# B2 First Reading and Use of English Part 1 - Verb + noun collocations

**A. Talk about Harry Houdini.**



1. What do you know about Houdini or other famous magicians?

2. Why do people enjoy watching dangerous performances?

3. Is being talented enough to become famous?

**B. Complete the sentences by matching the collocation halves. Use A–L once.**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. ____ His street performance soon drew … | A. her ambition to appear on stage. |
| 2. ____ People trusted her because she had gained … | B. a serious risk with her life. |
| 3. ____ With no safety rope, the climber was taking … | C. the speed limit through the village. |
| 4. ____ The actor's moving final speech made … | D. a crowd around the small stage. |
| 5. ____ His voice sounded rough, so he cleared … | E. all knowledge of their disappearance. |
| 6. ____ The room was quiet until he broke … | F. the silence with a loud cough. |
| 7. ____ In front of a mirror, the magician practised … | G. a crime by stealing the jewels. |
| 8. ____ Getting the main part meant she had fulfilled … | H. a lasting impression on the audience. |
| 9. ____ When asked about the stolen keys, he denied … | I. a reputation for honesty. |
| 10. ____ The usher moved me nearer the stage, so I changed … | J. my seat during the interval. |
| 11. ____ On the journey home, the careful driver obeyed … | K. his throat before speaking. |
| 12. ____ The judge ruled that the thief had committed … | L. a card trick for his next show. |

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**C. Read the text and choose A, B, C or D for each gap. See example 0.**

## A show above the street

Most magic shows take (0) …… on a stage, but Harry Houdini knew how to turn a street into a performance space. A photograph in the Library of Congress shows him hanging upside down outside a Washington theatre in a straitjacket, his arms tightly restricted.

Such an escape could draw a (1) …… without anyone buying a ticket. Even people who only hoped to (2) …… a glimpse of Houdini might stop to watch. He had already (3) …… a reputation as an escape artist, but performing above the street meant taking a (4) …… There was no curtain to hide behind if something went wrong.

It is easy to imagine spectators (5) …… their breath as he struggled to free himself. Unlike a small trick involving cards, this performance allowed people some distance away to (6) …… track of his progress. It was a way to (7) …… a lasting impression on an audience. Yet the photograph offers few clues about his technique: we cannot (8) …… any firm conclusions about how he escaped from this single moment.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | A position | Ⓑ place | C location | D point |
| 1 | A crowd | B queue | C crew | D team |
| 2 | A fetch | B collect | C catch | D pick |
| 3 | A gathered | B received | C reached | D gained |
| 4 | A risk | B threat | C danger | D hazard |
| 5 | A keeping | B holding | C saving | D storing |
| 6 | A hold | B carry | C save | D keep |
| 7 | A put | B set | C make | D give |
| 8 | A pull | B draw | C collect | D receive |

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# Answer Key

**A. Answers will vary.**

**B. 1 D 2 I 3 B 4 H 5 K 6 F 7 L 8 A 9 E 10 J 11 C 12 G**

**C. 1 A 2 C 3 D 4 A 5 B 6 D 7 C 8 B**

**Glossary**

**break the silence**: Make a sound after a period when nobody has spoken.

**catch a glimpse**: See someone or something briefly.

**change your seat**: Move to a different place to sit.

**clear your throat**: Cough gently to make your voice clearer before speaking.

**commit a crime**: Do something that is against the law.

**deny all knowledge**: Say that you know nothing about something.

**draw a crowd**: Attract a group of people to watch or listen.

**draw conclusions**: Form opinions based on the information or evidence available.

**fulfil an ambition**: Achieve something you have wanted to do for a long time.

**gain a reputation**: Become known for a particular quality, skill or behaviour.

**hold your breath**: Stop breathing for a short time.

**keep track of**: Stay informed about someone's progress or what is happening.

**make a lasting impression**: Have an effect on someone that they remember for a long time.

**obey the speed limit**: Drive no faster than the maximum speed allowed.

**practise a trick**: Repeat a magic trick in order to perform it better.

**take a risk**: Do something even though it could have an unwanted result.

**take place**: Happen or be held, especially of an event or performance.

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