4. I think I'll skip the gym tonight - I've been feeling a bit under the _____ since yesterday.

A) climate B) cold C) flu D) weather

5. It's getting harder to _____ up with how fast smartphone technology changes every year.

A) maintain B) stay C) keep D) hold

6. After their big argument, it took weeks for them to _____ things up and start talking again.

A) mend B) sort C) repair D) patch

7. With rent going up again, we're struggling to make _____ meet this month.

A) ends B) ways C) bills D) means

8. Please, make yourself at _____ - treat the place as if it were your own.

A) ease B) peace C) home D) odds

2. Idioms and Collocations in Everyday Situations

Idiomatic expressions & collocations · Idiomatic expressions and collocations across work, study, travel, health, technology, relationships, money and the environment

For questions 1–8, choose the word (A, B, C or D) that best completes the idiom or collocation in each sentence.

1. After months of training, finishing the marathon in under four hours felt like a piece of _____ for her now that she was so fit.

A) slice B) cake C) pie D) bread

2. She crammed all weekend, trying to _____ up on the lectures she had missed earlier in the term.

A) pick B) make C) catch D) get

3. By booking the flights and the hotel together, we managed to _____ two birds with one stone.

A) catch B) kill C) hit D) strike

4. I've had a terrible cold all week and I'm feeling really under the _____ today.

A) climate B) forecast C) weather D) sky

5. The prototype kept overheating, so the engineers had to go back to the _____ board and rethink the whole design.

A) planning B) drawing C) sketch D) design

6. After years of not speaking, the two brothers finally agreed to bury the _____ and start over.

A) weapon B) sword C) hatchet D) axe

7. With rent rising every year, it's getting harder for young families to make _____ meet.

A) ties B) ends C) edges D) sides

8. The council's decision to ban single-use plastics is seen as a step in the right _____.

A) direction B) path C) route D) way

Answer Key

1. Idioms and Collocations in Everyday Situations

1. C) weight

2. B) up

3. C) lag

4. D) weather

5. C) keep

6. D) patch

7. A) ends

8. C) home

1. 'Pull your weight' means to do your fair share of work in a group. 'Load' can follow verbs like 'carry' or 'share', but English speakers don't say 'pull your load' to mean contributing fairly.

2. 'Brush up on something' means to improve a skill you haven't practised recently. 'Brush over' exists as a different phrasal verb meaning to deal with something quickly, but it doesn't combine with 'on' in this sense.

3. 'Jet lag' is the fixed term for the tiredness and confusion caused by flying across time zones. 'Jet strain' sounds plausible but isn't a real expression - strain describes pressure on muscles or relationships, not time-zone fatigue.

4. 'Under the weather' means feeling slightly unwell. 'Climate' refers to long-term weather patterns in a region, not personal health, so it cannot replace 'weather' in this fixed idiom.

5. 'Keep up with' means to stay level with something that is changing or progressing quickly. 'Hold up with' sounds similar but isn't a standard combination - 'hold up' means to delay or support, not to match a pace.

6. 'Patch things up' means to resolve a disagreement and restore a relationship. 'Repair' is close in meaning but is normally used with a direct object such as 'repair the relationship', not combined with 'things up' in this idiomatic sense.

7. 'Make ends meet' means to have just enough money to cover basic living costs. 'Means' appears in the separate expression 'live within your means', but you can't 'make means meet'.

8. 'Make yourself at home' is a fixed invitation telling a guest to feel comfortable, as the following clause about treating the place as their own confirms. 'At ease' is a real expression, but it describes feeling calm or relaxed, not being invited to treat someone's house as your own.

2. Idioms and Collocations in Everyday Situations

1. B) cake

2. C) catch

3. B) kill

4. C) weather

5. B) drawing

6. C) hatchet

7. B) ends

8. A) direction

1. 'A piece of cake' is an idiom meaning something very easy to do; 'pie' is confused with the separate idiom 'easy as pie', while 'bread' and 'slice' don't form any recognised expression with 'piece of'.

2. 'Catch up on' means to spend time doing something you missed in order to be up to date; 'get up on', 'pick up on' (which means to notice something) and 'make up on' are not natural collocations here.

3. 'Kill two birds with one stone' means to achieve two results with a single action; 'hit', 'strike' and 'catch' two birds with one stone are not standard forms of this idiom.

4. 'Under the weather' is an idiom meaning slightly unwell; 'climate', 'sky' and 'forecast' are all related to weather but don't form this fixed expression.

5. 'Back to the drawing board' means to start a plan or design again from the beginning after failure; 'design', 'sketch' and 'planning' board are not the established collocation.

6. 'Bury the hatchet' means to end a conflict and make peace; 'axe', 'sword' and 'weapon' are related objects but don't form this fixed idiom.

7. 'Make ends meet' means to have just enough money to cover your basic expenses; 'edges', 'sides' and 'ties' meet is not the recognised expression.

8. 'A step in the right direction' describes a positive move toward achieving a goal; 'way', 'path' and 'route' don't complete this fixed phrase, even though they relate to movement.

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