The next addition to our series on boosting vocabulary is focused on the word KEEP. KEEP is a high frequency word in the English language and it is essential to understand its use to perfect language use.

KEEP is a transitive verb that can have various meanings, among them are ´continue, stay, maintain, store, own, delay, control´. KEEP has a very good range of collocations that you need to be aware of and you need to be careful not to confuse KEEP with stay.

Keep and save can be confusing because in theory they have the same meaning, ´to put something away, to store or to reserve something for a later date´. But there are some subtle differences.

Save is:

- Reserve something for a specific purpose
- Collect things
- Make sure that other people can´t get to something
- Keep information

KEEP is:

- store something in a specific place
- not throw something away
Collocations with KEEP:

Keep calm – I didn’t want to lose control so I kept calm
Keep control – It is important to keep control when under pressure
Keep a secret – I can keep a secret because I am trustworthy
Keep still – My youngest son finds it hard to keep still
Keep a promise – I can keep a promise because I always do what I say I will do
Keep in touch – It is hard to keep in touch when you are abroad
Keep quiet – When there is an exam in process, everyone must keep quiet
Keep in mind – All students should keep in mind the deadline date when handing in their work
Keep going – When you run a marathon, the important thing is to keep going
Keep the change – I told the waiter that he could keep the change for the good service
Keep your chin up – Even when you fail, you must keep your chin up
Keep fit – The best thing to keep fit is to walk everywhere and eat healthily
Keep your hair on – I told him not to panic and to keep his hair on
Keep something to yourself – It is a secret so you need to keep it to yourself
Keep your job – To be able to keep your job you must accept the pay-cut
Keep your pride – Even when you make a fool of yourself, you should try to keep your pride
Keep your dignity – Drunk people find it hard to keep their dignity
Keep your balance – He was doing yoga and he couldn’t keep his balance so he fell
Keep a copy of – When you write an essay, you should keep a copy on the computer just in case
Keep a record of – I kept a record of the notes about the meeting
Keep a pet – Keeping a pet is a good way to teach responsibility
Phrasal verbs with KEEP:

Keep up (with) = maintain a pace
Keep out = not enter
Keep on = continue
Keep out of = not get involved in
Keep down = maintain low
Keep at = continue, persevere. repeat
Keep ahead = maintain the lead
Keep back = delay
Keep off = stay away from
Keep to = maintain your word/promise

The key to using KEEP is to practice a lot and to make phrases and sentences in contexts that you will remember.