# Collocations: *take* and *make*

At Trinity College London, we have studied the scripts from hundreds of our speaking and listening exams. This data shows us the range of collocations that test takers use.

Collocations are combinations of words that are often used together in speech and writing. They are crucial for producing natural-sounding language. For example, **take place** or **make clear** are frequent collocations.

## Activity 1

Read this exam extract of a discussion between a test taker <TT> and an examiner <E> about the the film *Titanic*.

### Corpus extract

<TT> The first question that comes to my mind after watching this film and all that it involves has to do with these highly qualified professionals who made such basic mistakes

<E> Mm

<TT> Especially the ones related to the lack of space the shortage of lifeboats

<E> Mm […]

<TT> One of the most astonishing moments of this fateful wreck has to er was the musicians' behaviour they kept on playing to relieve the passengers' anxiety while er they watched well perhaps following the the men and boys or whatever as they watched the chaos the ship was turning into

<E> Yeah

<TT> And last but not least is the reaction of those people who really p= erm helping other people doomed their selves to die

<E> Mm […]

<TT> Er I wish I could behave this way however <laugh> if I were in this situation but er if I'm sinc= if I'm really sincere I don't know what I would do

<E> Mm

<TT> I don't think personally I would be such a courageous guy so as not to fight for my own survival

<E> Mm

<TT> Because whatever taking it er taking taking into account that one minute after or before taking the advantage of the opportunity to leave the vessel would be definite for your fate

<E> Yeah

<TT> You wouldn't be able to save money or any other material things that you could make up later

<E> Yeah

<TT> And there wouldn't be another chance erm yes er no one knows er how

Underline all collocations in the text.

Then, discuss the following questions with a partner:

a) Did you identify the same collocations?

b) Is it easy or difficult to identify collocations in text?

c) What criteria did you use?

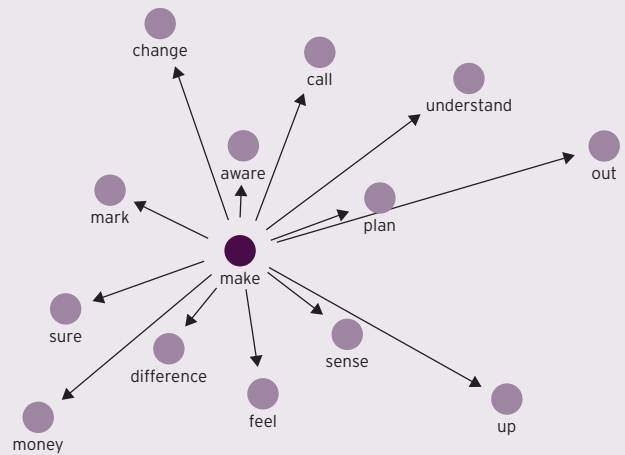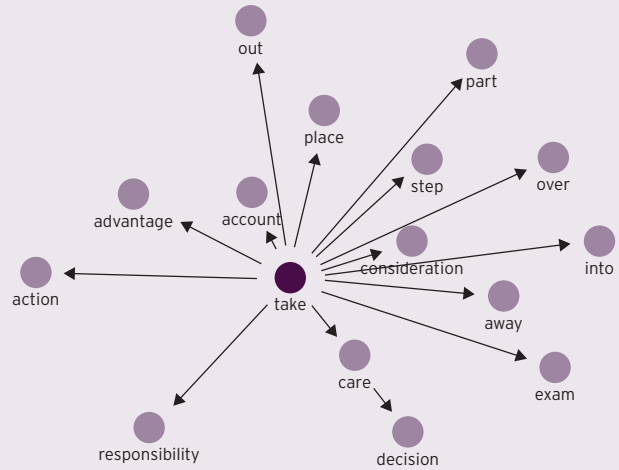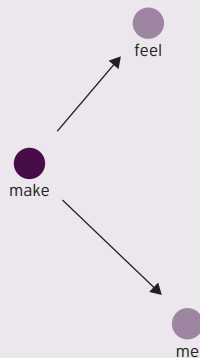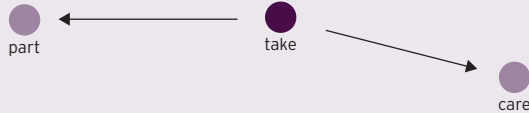d) Are the collocations in the transcript used correctly/efficiently?

# Activity 2

Look at typical collocations with *take* and *make* in the Corpus findings below.
Compare the collocations that less advanced (B1) and more advanced (C1 and C2) speakers use.

## Corpus findings

| Less advanced (B1) | More advanced (C1 and C2) |
| --- | --- |

**TAKE**

Less advanced: part ← take → care

More advanced: take → out, place, part, step, over, into, advantage, account, consideration, away, exam, care, decision, action, responsibility

**MAKE**

Less advanced: feel ← make → me

More advanced: make → change, call, understand, out, aware, mark, plan, sure, difference, feel, sense, up, money

# Activity 3

From activity 2, select three collocations with the verb *take* and three collocations with the verb *make*.
Write down sentences in which you use these collocations.

For example: *take + care* ⟶ *I would be at home with my kids **taking care** of them.*