Answers Unit 6

1. A possible feature list for the first set of words includes: [male; fully grown/ adult/ able to produce offspring]. Remember that the presence of one feature can entail the absence of the opposite feature. For example, [+ male] entails [- female]. Is the following table a satisfying representation, or are there features where a clear-cut classification is not possible?

	Male	Fully grown
horse	+/-	+/-
stallion	+	+
mare	-	+
colt	+	-
filly	-	-
foal	+/-	-

   Check a corpus to find out whether, for example, *colt* is really used to denote male young horses only, or whether there are any systematic semantic contrasts not captured in the table between *colt* and *foal*?

2. Work out an answer to this question by yourself.

3. *lock*: homonyms
   Complication: while *lock* "Haarlocke" and *lock* "Schloss" illustrate homonymy, there may be a relation of polysemy between the latter meaning and *lock* "Schleuse."

   school: polysemous
   There are clear semantic links leading from *school* "Schulgebäude" to *school* "Gruppe von Wissenschaftlern oder Künstlern, die derselben Theorie oder Methode verpflichtet sind."

   grade: polysemous

   lie: homonyms

4. Here are some examples of the uses of the two words from the British National Corpus to help you with the first part of this question. They should make clear that *loneliness* tends to be viewed negatively, whereas *solitude* is neutral or positive and often sought voluntarily. Collocations such as *I need some loneliness* or *a terrible sense of solitude* are unusual.

   Loneliness:
   G2V 2214 Loneliness is the scourge of our age.

   GUW 745 Employed in a maisonette in a London suburb, she ate by herself and slept in the junk room,

enduring **agonies of loneliness** and misery.

H8M 1904 In the middle of each night I would smooth away her **loneliness**, and sometime in the day I'd bring her flowers.

H9X 1089 Otherwise, the war meant much **loneliness**, which was assuaged in my case by writing, reading, learning languages, and studying such countries of the Middle East as I was able to visit.

HA5 3176 In the heady fire of consummation Gina knew that **the aching loneliness which had dogged her throughout her life** was finally ended, her own desire rising to match Rune's as their mutual need drowned them in the remorselessly rising tide of satisfaction.

HDA 357 London have all the entertainment, music and modern technology, famous buildings, statues , and money; but on the opposite side it has **the ugliness, violence, loneliness, homelessness, lots of pollution, litter,** the poor run-down parts of London.

HRB 942 Her pregnancy thankfully gave her a little relief from the enormous output normally expected of her, and her stay with the Franklins was a welcome respite **from the boredom and loneliness of being on her own**, as she wrote on 9 January:

HU9 1306 Many of the people visited do not receive financial help from the Society --; their poverty takes other forms, e.g, **bereavement, loneliness, hospitalisation, being housebound,** --; the list is endless.

HWM 1294 If you are **afraid of loneliness**, don't marry

JSU 167 Yes there is something outside his window, however near or far and it is alive but he doesn't have to be seeing it and on the other hand something is alive in the room because actually if you look at the context of that, something else is alive beside the clock's **loneliness** and the blank page where my fingers move.

Solitude:
A0P 1536 He **needed solitude** to write, as well as a place of his own for entertaining his girlfriends, which he found on Mountain Street.

A0P 1626 As ever, his world was split into two contradictory rhythms: **solitude** and company, his own tough self-criticism and the adulation of those around him: ambiguities converging, and testing.

A6W 1365 Only wind noise above 80mph from the A-pillars and exterior mirrors intrudes on the **solitude** of motorway driving.

A7D 476 Her capacity for **solitude** and disregard for physical comforts helped her to survive.

ABW 2387 Away from his business, Christopher craved only peace and **solitude**, now shared with her --; the first person ever to share it.

ARG 1193 Instead, this is **a solitude that gives space for God** within us.

C8Y 457 To have no line of communication to your own kind available can turn a tolerable **solitude** into a state of intolerable isolation; and yet thousands of elderly people, who live on their own and are too frail to go out, are in this position.

C9B 741 Third, Vanaprastha, the forest-dwelling stage, which involves withdrawal from the normal requirements of social and family life, after the fulfilment of all necessary obligations, to **a place of solitude for study and meditation**.

CG1 401 Mixed because you can find **real solitude** in the Mournes, but lack of people often means a lack of facilities.

CG2 869 If **the solitude and beauty of the area** grabs you then these routes are just a taster of what the west has to offer, and no doubt you'll return.

You may find it instructive to exchange the words *loneliness* and *solitude* in the above examples. Try it out and report on the consequences.

To help you with the second part of this question (quotation from Poe), think for example of a scale of intensity on which you could place these words. Which word is the weakest, which one the strongest? Consult corpora to find out whether the arrangement chosen by Edgar Allan Poe is

his subjective preference or whether it reflects general trends in the use of these words. The *Corpus of Historical American English* (COHA) is ideal for this task, because it will allow you to home in on the language used during the writer's lifetime.

5. Choose a corpus and start your work. I have done *awake* in COCA for you for demonstration:

   As predicted, *come awake* is top of the list, with 139 examples. Culicover's prediction also holds for *grow*, *turn* and *go*, which are not attested. (There is one sequence, *take turns awake*, which is obviously irrelevant to the present question, because it has a different meaning, namely that people take turns doing something while awake.) *Become awake*, the second form accepted by Culicover, is attested, but only three times. This is less frequent than *get awake*, ruled out by Culicover, but attested 7 times. A special case is presented by one instance of *falling awake*, a conscious play on words, based on the frequent *fall asleep*. It is worth thinking about the specific semantic effect that rule-breaking produces in this example.

   The general lesson from this task is that you need very large corpora to study collocations. Small corpora are useless for this task because they are unlikely to document the full range of possible collocations.

6. If you look for STAY (remember: capitals search for the lemma, that is all forms of the verb), followed by any kind of adjective, in COCA, the top five collocates are all clearly positive: *alive*, *awake*, *healthy*, *safe*, *strong*. The picture for REMAIN, on the other hand, is more mixed. Go further down the lists of collocates and assess whether *stay* has a general positive connotation (and *remain*, perhaps, a negative one). How much overlap is there in the set of adjectives combining with either verb?

   If you now move to political discourse: Do you think that in the Brexit debates of the 2010s it would have made a difference talking about Britain **staying** in the European Union rather than, as was usually done, Britain **remaining** in the European Union? The ideal corpus to investigate this issue is News on the Web (NoW).

7. To obtain answers, follow the instructions. Information about a word's grammatical potential and collocational preferences is particularly likely to be provided in monolingual learner's dictionaries. Tracking down idioms and fixed expressions is usually difficult because dictionaries have different policies with regard to what they consider as "head-word" in, for example, *schwacher Trost*.

8. The crucial issue here is, of course, whether and at what level of consciousness we are sensitive to the "literal" meanings of these conventionalised metaphors. Another question is to what extent they are universal, rooted in human cognition, and to what extent they are culture-specific, reflecting sedimented social and cultural stereotypes which might be challenged and changed on reflection.