



Using Cobuild

The Collins Cobuild English Dictionary is a store of information and is the dictionary recommended for use in the Final Exam, for both the Essay and the Translation. However, the best dictionary in the world is not much good if you don't know how to use it. This handout is a kind of introduction to using the Cobuild. The latest edition is *Collins Cobuild Advanced Learner's English Dictionary*, 4th edition, Glasgow 2003.

There are four parts to this handout, with a variety of tasks involving dictionary work.

Part 1. A quiz to start you off

Try and answer the questions in this quiz – find the most suitable / the correct word. Do **NOT** use a dictionary at this stage, just your own heads. Do it quickly, quite spontaneously.

1. If you wanted to travel from London to Glasgow but not by train or plane would you use the expression to go
by coach?
or by bus?
2. In America people would say the train from Washington to New York consists of an engine and several
coaches?
carriages?
cars?
3. A friend told me that when she heard she had won a free flight to Sydney she
passed out?
fainted?
swooned?

4. Which is correct? Both? One? Neither?

This topic is to a high extent interesting.

This topic is highly interesting.

5. I'm afraid the latest news

is?

are?

not very good.

6. Learning to use the Cobuild would be

a big progress?

big progresses?

big progress?

7. In Kenya she went hunting for

a game?

game?

8. She had a wonderful trip but unfortunately it had to be cut short because of death in the family?

a death in the family?

9. If you hate overcrowded trains you should avoid

to travel?

travelling?

at weekends

10. Which of the following are correct?

I suggest you buy a dictionary

I suggest to buy a dictionary

I suggest you to buy a dictionary

I suggest that you buy a dictionary

I suggest buying a dictionary

11. Which of the following means "Don't think about it any more":

You have to stop to think about it?

You have to stop thinking about it?

12. Which of these means leaving Konstanz University:

I would like to change the university?

I would like to change university?

I would like to change universities?

Part 2

Which of the above questions would you expect to be able to solve with the help of an English-English dictionary?

Now use the **Collins Cobuild**. See if you can find a clear answer to the questions.

If you haven't got a copy of the Cobuild yet, you can use the one in my Semesterapparat.

If you think this is just a dull academic exercise, look up "a clap" and "the clap" and I'll tell you a good story.

Part 3

So what kinds of information does the Cobuild give you?

Make a list here:

PART 4 Translation

Make use of the Cobuild (not a translation dictionary) and see if you can find a good translation for the following.

Ich bin gern in der Natur.

Das kulturelle Angebot in Berlin ist viel grösser als in Konstanz.

Ich hatte grosse Schwierigkeiten, eine gute Übersetzung zu finden.

Ich bin dagegen, dass er es so macht.

Was können wir dagegen tun?

Das ist keine adäquate Lösung.

Das wurde nur aus Panik gemacht.

Zu einer adäquaten Lehrerausbildung gehört ein längerer Auslandsaufenthalt.

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