

1. To exacerbate.

Exacerbate. Meaning to make something worse.

Collocations you can exacerbate a problem, exacerbate a situation or an impact or the effect of something.

Now in IELTS speaking, especially part 3, **we often talk about problems**, about **the size of the problem**, **how to solve the problem** or **maybe make it worse**. Here's a great example with this word on a recent topic.

The problem of climate change is exacerbated by people flying too much and creating carbon emissions.

2. To mitigate.

Which means to make less severe or less unpleasant.

Collocations we can mitigate a problem, mitigate the impact or the effect of something or mitigate someone's suffering. Again talking about problems, how can we reduce the impacts of different problems? Mitigate. Here's another example.

We could mitigate the impact of climate change by flying less. Easy solution.

3. Unsurmountable.

Which means impossible to solve.

Collocations you can have an unsurmountable problem, unsurmountable challenge or a barrier.

So again talking about problems in IELTS speaking that may be very difficult or even impossible to solve.

You could say, **Although climate change is a challenging problem it's not unsurmountable.** We can solve it. (Notice what I did. I used a negative to express my idea). It's not unsurmountable. It's not impossible. Meaning it's possible.

4. An uphill struggle.

Meaning something is difficult and challenging but still possible.

We can use this to talk about a task, a project maybe or even a game.

We could use it in the following context.

Writing my new book has been an uphill struggle so I will be thrilled when it's finished.

5. Apprehensive.

Apprehensive. Which means you're worried or nervous about a future result or something coming out bad.

In IELTS speaking part 2 we often have to express different feelings. They ask you and how did you feel about this? Apprehensive is a nice one. Here's a possible example.

Initially I was really apprehensive about doing my driving test but in the end it turned out really well.

6. Disgruntled.

Disgruntled. This is a feeling again and it's a feeling of unhappy being unhappy and disappointed and maybe dissatisfied.

Describing your feelings: Maybe you bought something in a shop you want to talk about the customer service. You could say:

The customer service in that shop was terrible and in the end I felt rather disgruntled.

7. Bewildered.

Bewildered. Meaning confused.

Collocations are thoroughly bewildered to be utterly bewildered to be bewildered by something. So here we're with our feelings again where we may be confused by something.

An example here might be:

I was utterly bewildered by my friend's decision to quit his high-paid job.

8. To do my utmost.

Which means to try my best.

We sometimes are asked about the government. Do you think the government should? Is it a good or bad?

For example,

The government have produced a good economic plan and I am sure they will do their utmost to implement it.

*Notice we can say to do my utmost, you do your utmost and they, the government, do their utmost. You could say because the government

sometimes it's used as a plural noun, sometimes as a singular noun, you could say the government will do its utmost to implement the plan.

9- inept.

means to be inept means you're not good at your job or you show a lack of skill at doing something.

Collocations we can have very inept, rather inept, totally inept, politically inept or socially inept. If you're not very good at socializing you're socially inept and to be inept at something. We may want to describe the government as inept.

You might say : My boss likes to design his own PowerPoints, but between you and me he's rather inept at it.

10- impeccable.

Impeccable meaning, well, perfect or without fault. Apparently it comes from the Latin im meaning not, picare, peccare meaning to sin, so without sin being perfect, right?

Collocations you can talk about an impeccable job, to do an impeccable job, right? To do a task very well. Impeccable behavior, impeccable manners when you behave very well. Even impeccable English when you speak perfect English.

So you could say

My friend has lived in America and she speaks impeccable English.

1-How can the expression "do your utmost" be used in a sentence?

2 What does it mean to describe someone as "inept"?

- 3 Give an example of a collocation with the word "inept".
- 4 What does the word "impeccable" mean?
- 5 Provide an example of using "impeccable" to describe someone's behavior.
- 6 How can the word "impeccable" be used to describe English proficiency?

Illness: feeling under the weather

A Feeling unwell Expressions

Some informal expressions that mean 'not well, but not seriously ill'.

A: You look a bit **off-colour** today. Are you all right?

B: I'm just feeling a bit **out of sorts**, it's nothing to worry about.

- I was feeling a bit **under the weather**, so I stayed at home yesterday.

- Katy's been **feeling poorly** for a while.

- I'm **fighting off** a cold at the moment. [trying to get rid of]

- Rani isn't in today; she's **gone down with** flu. [has caught, usually a non-serious illness]

- I'm not going to work today. I've **come down with** a dreadful cold. (we usually say *come down*, not *go down with*, when talking about ourselves)

- Harry **suffers from** hay fever and sneezes a lot if he's near grass or flowers. [used for more long-term problems]

B Minor health problems

Note that hurt is different from ache:

- My arm **hurts** where I banged it against the car door. [gives pain caused by an injury]

- My back **aches** after all that digging yesterday. [persistent low-level pain]

The fixed expression (the usual) aches and pains

is often used to refer in a non-serious way to minor problems:

- Mum's feeling fine, apart from the usual **aches and pains** (NOT pains and aches).

The phrase "**aches and pains**" is an established and fixed collocation in the English language. This specific order ("aches and pains") has become idiomatic and customary over time. It's the typical and accepted way to refer to various minor bodily discomforts or physical sensations.

The reason for using "aches and pains" in this specific order is primarily due to convention and usage. It's an example of a set phrase where the order has become standardized and widely recognized in English. Changing the order to "pains and aches" would go against the conventional usage of this established phrase, which might sound unusual or less idiomatic to native speakers.

Language often has set patterns and idiomatic expressions that become ingrained in usage, and altering the order of such fixed collocations might disrupt the natural flow or sound awkward, even if the individual words maintain their meanings.

Therefore, "Mum's feeling fine, apart from the usual aches and pains" follows the customary and idiomatic use of the phrase "aches and pains" to describe the minor discomforts she may be experiencing.

- The fixed expression **cuts and bruises** can refer to minor injuries:

- Jason had a few **cuts and bruises** when he fell off his bike, nothing serious (NOT bruises and cuts).

Some other kinds of physical discomfort:

- My hand's been **stinging** ever since I touched that plant. [sudden, burning pain]

- My head is **throbbing**. [beating with pain]

- I have a **stiff neck** from sitting in a draught yesterday. [pain and difficulty in moving your neck round]

- She tripped on the uneven pavement and **twisted her ankle**. [injured by turning it suddenly]

- I feel a bit **dizzy**. I think I should sit down. [a feeling that you are spinning round and can't balance]

- She was a bit **feverish** this morning, so I told her to stay in bed. [with a high temperature/fever]
- I feel quite **shivery / hot and cold**. I think I must have a temperature. [shaking slightly, usually because of a fever]
- I've had a lot of **sleepless** nights recently. [without sleeping much]
- I had a terrible **nauseous** feeling after taking the medicine, but it passed. [feeling that you want to vomit]
- He was **trembling** all over; I knew it must be something serious. [shaking]
- My nose is all **bunged up** today with this horrible cold. [blocked; *informal*]

Getting better Expressions

- I had a virus last week, but I **got over** it quite quickly. [got better, recovered]
 - Jo's **recovering from** a major operation. [getting better: used for more serious illnesses]
- Dan felt terrible last week, but he's **on the mend** now. [getting better]
- It's taking Hania some time to recover from her accident, but she's **over the worst** now. [past the most difficult period]
- She'll **be back on her feet** again soon. [fully healthy again]



Exercises

52.1 Correct the mistakes in these sentences.

- 1 She was feeling out of the weather and a bit fevering, so she took the day off.
- 2 I felt really off my colour yesterday and my head was throwing, so I took a painkiller.
- 3 I felt a bit off the sorts and seemed to have more pains and aches than usual.
- 4 Maria has back hurt after carrying that heavy suitcase of yours.
- 5 Freddie has been fighting out cold for the last few days.
- 6 I'm sorry I won't make it to your party because I've gone down with flu.
- 7 Do you suffer of any allergies?
- 8 How did you get all those bruises and cuts?

52.2 Rewrite the underlined parts of these sentences using words and phrases from B opposite.

- 1 I was feeling quite as if I had a high temperature.
- 2 The smell of paint always made her feel that she wanted to vomit.
- 3 I felt as if my head was spinning, so I went and lay down for an hour.
- 4 My nose was blocked, so I got a spray from the chemist.
- 5 I got a pain in my neck from driving for a long time in an awkward position.
- 6 Laura was feeling hot and cold and looked unwell, so I told her to go to bed.
- 7 My knee hurts today because I moved it awkwardly getting out of Andrei's sports car yesterday.
- 8 I didn't sleep at all last night.

52.3 Sort these everyday phrasal verbs and expressions connected with health and illness into two groups, depending on whether they have positive or negative meanings with regard to health.

suffer from be over the worst fight off be on the mend be back on your feet again
get over come down with under the weather

positive	negative

52.4 Now fill the gaps using expressions from 52.3.

- 1 (Someone speaking to a colleague just returned to work after an illness) Hello, Dan, good to see you
- 2 (Person ringing their place of work) Nadja, I won't be in today, I've a cold.
- 3 (Person in hospital, just beginning to get better, talking to a visitor) Oh, I'm OK. I'm now. I still feel bad, but I should be out within a week or so.
- 4 (Parent to a child with a cold) Don't worry, darling. Everyone has a cold now and then. You'll it.
- 5 (Someone ringing a workmate) I'm trying to the flu, but nothing seems to help. I don't think I'll be at work tomorrow.
- 6 Lily was quite ill last week, but she's now and should be back at work on Monday.
- 7 I feel a bit today, but I'm sure I'll be fine tomorrow.
- 8 I used to a dust allergy, but I don't think I do any more.

