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

A. Talk about Serena Williams.



1. What do you think made Serena Williams stand out as a player?

2. Is it harder to compete against someone you know well?

3. What helps a player return to sport after a long break?

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

1. ____ Players who compete …	A. fully from the injury.
2. ____ Her results never vary much: she performs …	B. bitterly to this day.
3. ____ She praised her coach with affection and spoke …	C. closely in appearance.
4. ____ Her ankle no longer hurts: she has recovered …	D. professionally earn their living from sport.
5. ____ The repaired lift no longer jerks: it operates …	E. widely in our opinions.
6. ____ Even the storm failed to wake him: he slept …	F. smoothly between floors.
7. ____ The twins have almost identical faces: they resemble each other …	G. sharply to avoid a crash.
8. ____ The scores were very close, but she lost …	H. narrowly in the final.
9. ____ Before diving under the water, breathe …	I. consistently, rather than alternating good and bad performances.
10. ____ Our views are at opposite extremes: we differ …	J. soundly until morning.
11. ____ She feels terrible about what she did and regrets it …	K. deeply to fill your lungs.
12. ____ The car ahead stopped suddenly, so she braked …	L. warmly about all his support.

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

A familiar opponent, a new record

When Serena and Venus Williams met in the 2017 Australian Open final, they knew each other's game (0) …… well. However, knowing an opponent does not remove the need to prepare (1) ……: even familiar players can change their tactics. Both sisters had begun to (2) …… professionally years earlier and could (3) …… the ball powerfully. Serena needed to (4) …… consistently, rather than rely on an occasional brilliant shot.

Serena won in straight sets, claiming her 23rd Grand Slam singles title. Afterwards, she spoke (5) …… about Venus and described her sister as an inspiration. Their sporting rivalry had not destroyed their respect for each other.

Months later, Serena revealed (6) …… that she had been pregnant during the tournament. She was away from competition for more than a year. Serious health problems after childbirth meant she needed time to recover (7) …… As she (8) …… gradually to regular competition, reaching the same standard was a fresh challenge. She eventually reached four more Grand Slam finals, showing that her story had not ended with that victory in Melbourne.

0	Ⓐ exceptionally	B heavily	C firmly	D strongly
1	A widely	B thoroughly	C closely	D deeply
2	A contest	B challenge	C dispute	D compete
3	A press	B push	C hit	D move
4	A complete	B perform	C act	D deal
5	A bitterly	B sharply	C warmly	D sternly
6	A publicly	B closely	C steadily	D evenly
7	A deeply	B highly	C widely	D fully
8	A returned	B resumed	C replaced	D renewed

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Answer Key

A. Answers will vary.

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

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

Glossary

brake sharply: Use the brakes suddenly to slow down or stop quickly.

breathe deeply: Take air far into your lungs.

compete professionally: Take part in competitions as a paid career.

differ widely: Be very different from each other.

exceptionally well: To a much higher degree or standard than usual.

hit powerfully: Strike something with great force.

lose narrowly: Be defeated by only a small amount or difference.

operate smoothly: Work without problems or sudden, uneven movements.

perform consistently: Produce results of a similar standard each time.

prepare thoroughly: Get ready carefully, covering everything that is needed.

recover fully: Become completely well again after an illness or injury.

regret bitterly: Feel very sorry or upset about something you did or failed to do.

resemble closely: Look very similar to someone or something.

return gradually: Come back to a place or activity slowly, in stages.

reveal publicly: Make information known to people generally.

sleep soundly: Sleep deeply without being disturbed.

speak warmly: Talk about someone with affection or approval.

Photo: 'Serena Williams at 2013 US Open', Edwin Martinez.
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