THE FLATMATES
Language point:
Binomials:
peace and quiet
The Flatmates – Binomials: peace and quiet

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Background:
There are many phrases in English that use two words connected with ‘and’. For example, *peace and quiet, fish and chips*. These expressions are known as *binomials*. In these phrases the word order is usually fixed; we say ‘*peace and quiet*’, we *don’t* say ‘quiet and peace’.

The following binomials are all *noun phrases*, although there are also many adjective and verb phrases that are binomials.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun and noun:</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Many binomials combine words which are similar or closely connected in meaning:</td>
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</table>
| *peace and quiet*: freedom from noise and disturbance  
He sent his children to the park so that he could have *some peace and quiet*. |
| *life and times*: the story of someone’s life, especially in its social context  
I’m reading a book about the *life and times of* Winston Churchill. It’s fascinating. |
| *law and order*: the maintenance of a good society because people follow the laws and criminals are caught and punished.  
After the war there was a serious breakdown in *law and order*. It has taken a long time for the police to gain control of the situation. |
| Other binomials refer to things that are closely or frequently connected: |
| *fish and chips*: the popular and traditional take-away food in Britain  
I can’t be bothered to cook, I’ll go and get some *fish and chips*. |
| *salt and vinegar*: the condiments or flavourings that are often had with chips  
Do you want *salt and vinegar* on your chips? |
| *pros and cons*: the advantages and disadvantages of something; the things for and against something.  
What are the *pros and cons* of capital punishment? |
Rhyme and alliteration:
Many binomials combine words that rhyme:

odds and sods: a collection of small and unimportant things. Odds and ends has the same meaning.
I’ve done all the important building work; I’ve just got the odds and sods left, you know, like fitting the door handles.

hustle and bustle: a lot of noise and activity
I love the hustle and bustle of city life. I’d get bored in the countryside.

Many binomials use alliteration. This is when the sounds at the beginning of the words are similar.

rest and relaxation: a time of inactivity, for example when on holiday
The doctor said I need some rest and relaxation; I’ve been working too hard.

trials and tribulations: the difficult challenges that we face in life
Remember, while marriage is a wonderful thing, it also has its own trials and tribulations, which you both have to survive.

Grammar words:
Many binomials combine grammar words such as prepositions and conjunctions.

ups and downs: the good and bad times in life
The ups and downs of life are similar all over the world, but people react differently to them.

ins and outs: the details and fine points of something.
I don’t know all the ins and outs, but it seems the Prime Minister has made a serious mistake.

down and out: a homeless and jobless person. This is also often used as an adjective.
Did you see the poor down and out sleeping in the park? Should we tell the police about him?

ifs and buts: the reasons why someone doesn’t want to do something; their objections
Whenever we try to change the work routines, the workers have so many ifs and buts that we never manage to change anything.
Abbreviations:
Many common binomials are referred to by an abbreviation of the initial letters.

**R and R**: rest and relaxation
I'm going on a 2 week beach holiday. I really need some **R and R**.

**P and P**: postage and packing – usually seen when you buy something that needs delivery.
You know you want to buy that bicycle over the Internet? Did you check that the price includes **P and P**?

**R and D**: research and development – usually a department in an industrial business.
Sony has a very strong **R and D** division: that's why they keep coming up with new products.

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