

A

Adjectives and their opposites for describing textures

adjective + noun	opposite adjective + noun	example
dry hair	greasy hair	You need to wash greasy hair more often than you need to wash dry hair .
dry skin	oily skin	This cream is good for dry skin – that one would be better for oily skin .
smooth skin, surface, complexion	rough skin, surface, complexion	Use this cream and the rough skin on your hands will soon become smooth .
smooth water, sea	choppy or rough water, sea	I hope the sea will be smooth today – I hate rough seas .
smooth road, flight	bumpy road, flight	The outward flight was very bumpy . I hope the return flight is smoother .
soft pillow, bed, ground	hard or firm pillow, bed, ground	I'd much rather sleep with a firm pillow than a very soft pillow .
tender meat	tough meat	It's deliciously tender meat – how did you cook it? My steak is always tough .
sharp pencil, knife	blunt pencil, knife	This pencil's blunt – I can't work unless I have a good sharp pencil .

B

Verbs relating to textures

When the temperature gets warmer, ice melts but snow melts or snow thaws.

As time goes by, fruit goes soft and bread goes hard.

A voice softens or hardens [gets more friendly or gets less friendly] and an attitude softens or hardens. [gets less severe or gets more severe]

C

Other texture words with their collocations

HAVE YOUR PHOTOS PRINTED HERE
MATT FINISH OR GLOSS FINISH¹

TRY OUR YOGURT – smooth, creamy texture delicious with finely chopped² cucumber, coarse grain³ sea salt and crushed garlic.



NATURAL HAIR PRODUCTS
 for beautiful glossy hair.



CLEANO POLISH
 will get rid of those marks on paint and wallpaper made by greasy hands and sticky fingers. Buy some today.



¹ You can paint your walls using either matt paint or gloss paint. Gloss paint and gloss photos have a shinier finish than matt. ² cut into small pieces, opposite would be coarsely chopped ³ large grains of salt rather than small or fine grains

D

Metaphorical uses of texture words

If things go smoothly, they go well.

If someone has a sharp tongue, they say unkind things.

If you're in a difficult position, you can say that you're in a sticky situation. [informal]

Coarse jokes are vulgar jokes, jokes in bad taste.

Velvety sky is dark and deep with a beautiful soft smooth quality like the cloth velvet.

Exercises

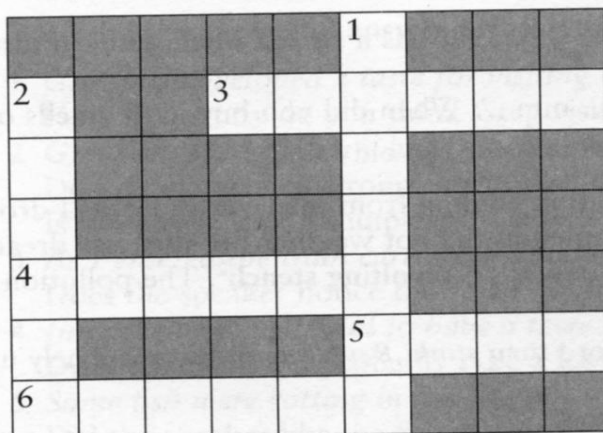
44.1 Can you remember the pairs of adjectives at A on the opposite page? Change the underlined words to their opposite meaning.

- 1 I always prefer to sleep on a soft pillow. How about you?
- 2 My grandmother had very rough skin, which surprised me as a child.
- 3 Remember the Parazo restaurant? It was where we had the really tender lamb chops.
- 4 I found an old sharp penknife in the pocket of a jacket I hadn't worn for years.
- 5 The surface of the lake was very rough as we set out on our fishing trip.
- 6 Can you help me? I'm looking for a shampoo for dry hair.
- 7 I've always had rather dry skin, so I always use Milona face cream.
- 8 We had a smooth flight over the mountains.

44.2 Use collocations from the opposite page to complete the second speakers' answers.

- 1 Customer: (*In a photo-lab*) Is there a choice of finish for the prints?
Assistant: Yes. You can either have or
- 2 Roger: The temperature was minus five yesterday; it's plus eight today!
Nelly: Yes. And the ice on the lake has already
- 3 Hilda: What's that loaf of bread like now? It's about four days old.
Bill: I'm afraid it has
- 4 Tim: I think the protesters are very angry about this new road, and getting angrier.
Elana: Yes, I think attitudes
- 5 Sheila: There are some oranges in the bowl, but I'm afraid they may be old.
Kate: Mm. Yes. They are rather old. They're beginning

44.3 Complete the crossword.



Across

- 3 the texture of yogurt
- 4 the texture of large grains of sand
- 5 It's warm; the snow's beginning to
- 6 The little child had fingers after eating chocolate.

Down

- 1 adjective meaning 'has a beautiful soft, smooth quality or appearance, usually dark or deep'
- 2 The couple spoke very angrily at first, but their softened when they realised it was a mistake.

44.4 Find four collocations on the opposite page that have positive associations and four that have negative associations.

FOLLOW UP

Find more collocations describing texture in English language magazine articles or advertisements about beauty and health products, or about fabrics and furnishings.

A Food and restaurant reviews

Look at these descriptions of smells and tastes in travel review articles.

Everywhere you go, the **fragrant perfume** of Caranza Island's wild flowers follows you. And in the village of Jarca, the **distinctive aroma**¹ of the local dishes and the **smell** of fresh coffee **wafting**² across the square from the small cafés is simply wonderful.

For many people, octopus is an **acquired taste**³, but it's a must on the south coast, and the **subtle**⁴ **flavour** of the local vegetable, *quingat*, provides a perfect accompaniment. The **fresh scent** of herbs is everywhere in the local markets.

¹ a slightly literary word used to refer to pleasant smells (often of food and drink, e.g. coffee); often used with adjectives such as

distinctive, rich, strong, sweet, appetising

² moving gently through the air

³ something you dislike at first but start to like after trying it several times

⁴ not noticeable or obvious

B Negative collocations connected with smells and tastes

I can't drink **bitter** coffee. I'll have to put some sugar in this.

There was nothing in the fridge except an old carton of **milk** which had **gone sour**.

The lovely beach was completely spoilt by the **acidic**¹ **smoke** and **noxious**² **fumes** from a **foul-smelling chemical factory** nearby. [¹strong smelling, causing a burning feeling in your throat ²poisonous]

Body odour can be extremely unpleasant and embarrassing. [an unpleasant smell on a person's body that is caused by sweat]

C More taste and smell collocations

Ray: Jane, do you think this cheese is bad? It has a **strong smell**. **Have a taste**, tell me what you think.

Jane: Hmm. Let me **have a smell** ... mm ... When did you buy it? It **smells off**¹ to me.

¹ no longer fresh or good to eat because of being too old

Tania: There was an **overpowering stink** coming from the river today as I drove over the bridge. It always **gives off a smell** in the hot weather but this was dreadful.

Mick: Yes, I passed there the other day. It's a **revolting stench**². The pollution is getting worse and worse.

² *Stench* is a stronger, more extreme word than *stink*. *Revolting* means extremely unpleasant, disgusting.

Chris: Do I detect a **whiff**³ of **perfume**? Are you meeting someone special tonight?

Rita: It's none of your business!

³ slight smell

D Smell and taste: metaphorical collocations

Her cruel remarks **left a bad/unpleasant taste in our mouths**. [left an unpleasant memory] I **tasted freedom** when I gave up my job and travelled for a year. Now I can't go back to normal life.

Bob and I **share the same taste in** music; we often buy the same CDs.

She has **developed a taste for** fast cars. She's just bought a bright red Ferrari.

We **smelt danger** and decided not to enter the city. It was a wise choice.

I didn't hear every word, but I **got the flavour of** what he was saying and I didn't like it.

Exercises

45.1 Look at A. Match the beginning of each sentence with its ending.

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1 I think caviar must be an acquired | fumes from the factory behind it. |
| 2 The delicious aroma of fresh coffee | is just too bitter for my taste. |
| 3 The park was spoilt by the noxious | wafted in from the kitchen. |
| 4 We just loved the fragrant | smoke from the bonfire. |
| 5 I particularly enjoy the subtle | taste – I don't like it very much. |
| 6 Smell the bottle and tell me if the milk | perfume of the blossom on the trees. |
| 7 I usually love coffee but this coffee | is sour or OK to drink still. |
| 8 It must be the wet wood causing such acrid | flavours that herbs give to food. |

45.2 Divide the collocations in the box into those that have a positive meaning and those that have negative connotations.

acrid smoke appetising aroma foul-smelling chemicals fragrant perfume
noxious fumes overpowering stink revolting stench fresh scent

positive	negative

45.3 Read the sentences and answer the questions about them.

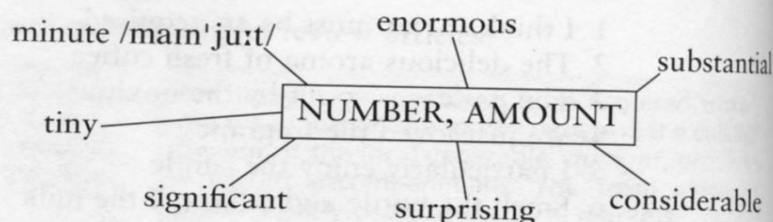
- Greg has developed a taste for visiting old churches.*
How frequently do you think Greg visits old churches?
- Greta always leaves a whiff of perfume behind her.*
Does Greta leave a strong smell or a light one?
Is it a pleasant or an unpleasant smell?
- As I entered the train carriage I couldn't help noticing the body odour.*
Does the speaker notice the smell of sweat or the smell of cosmetics?
- Jim asked his girlfriend to have a taste of the sauce he was preparing.*
Does the girlfriend probably take a lot or a little of the sauce?
- Some fish were rotting in a bucket and were giving off an overpowering stink.*
Did the speaker like the smell?
If the speaker had said *revolting stench* instead of *overpowering stink*, would this have made the smell seem better or worse?
- If you just read the introduction to the article, you can get the flavour of it.*
How could you say *get the flavour* in a different way?
- The argument has left an unpleasant taste in my mouth.*
Is the speaker upset by something he has eaten or something that has happened?
- Hilary and I get on so well together because we share the same taste in lots of things.*
Do Hilary and the speaker only like the same kinds of food or other things too?

FOLLOW UP

Look up the words *taste*, *flavour*, *aroma*, *smell*, *perfume*, *scent* and *odour* in a good learner's dictionary. Make a note of what kinds of things they collocate with.

A Commenting on how much or how many

These adjectives collocate strongly with both *number* and *amount*. Try to use them instead of *small* or *large* where appropriate.

**B Talking about numbers**

collocation	example	comments
odd/even numbers	51 is an odd number – 50 is an even number	odd numbers = 1, 3, 5 etc. even numbers = 2, 4, 6 etc.
a decline/drop in the number of	There's been a recent decline in the number of boys joining the army.	<i>Drop</i> is more informal than <i>decline</i> .
an increase/rise in the number of	The increase in the number of homeless people is worrying.	<i>Rise</i> is slightly more informal than <i>increase</i> .
come to a total of	If we add up all the figures it comes to a total of 794.	A calculation comes to a total of x; the person calculating arrives at a total of x.
birth rate rises/falls	Over the last few years the birth rate has been falling .	A rate can also drop or decline as well as fall.
a unit of currency/measurement	The standard unit of currency in most EU countries is the euro.	We also talk about a unit of electricity, unit of length .

C Frequency

Widespread [existing or happening in many places or among people] collocates strongly with a lot of words relating to either attitude (**widespread interest, widespread support**) or problems (**widespread damage, widespread poverty**):

There has been **widespread support** for the government's new policy on education.
The heavy winds at the weekend have caused **widespread damage**.

Rare [infrequent and special] collocates with things in the natural world (**rare disease, rare bird, rare species**) and also with collectable items of special interest (**rare stamps**).

If someone repeatedly does something that annoys you, you can use the expression **keeps asking, keeps interrupting, keeps hitting**, etc. This is common in informal spoken English: Please don't **keep interrupting** me when I'm trying to work.

The children **keep asking** me when we're going to buy a new computer.

Constant and **continual** also convey the idea of something happening repeatedly: I couldn't get on with my work today because of **constant interruptions** – the phone kept ringing every five minutes.

It was a mistake to go on holiday with them. Their **continual complaining** drove us mad.

D Describing graphs and charts

Profits **rose sharply/steeply** in July, but **fell sharply/steeply** in September.

There was a **dramatic rise/fall** in the number of students applying to university this year.

Numbers of mature students have **increased steadily/gradually** since the 1960s.

The number of crimes committed in the city has **remained constant/stable** since 2001.