

VERBS AND THE WORDS THEY COMBINE WITH

A How verbs combine with other words

You should note a number of things about verbs in an academic context, in particular:

- any nouns often used with the verb and whether the noun goes before or after the verb, for example, the research/theory is based on, to pose a problem/question/threat
- any adverbs often used with the verb, for example, mainly/partly/loosely based
- any prepositions following the verb, for example, to base something on something else
- if the verb is often used in the passive, for example, be based on, be associated with.

verb	nouns	adverbs	examples
base (on)	research, theory, story, hypothesis	mainly, partly, loosely	The story was loosely based on a true event which occurred in 1892. The theory is mainly based on the writer's initial study.
associate (with)	word, idea, theory, term	generally, commonly, invariably	A decrease in consumer spending is generally associated with fears of instability. The word is commonly associated with youth culture.
discuss	idea, problem, issue, question, topic, theme	at length, briefly, thoroughly	Wilson and Crick (1965) discuss the problem at length . Sim's article discusses the issue thoroughly .
establish	relationship, connection	firmly, clearly, conclusively	Geologists have been unable to firmly establish a connection between the two types of fossils. Lopez conclusively establishes a relationship between the two phenomena.
examine	facts, evidence, effects, aspects	briefly, critically, thoroughly	We shall now briefly examine the evidence for the existence of dark matter. Our aim is to thoroughly examine the effects of stress.
demonstrate	existence, need, effects, importance	clearly, convincingly	The study clearly demonstrates the importance of support for dementia sufferers. Harvey's work convincingly demonstrates the need for a new approach to the problem.
identify (with) (often used in passive)	causes, factors, issues, properties, needs, approach, origin	correctly, clearly, closely	This approach is closely identified with the work of H. Crowley during the 1950s. The article clearly identifies the factors influencing the decision to go to war.

B More verbs in combination with nouns, adverbs and prepositions

- pose – This inevitably poses a question concerning the stability of society. Parks poses a challenge to Kahn's theory.
- suggest – The most recent results strongly suggest a different interpretation of the situation. The article suggests a new approach to the problem.
- list – Here I simply list the main hypotheses/causes/features/characteristics; they will be examined in detail below.
- refer – The book refers frequently/specifically/in passing to the 1956 economic crisis.
- observe – This is due to the changes/trends/differences we observed earlier.



Remember, we say *based on*, NOT *based-in*. We *discuss a problem / an issue*, NOT *discuss about a problem / an issue*.
Note any verb + preposition combinations that differ from those of your first language.

Exercises

12.1 Choose the most appropriate adverb for the verb in bold, and add it to the sentence. Note the word order used on the opposite page.

- 1 Paulson's research **demonstrated** the need for a new approach to the study of stress.
invariably convincingly closely
- 2 As was **observed**, there is a strong correlation between house prices and inflation.
closely critically earlier
- 3 In the study of language, 'tense' refers to the coding of time in the form of the verb.
specifically strongly briefly
- 4 Classical liberal economics is **identified** with the theories of Milton Friedman.
thoroughly closely conclusively
- 5 Chapter 1 **discusses** the main issues, but they are dealt with in greater detail in Chapter 2.
closely simply briefly
- 6 To date, no research exists that **establishes** a connection between behaviour, personality traits, and leadership traits. firmly thoroughly critically
- 7 SENTA is a computer programming language **based** on Logo.
strongly slightly loosely
- 8 Social research techniques were applied to **examine** the effects of the policy on the poor.
strongly mainly critically

12.2 Complete each sentence with a suitable noun. There may be more than one answer.

- 1 Here we list again the main of the present study and show which have been proven and which have been rejected.
- 2 The graph enables us to observe recent broad in mortality rates.
- 3 The researchers concluded that it is still difficult to identify the of the time-related changes in human beings that we call ageing.
- 4 A seminar was held to discuss the of children's rights in the light of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- 5 Wu demonstrated the for a comprehensive plan in preparation for a pandemic.

12.3 Complete each sentence with three possible nouns. Use a dictionary if necessary.



- 1 These figures lead me to suggest an alternative (1) (2) (3)
- 2 It is clear that these developments pose a new (1) (2) (3)
- 3 Before we reach any conclusion, it is important to examine the (1) (2) (3)

12.4 Underline useful verb + adverb combinations in this text.

The world is facing a looming water crisis. Disputes over allocation have steadily increased in the last decade, and demand has grown rapidly. Water is likely to generate the same degree of controversy in the 21st century as oil did in the 20th. If we take no action now, new conflicts are likely to occur periodically around the world. At the moment, instead of seeking solutions which directly address multiple needs, countries focus a little too narrowly on local issues and typically opt for expensive and inferior solutions. What is needed are decisions which can be quickly implemented and a debate which will seriously consider more than the short term needs of individual states.

12.5 Use one of the combinations you underlined in 12.4 to complete each sentence.

- 1 Various measures were introduced last year to the issue of identity theft.
- 2 The justice system needs to the impact of a prison sentence on offenders.
- 3 The number of university applications has been over the last 50 years.
- 4 The article on one angle of the problem rather than taking a broad view.
- 5 The suggested measures should be to avoid further problems.