Word and Phrase is a resource created by Mark Davies at Brigham Young University. The site was designed to help students find detailed information on the 60,000 most frequent words in English and apply that information into their own writing. In Word and Phrase you will be able to explore words in use as well as their frequency in different kinds of genres (spoken, fiction, magazines, newspapers and academic writing). You can also find words definitions, synonyms, and collocates that can help you expand your vocabulary and become a more proficient writer.

Getting started

Word and Phrase is completely free but you need to register. You can do this by going to https://corpus.byu.edu/profile_new.asp and filling out this form.

You will receive an email with a link to activate your account. To start using the website, open a new tab or window, go to https://www.wordandphrase.info/ and follow the steps in the section below.

Running a basic search

1. Go to https://www.wordandphrase.info/
2. Click on Frequency list.
3. After WORD enter the word you want to search. For a noun, use a singular form (consequences will not work. Try consequence instead). If a verb form (focusing) does not appear, try searching for its base form (focus).

4. Click SEARCH.

5. Your screen will look something like this. At first, it may seem like too much information but don’t feel overwhelmed by it. We will guide you step by step so you can make the best out of this resource. At this point you may want to check our Word and Phrase Quick Guide to see what it all means.
Solving specific questions

1. Enter your keyword and click **SEARCH**.
2. Limit your results by word form (noun, verb, adjective, and adverb) by clicking below **PoS** (i.e. Part of Speech) or **WORD**. Note that **V** stands for verb, **N** for noun, **J** for adjective and **R** for adverb.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RANK #</th>
<th>PoS</th>
<th>WORD</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>SPOKEN</th>
<th>FICTION</th>
<th>MAGAZINE</th>
<th>NEWSPAPER</th>
<th>ACADEMIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>FOCUS</td>
<td>62922</td>
<td>11357</td>
<td>4891</td>
<td>10874</td>
<td>24439</td>
<td>24439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>FIELD</td>
<td>29453</td>
<td>4845</td>
<td>1742</td>
<td>5197</td>
<td>4864</td>
<td>12873</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. You can also limit your results by genre (spoken, fiction, magazines, newspapers and academic).

4. This is how your search results will look like. Read a few examples and try to imagine the situation in which a speaker may have used a particular sentence. Is it similar to your situation?

- police disbanded the unit dedicated to tracking large gaps in the measuring of the emerging field of xenotransplantation.
- so he drew into his work without any greater happiness, focusing completely for the genetic experiment. It would take a telescope. The trick is getting your school counselors K-12 with the organizational structure to focus efforts. They struggle with work schedules and allocate time necessary that proposed by, for example, ecologists, who generally focus exclusively on society's life-support system. Physicians or
5. Notice what came before and after your word. Were you thinking about pairing it with similar words? If the answer is yes, your sentence is likely to sound correct to a proficient speaker. However, if you can’t find a combination like the one you had in mind, your construction may sound awkward or incorrect.

6. If you like the sound of two specific words put together, click on any highlighted word to see isolated examples of those two words.

Q2: My teacher says my vocabulary is not academic enough.

1. Enter your identified ‘non-academic’ word or any other you have doubts about. Click search.

2. Limit your results by word form or genre if necessary.

3. Focus on the graph above your concordance lines. This graph tells you how often a word is found in a certain genre. Analyse this chart and assess whether your word is commonly found in the genre you are writing in.
4. Here’s a comparison between the words *spotlight* and *focus*. If you’re writing an academic paper writing something like ‘In the pages that follow, we will focus on three major initiatives...’ will sound better than ‘In the pages that follow, we will spotlight three major initiatives’.

Clicking on any bar will limit the sentence samples to that genre.

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONCORDANCE LINES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GENRE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 ACAD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 ACAD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 ACAD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 ACAD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 ACAD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q3: I don’t want to keep using the same ‘easy’ words. I want my papers to sound more sophisticated.

1. Enter your identified ‘easy’ word. Click SEARCH.

2. Limit your results by word form or genre if necessary.

3. Focus on the SYNONYMS section on the left side of your screen. This section will show the word closest in sense (in blue) and other entries organised by frequency in the Word and Phrase collection.

4. Click on any synonym for a new list of sample sentences for that word.
5. Limit your search for more specific or general synonyms and for those containing more than one word.

6. Before substituting any word, make sure to check its definition and ensure that the meaning and connotation are still quite similar.

1. Enter one of the words you don’t know what to pair with (e.g. for the example above enter test or explain). Click SEARCH.

2. Limit your results by word form or genre if necessary.

3. Focus on what comes before and after your word. Words in Word and Phrase are colour coded (verbs are pink, nouns are blue, adjectives are green, adverbs are orange and prepositions are yellow), so you can easily see what a word is often preceded or followed by.

4. Check the COLLOCATES section under DEFINITIONS to see a list of words that often appear together.
As you can see on the image above, the verb focus is frequently followed by nouns like attention, study, and research as well as the preposition on.

5. Clicking on a collocate will result on a new list of sentences containing your keyword plus that collocate. If you notice the word you were intending to pair with your keyword does not appear on the list that may be a sign that they are not meant to be together. Check the synonyms and definitions tool to find a more suitable option.

We hope you found this guide useful. If you have any problems using Word and Phrase or simply want to know more about it, simply book a consultation with a language adviser at the Advisory Zone. You can also join our new Vocabulary Workshop where you will learn about this and other great resources that can help you put your thoughts in just the right words!

All screenshots have been taken from https://www.wordandphrase.info/ and adapted by the author.