Towards One Thousand Constructions

Rethinking the learner’s understanding of lexis and grammar
The theory

• The alignment of corpus-observation (‘data-driven’) concepts:
  – units of meaning (*Sinclair 1991*)
  – grammar patterns (*Hunston & Francis 2000*)

• ...with the cognitive linguistic (‘hypothesised’) concept:
  – construction grammar (*Goldberg 2005*)
The practice

• Existing resources on grammar patterns can be used to build a constructicon of mid-level constructions.
• The constructicon can intersect with dictionaries...
• ...and form an independent resource...
• ...addressing a ‘pattern approach’ to language teaching.
A pattern approach to grammar
of being at the front edge of a struggle to subvert a patriarchal black might make a stand in the struggle for freedom, but it also revealed s spiritual leader today called the struggle against the United States a holy reporting: <p> After months of struggle, conference Chairman Jean Ripert of other guys. There was a fierce struggle and one or two punches were a system where the political struggle of the working class is contained. to the Americans, without a struggle, this highly important market. How Robotics had really failed in the struggle, Lynn could expect no political struggle, and I was through. I had the struggle for democracy in his own country. This time there was a short sharp he began drawing parallels with the signs of a new and final power struggle are gathering on the horizon. When parties, democracy created a struggle between the left and conservative s harrowing odyssey on TV. His struggle for the last chapters of his new s attitude to the armed struggle, both at home and in the United since has served to commemorate the struggle. On that day in 1940 the Nazis said he had come to join the struggle for real democracy. He was a and constituted a site for feminist struggle. Modern states, whatever their in Love focused on the playwright's struggle to compose Romeo and Juliet while to have value, but it is a constant struggle to hold onto it. How much easier has never been higher. Caught in a struggle between our ideals and grim as an 'institution consisting of a struggle between conflicting interest Sometimes, it is an uphill struggle. The first attempt at irony falls tell of the violence of its last struggle with the sea." <p> Twenty-five
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Complementation patterns

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A word, its patterns and meaning

• STRUGGLE 1

  – struggle among PLURAL; struggle between PLURAL
  – struggle over NOUN;

= conflict between people, in respect to a resource

• Similar meanings:

  – competition among, conflict between, dispute over, fight among, quarrel between, rivalry over
A word, its patterns and meaning

• STRUGGLE 2
  – *struggle for* NOUN
  = attempt to get something

• Similar meanings:
  – *appeal for, bid for, campaign for, clamour for, demand for, fight for, rush for, scramble for*
A word, its patterns and meaning

• STRUGGLE 3
  – *struggle with* NOUN
  = conflict with a person or thing

• Similar meanings:
  – *battle with, conflict with, disagreement with, fight with, feud with, friction with, rivalry with, skirmish with*
A word, its patterns and meaning

• STRUGGLE 4
  – struggle to do something
  = attempt

• Similar meanings:
  – attempt to, battle to, bid to, campaign to, mission to, rush to
A word, its patterns and meaning

• STRUGGLE 5
  – *it is/was a struggle to do something*
  = do something difficult

• Similar meanings:
  – *it was a battle to, it’s a challenge to, it was an effort to, it is a nightmare to, it was a problem to*
struggle

It be N to-inf

N for

N with/among

N to-inf
A pattern, its words and meanings

- Noun + to-infinitive
- 156 nouns
- With 12+ ‘meanings’
Groups of words sharing meaning

1. ‘a desire to win’
   - aim, compulsion, determination, eagerness, intention, longing, readiness, wish (35 nouns)

2. ‘arrangements to leave’
   - agreement, appointment, conspiracy, contract, deal, decision, plans, plot, scheme (11 nouns)

3. ‘a bid to restore order’
   - attempt, battle, bid, campaign, drive, effort, fight, mission, rush, struggle (18 nouns)
Grammar Pattern Online

- [https://www.collinsdictionary.com/grammar.patterns](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/grammar.patterns)

- For more information, go to [www.bham.ac.uk](http://www.bham.ac.uk), enter ‘pattern grammar’ in the search box, and go to the page titled ‘Pattern Grammar’.
Grammar Pattern Online

• Each pattern is a series of elements dependent on the core word.
• All the words with a given pattern are listed...
• ... in groups determined by meaning.
Some numbers

• About 200 patterns.

• 5-10 meaning groups per pattern.

• About 15,000 adjectives, nouns and verbs.

• Updated 2017, by Gill Francis.
Patterns

• I still **remember** the games...
  – V n

• I **remember** sitting in a church
  – V -ing

• I **can’t remember** the thing happening at all
  – V n -ing

• You **must remember** how ill she’s been
  – V wh
**Patterns**

- **I remember** they used to have one maid
  - V that
- **Remember** to place two or three match heads...
  - V to-inf
- ...and **remembers** her as a less inspired student
  - V n as n
- ...Green **will be remembered** for his journals
  - V n for n
COBUILD Grammar Patterns

COBUILD Grammar Patterns presents an authoritative and comprehensive description of English verbs, nouns, and adjectives, based on analysis of Collins Corpus, an analytical database of English containing over 4.5 billion words. This online version provides detailed explanations, clear structural information, and contextualised usage examples for each pattern, showing users exactly how individual words are used.
Grammar > Nouns

N to-inf

The noun is followed by a to-infinitive clause.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>to-infinitive clause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>an</td>
<td>attempt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hor</td>
<td>desire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scope</td>
<td>to save money</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

The 'desire' group
The 'arrangement' group
The 'promise' group
The 'proposal' group
The 'attempt' group
The 'ability' group
The 'permission' group
The 'request' group
The 'responsibility' group
The 'reason' group
The 'tendency' group

TALC 2018 Hunston
Grammar > Nouns > N to-inf

N to-inf

The 'attempt' group

These nouns refer to an attempt to do or achieve something.

By 1961, they were making few attempts to keep their affair a secret. Twenty people were injured as police fired shots in the air and baton-charged the crowds in a bid to restore order.

The campaign to stop people drink driving has been successful because of the amount of resources that were put into it.

The lead story in several papers is the rush to buy shares in these companies.

- attempt
- battle
- bid
- campaign
- crusade
- drive
- effort
- endeavour
- fight
- initiative
- mission
- move
- push
- quest
- race
- rush
- scramble
- struggle
N to-inf

The ‘arrangement’ group

These nouns refer to an arrangement or plan.

I think the thing that impressed me most is that no one is making any arrangements to leave.

My decision to resign was made after much consideration.
Meanwhile, the authorities are said to have found the mastermind of the plot to kill the ex-prime minister.

- agreement
- appointment
- arrangement
- conspiracy
- deal
- decision
- contract
- pact
- plans
- plot
- scheme
Grammar Patterns > Chapter 4 Complex Patterns with Prepositions and Adverbs

V n as adj

V n as adj

The verb is followed by a noun group and a prepositional phrase which consists of the preposition as and an adjective group. The passive pattern is be V-ed as adj.

This pattern has two structures:

Structure I: Verb with Object and prepositional Object Complement
I saw the question as crucial.

Structure II: Verb with Object and prepositional Complement
That strikes me as right.

Structure I: Verb with Object and prepositional Object Complement
Structure II: Verb with Object and prepositional Complement

V n as adj

V n as
V n as to wh
V n at
V n between/among pl-n
V n by
V n for
V n from
V n in
V n into
V n into -ing
V n of
V n off
V n on

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  V n with adv
  V pl-n with together
  V way prep/adv
  V n about n
  V n against n

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V n as adj

Structure I: Verb with Object and prepositional Object Complement

Active voice: V n as adj

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Object</th>
<th>as</th>
<th>adjective group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We</td>
<td>accept</td>
<td>this premise</td>
<td>as</td>
<td>fundamental.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She</td>
<td>perceived</td>
<td>him</td>
<td>as</td>
<td>stupid.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Passive voice: be V-ed as adj

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Verb group</th>
<th>as</th>
<th>prepositional Complement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Such protection</td>
<td>could be considered</td>
<td>as</td>
<td>adequate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A woman aged twenty</td>
<td>is described</td>
<td>as</td>
<td>critically ill.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Verbs with this structure are all concerned with labelling, interpreting, or regarding someone or something as having a particular quality. The prepositional phrase indicates a description of the Object.

Some verbs, such as brand, condemn and scorn, indicate that you regard someone or something as bad. Others, such as misrepresent, indicate that you disapprove of the way someone else labels, interprets, or regards someone or something.
dangerous to health.
Depending upon your circumstances, you **might interpret** redundancy as welcome or unwelcome.

Her diamond rings **marked her out as seriously rich**.

In psychiatric practice much care is taken to make sure that the occasional physical illness **is not passed off as psychological**.

The growth of free trade internationalism **was presented as crucial to the progress of the working man in Europe**.

His government supports the idea of defining common criteria to use in deciding whether to **recognize states as independent**.

One man **regards a glass of water as half full while another views it as half empty**.
Back to the theory
Construction Grammar

• An alternative mental model to Universal Grammar (Dąbrowska 2015).

• Pairing of form and meaning (e.g. Goldberg 2005).

• Mental constructs, for which corpora provide evidence.

• When learners learn, they learn constructions.
Construction Grammar

• A unified theory of language: all levels of generality.

• *Apple* – [apple]
  • *Apple of poss eye* – [adored person]

• Subject-verb inversion – [interrogative]

• Ditransitive – [transfer of possession]
  • Appositive *as* – [interpretative]
  • Causative *into* – [trick / force an action]

• Inserted *at* (pull at, judge at, nibble at) – [incomplete action]
Construction Grammar

• All levels of generality. All kinds of ‘phrase-y’ things.

• Meaning belongs to the construction, not the word (Goldberg).

• Corpus frequency is one kind of evidence for the existence of a construction.

• But the construction is a mental phenomenon.
Constructions and Units of Meaning

• (Sinclair 1991)
‘have your cake and eat it’

• He cannot have his cake and eat it.
• They both want to have their cake and eat it too.
• He accuses him of trying to have his cake and eat it.
• Maybe we just realise we can’t have our cake and eat it.
‘have your cake and eat it’

• He cannot have his cake and eat it.
• They both want to have their cake and eat it too.
• He accuses him of trying to have his cake and eat it.
• Maybe we just realise we can’t have our cake and eat it.
**HAVE [ ] cake and**

- 204 instances (BoE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have</th>
<th>Possessive</th>
<th>Cake</th>
<th>And</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Pronoun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>have 166</td>
<td>your 55</td>
<td>cake</td>
<td>and</td>
<td>eat 154</td>
<td>it 189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>having 33</td>
<td>their 46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>eating 32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>had 4</td>
<td>his 39</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ate 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has 1</td>
<td>its 18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>eaten 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>our 11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>my 11</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>her 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>204</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TALC 2018 Hunston
Describing the unit of meaning

• Collocation: *have, cake, eat*

• Colligation: modal, possessive, coordinator

• Semantic set: wanting, trying, impossibility

• Semantic prosody: ‘It is wrong to aim for two contradictory things’ – used as criticism.
Variability

• ‘...the ranks of animal protesters, many of whom don’t mind capitalism... but do not want to see calves slaughtered... Those who want to have their veal and eat it...’

• ‘They were like fish that hated the very sea in which they swam... they wanted to have their hamburgers and eat them...’
Constructions and patterns
Patterns are constructions

• He talked his friend into lending him some money.
  – The V n into –ing pattern.
  – The ‘causative into’ construction.

• They interpreted her silence as agreement.
  – The V n as n pattern.
  – The ‘appositive as’ construction.

• Ellis, Römer & O’Donnell (2016)
Patterns are not constructions

• The **N to-inf** pattern:
  – The ‘desire to’ construction: Have an aim / ambition / need / willingness to do something.
  – The ‘promise to’ construction: Make a commitment / promise / threat / vow to do sth.
  – The ‘permission to’ construction: leave / permission / right to do something.
  – The ‘attempt to’ construction: attempt / effort / struggle to do something.
  – The ‘responsibility to’ construction: duty / obligation / responsibility to do something.
Patterns are not constructions

• The \textit{V for n to-inf} pattern:
  – They are pressing for the government to implement reforms...
  – He longed for winter to be over...
  – I was waiting for the phone to ring...
  – I’ll arrange for your luggage to be sent...

• A construction is a form-meaning pairing.
• If the meaning is not consistent, there is no construction.
A possible answer

• The pattern is not the construction...

• But the pattern-meaning group may be the construction...

• Leading to an identification of ‘one thousand’ constructions at a given level of specificity.
An adjective pattern example
ADJ *at* n

- the ‘reactive *at’’ construction
  - *She was surprised at the question*...

- the ‘(un)skilled *at’’ construction
  - *She was not very good at writing letters*...
ADJ for n

• the ‘reactive for’ construction
  – The people are impatient for change

• the ‘proxy for’ construction
  – She was afraid for her son

• the ‘purposive for’ construction
  – Cylinder mowers are ideal for use on ornamental lawns
ADJ for n

• the ‘specifying for’ construction
  – *The event is not suitable for children under ten*

• the ‘affected for’ construction
  – *Sunshine is good for you*

• the ‘reason for’ construction
  – *He is famous for his witty approach to design*
A verb example
Verb-noun-on-noun

• 146 verbs identified with this form
• A range of meanings:
  – ...a substantial amount of money being settled on that child
  – Rose ... did not impose her grief on friends
  – I congratulated Katherine on her decision...
  – He caught his shirt on a nail
  – They patted him on the back
  – She gambled a small fortune on hiring a top publicist...
• = 16 constructions
Grammar > Verbs > Chapter 4 Complex Patterns with Prepositions and Adverbs > V n on n

V n on n

The 'bestow' group

These verbs are concerned with giving something to someone, or doing something pleasant to them.

- He possessed a ghost is thought to confer prestige on the owner of the house to which it belongs.
- Japanese car bosses heaped praise on British workers who accelerated their factory into profit a year early.
- It involves a substantial amount of money being settled on that child.

The preposition is sometimes upon instead of on.
The King and Queen bestowed their grateful thanks upon Lancelot.

- bestow
- confer
- heap
- lavish
- press
- settle
Rob dumped his children on the grandparents but my family does not live nearby.

Rose grieved privately with her immediate family and did not impose her grief on friends.

I did not bring this case to lay blame on my husband. It was the only way to get the insurance.

There are consistent reports of electrical torture being practised on inmates.

A Home Office spokeswoman stated: ‘We have served a writ on Central Television to prevent the programme being screened.’

I didn’t mean to take my anger out on him, but I couldn’t help myself.

He told his son that he’d spent his life doing things he hated, and he wouldn’t wish that on anyone.

The preposition is sometimes upon instead of on.

The reality is that a good therapist or counsellor will not try to foist anything upon a client.

In the case of impose, the noun group following the verb is often a reflexive pronoun. This pattern is V pron-refl on n.

Mrs Griffin said they could not possibly impose themselves on her for dinner, but if they might, they’d just stay for a drink and a chat.
commending someone e.g. compliment, congratulate
criticizing someone e.g. pick up
accepting an offer or suggestion e.g. take up

This guide will brief you on sightseeing and shopping.
I congratulated Katherine on her decision to advance her education.
Witnesses were cross-examined on only those parts of the statements considered controversial.

He wouldn't be drawn on numbers, but said that the US would be given all the support they needed.

His hosts will clearly want to question him closely on what he said in Dublin.
At the end of the week, he quizzed us gently on what we had learnt.

I'll tell my mummy on you!

The preposition on is sometimes followed by an 'ing' clause or a wh-clause.

The prime minister complimented him on leading what she described as the only Conservative government in Eastern Europe.

BR made it clear that it would consult its legal advisers on whether court action could be taken to prevent the strikes.

In the case of congratulate, the noun group following the verb is often a reflexive pronoun. This pattern is V pron-refl on n.

She congratulated herself on her own business acumen.
Grammar > Verbs > Chapter 4 Complex Patterns with Prepositions and Adverbs > V n on n

V n on n

The 'bang' group

These verbs are concerned with striking one thing on another, or catching one thing on another. We include here the verb wipe.

He laughed out loud in his anger, and banged his fists on the steering wheel.

He caught his shirt on a nail.

I stared at the phone and drummed my fingers on my desk.

She set down the serving fork and wiped her hands on a dish towel.

- bang
- catch
- drum
- hammer
- slap
- snag
- rap
- strike
- wipe
The 'pat on the back' group

These verbs are concerned with touching or hitting someone, either in a friendly way or in a violent way. The noun group following the verb indicates the person you touch or hit. The prepositional phrase indicates which part of their body you touch or hit. We include here land and plant, where the noun group is a kiss or a blow, for example.

To pat someone on the back may also be metaphorical, meaning to praise someone. When a reflexive pronoun is used (see below), the action is always metaphorical.

His fist lashed out, caught her on the side of her face and knocked her down. One by one the uncles rose and shook his hand, patted him on the back and welcomed him home.

Mary Ann leaned over and pecked him on the cheek.

Marvin tried to plant a Valentine's Day kiss on Ruth's cheek but his peck landed on the side of her neck.

In the case of pat, the noun group following the verb is often a reflexive pronoun. This pattern is V pron-refl onn.

The industry is patting itself on the back for being incredibly successful.

- beat
- catch
- clap
- clout
- land
- hit
- pat
- peck
- plant
- slap
Grammar Patterns > Verbs > Chapter 4 Complex Patterns with Prepositions and Adverbs > V n on n

V n on n

The ‘gamble’ group

These verbs are concerned with gambling. The noun group indicates the stake, that is, what it is that you gamble, such as a pound or your life.

I'll bet a quid on anything, but never more than a fiver.

Having decided to wager their lives on a toss of the dice, what value might they attach to the lives of others?

The preposition on is sometimes followed by an ‘-ing’ clause.

She gambled a small fortune on hiring a top American publicist to plug her talents.

In the case of bet, gamble, lay, and stake the preposition on is sometimes followed by a noun group and an ‘-ing’ clause. This pattern is V n on n -ing.

You wouldn’t want to stake your life on the signal being picked up.

- bet
- gamble
- place
- stake
- lay
- put
- wager
Construction 1: BESTOW GOOD THINGS ON

- bestow, confer, heap, lavish, press, settle

- someone bestows thanks on someone
- someone confers power on someone
- someone heaps praise on someone
- someone lavishes attention on someone
- someone presses jewellery on someone
- someone settles money on someone
Construction 2: BRING MISFORTUNE ON

- blame, bring, dump, exact, foist, foist, force, impose, inflict, perpetrate, spring, thrust, vent, wish
- someone blames event on someone
- someone brings disgrace on someone
- someone dumps problem on someone
- someone imposes feelings on someone
- someone inflicts pain on someone
- someone springs a surprise on someone
- someone wishes evil on someone
Construction 3: ADVISE S.O. ON

• advise, brief, counsel, harangue, instruct, lecture, update, fill in

• someone advises someone on topic
• someone harangues someone on topic
• someone lectures someone on topic
• someone fills someone in on topic
Construction 3a: QUESTION S.O. ON

- consult, cross-examine, grill, poll, press, question, quiz, pin down

- someone consults someone on topic
- someone grills someone on topic
- someone presses someone on topic
- someone pins someone down on topic
Construction 3b: COMMEND S.O. ON

- challenge, commend, compliment, congratulate, pick up, take up

- someone challenges someone on action
- someone commends someone on action
- someone picks someone up on action
Construction 5: FOCUS ATTENTION ON

• centre, concentrate, direct, fasten, fix, focus, pin, project, turn

• someone centres attention on action
• someone concentrates efforts on action
• someone pins hopes on action
• someone projects feelings on someone
• someone turns attention on topic
## Summary of ‘verb-noun-on-noun’ constructions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Construction</th>
<th>Verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>BESTOW GOOD THINGS ON SOMEONE</td>
<td><em>bestow, confer, heap, lavish, press, settle</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>IMPOSE BAD THINGS ON SOMEONE</td>
<td><em>blame, bring, dump, exact, foist, foist, force, impose, inflict, perpetrate, spring, thrust, vent, wish</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ADVISE SOMEONE ON TOPIC</td>
<td><em>advise, brief, counsel, harangue, instruct, lecture, tell, update, fill in</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a</td>
<td>QUESTION SOMEONE ON TOPIC</td>
<td><em>consult, cross-examine, grill, poll, press, question, quiz, pin down</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b</td>
<td>REACT TO SOMEONE ON ACTION</td>
<td><em>challenge, commend, compliment, congratulate, pick up, take up</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>PUT ITEM ON PLACE</td>
<td><em>centre, clip, cram, impale, load, mount, perch, place, plunk, prop, put, set, sprinkle</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Summary of ‘verb-noun-on-noun’ constructions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4a</td>
<td>METAPHORICAL PUT ITEM ON PLACE</td>
<td><em>capture on film, cast doubt on,</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>throw light on, levy tax on, slap tax on</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>FOCUS ATTENTION ON ACTION/THING</td>
<td><em>centre, concentrate, direct, fasten,</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>fix, focus, pin, turn</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>DIRECT A WEAPON ON SOMEONE</td>
<td><em>fix, pull, train, turn</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>STRIKE BODY PART/CLOTHES ON PLACE</td>
<td><em>bang, catch, drum, hammer, rap,</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>slap, snag, strike, wipe</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>STRIKE SOMEONE ON BODY PART</td>
<td><em>beat, catch, clap, clout, hit, land,</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>pat, peck, plant, slap</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>WRITE SYMBOL ON PLACE</td>
<td><em>carve, engrave, etch, impress,</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>imprint, inscribe, print, scratch,</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>superimpose, write, put down</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Summary of ‘verb-noun-on-noun’ constructions

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Construction</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>FOUND IDEA/ENTITY ON BASIS</td>
<td><em>base, build, ground, predicate, be premised</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>GAMBLE MONEY ON ACTION</td>
<td><em>bet, gamble, lay, place, put, stake, wager</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>SPEND MONEY ON ITEMS</td>
<td><em>blow, save, spend, waste, fork out, shell out</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>MODEL SOMETHING ON SOMETHING</td>
<td><em>model, pattern</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The practical applications
If you **attempt** to do something, especially something difficult, you try to do it.

The only time that we **attempted** to do something like that was in the city of Philadelphia. [VERB to-infinitive]

Before I could attempt a reply he added over his shoulder: 'Wait there.' [VERB noun]

**Synonyms:** try, seek, aim, struggle  
[Link to More Synonyms of attempt]

2. **countable noun** [self NOUN to-infinitive]

If you make an **attempt** to do something, you try to do it, often without success.

...a deliberate attempt to destabilise the defence.  
It was one of his rare attempts at humour. [+ adj]  
...their involvement in a coup attempt in September.

**Synonyms:** try, go [informal], shot [informal], effort  
[Link to More Synonyms of attempt]

3. **countable noun**

An **attempt** on someone's life is an attempt to kill them.

...an attempt on the life of the former Iranian Prime Minister. [+ on]

**Synonyms:** attack, assault, strike, offensive  
[Link to More Synonyms of attempt]

4. **countable noun**

In British English, if a sportsman or sportswoman makes an **attempt** on a sporting record, they try to beat it. In American English you say that they make an **attempt** to break it.

*Everything is almost ready for me to make another attempt on the record.*

*[COBUILD Advanced English Dictionary. Copyright © HarperCollins Publishers]*

**Video:** pronunciation of 'attempt'
Current: ATTEMPT 2

• Countable noun [oft NOUN to-infinitive]

• If you make an attempt to do something, you try to do it, often without success.
  – ...a deliberate attempt to destabilise...
  – It was one of his rare attempts at humour [+at]
  – ...their involvement in a coup attempt...

• Synonyms: try, go, shot, effort
Proposed: ATTEMPT 2

• Countable noun

• If you make an attempt to do something, you try to do it, often without success.
  – *...a deliberate attempt to destablise...*
    • [NOUN to-infinitive]
  – *It was one of his rare attempts at humour*
    • [NOUN at noun / -ing]
  – *...their involvement in a coup attempt...*
    • [NOUN]

• Go to: [an attempt to do]; [an attempt at]
N to-inf

The 'attempt' group

These nouns refer to an attempt to do or achieve something.

By 1961, they were making few attempts to keep their affair a secret.
Twenty people were injured as police fired shots in the air and baton-charged the crowds in a bid to restore order.
The campaign to stop people drink driving has been successful because of the amount of resources that were put into it.
The lead story in several papers is the rush to buy shares in these companies.
N at n

The 'attempt' group

These nouns refer to attempts to do or get something.

*Their attempt at a second honeymoon in Europe was a disaster.*

Despite being forced to resign, he may one day get another *chance at the leadership.*

The preposition *at* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

*What was needed now was a sustained *effort* at making sanctions work.*

*He has made an interesting *stab at creating a Budget that clearly differentiates the two parties.*

- attempt
- bash
- crack
- effort
- go
- shot
- stab
- chance
- tilt
- try
A constructicon entry
# PRAISE – BLAME – REWARD – PUNISH

To describe how someone responds to a good/bad action, you can use the **V n for n** pattern.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>...to describe how someone responds to a good/bad action, you can use the <strong>V n for n</strong> pattern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pattern</strong></td>
<td><strong>verb noun for noun</strong> <strong>n noun is verbed for noun</strong> <strong>verb noun for -ing</strong> <strong>n noun is verbed for -ing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Verbs</strong></td>
<td><strong>praise</strong></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>acclaim</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>admire</strong></td>
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<td><strong>commend</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Examples</strong></td>
<td>He was praised for his dedication...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extras</strong></td>
<td>PERSON verbs PERSON for DOING SOMETHING GOOD / BAD.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exploitation

• How do people react?

  – She was efficient and helpful.
  – The company’s workers were exceptionally loyal.
  – They arrived late.
  – Bad ploughing techniques cause soil erosion.
  – He really was not a good father.
Exploitation

• She was efficient and helpful.
  – She was praised for her efficiency.
• The company’s workers were exceptionally loyal.
  – The company rewarded its workers for their loyalty.
• They arrived late.
  – They should be punished for arriving late.
• Bad ploughing techniques cause soil erosion.
  – Scientists blame ploughing techniques for soil erosion.
• He really was not a good father.
  – She forgave him for his shortcomings as a father.
The challenge

• How to organise a constructicon?

• The notion of notions (Wilkins 1976).

• For example...
DESCRIPTING REACTIONS

• The ‘approve a plan’ construction.
  – accept, adopt, allow, approve, back, promote, push, support.
  – V n

• The ‘get back at someone’ construction.
  – get back at, hit back at, strike back at.
  – V at n

• The ‘respond by doing’ construction.
  – Compensate, counter, react, reciprocate, reply, respond, retaliate.
  – V by -ing
DESCRIPTING REACTIONS

• The ‘react to an event’ construction.
  – *react, reply, respond, retaliate.*
  – V *to n*

• The ‘respond with an action’ construction.
  – *compensate, counter, oblige, reply, respond, retaliate.*
  – V *with n*

• The ‘reward someone for something’ construction.
  – *arrest, excuse, punish, thank*
  – V *n for n*
Conclusion

• The concept of ‘construction’ provides useful terminology for all sorts of ‘phrase-y’ things.
• And accounts for what it is that learners learn.
• The concept of ‘grammar patterns’ provides information that is corpus-based and organised to build a taxonomy of constructions.
• Providing a resource for learners.
Those URLs again

- [https://www.collinsdictionary.com/grammar.patterns](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/grammar.patterns)

- For more information, go to [www.bham.ac.uk](http://www.bham.ac.uk), enter ‘pattern grammar’ in the search box, and go to the page titled ‘Pattern Grammar’.
Grammar Pattern Online

• [https://www.collinsdictionary.com/grammar.patterns](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/grammar.patterns)
References