

# THE LEGAL PROFESSION

## THE IMPORTANCE OF COLLOCATIONS

Collocations are words that form natural partnerships in English. For example, we say,

'Merry Christmas!'

but

'Happy New Year!'

Why can't we say 'Merry New Year'? It's because a native English speaker wouldn't expect these words to go together. They do not form a good collocation. Legal English is full of collocations. They might be:

- **verb+noun**  
Do you **accept liability**?
- **noun+verb**  
The **gap** has **widened** between them.
- **verb+adverb**  
Could we please **discuss** this matter **rationally**?
- **adjective+noun**  
She made a **fatal error**.
- **adverb+adjective**  
This is a **highly contentious** dispute.

The key to learning accurate legal English is to have a good familiarity with collocation. Some nouns form good collocations with more than one verb. Some nouns form a good collocation with just one verb. The important thing is to start to notice accurate collocations and memorise them. For example:

**Good collocation:** to **draft** a contract  
to **honour** a contract  
to **breach** a contract

**Bad collocation:** to **write** a contract  
to **respect** a contract  
to **infringe** a contract

As you work through this book you will see many collocations. To help you notice and remember accurate collocations they have been put into a collocation bank for you. The symbol **m** means 'memorise'.

### Collocation bank

- to **draft** a contract
- to **honour** a contract
- to **breach** a contract

### Exercise 1

Look at these sentences. They contain collocations that are in Unit 1A. Complete the sentences with the correct collocation from the four choices on the next page.

- a Solicitors are allowed to \_\_\_\_\_ clients in court.
- b I am afraid I can't help you. I am a commercial lawyer and this is a criminal \_\_\_\_\_.
- c What are the \_\_\_\_\_ for your case?
- d I will \_\_\_\_\_ my final law exams in June of next year.
- e My client is \_\_\_\_\_ a new factory and he needs advice about the relevant health and safety regulations.