The Word and Phrase resource can support you in better understanding how language has commonly been used by other writers. Included in the results for a word search is a group of collocates, words that are often used with the search word. Also shared in the results are sample text excerpts featuring the search word. These sample excerpts offer you the opportunity to discover patterns of language use, including perhaps which preposition might tend to appear after a particular verb or noun. The information below will guide you through major aspects of Word and Phrase searches.

The creators of Word and Phrase expected to retire the resource by 2021, so you might discover one day that it has disappeared. Consider watching our screencasts on the COCA resource, which provides similar support. The fifth COCA screencast explains where and how you can access information similar to that provided by the Word and Phrase frequency list. COCA screencasts and transcripts: https://dukewritessuite.com/coca-corpus-of-contemporary-american-english/.

Conducting a Search

• Click on the link below, then click on the words Frequency list on the left side of the page http://www.wordandphrase.info/old/

• Enter the word focus in the WORD search field on the upper left

For a frequency list search, you need to choose one word to search. For a noun, use a singular or non-count form. The plural noun problems will not yield search results, so use problem instead.

• Click on "Search" to the right of the search field

If your chosen word does not yield results in Word and Phrase, check the Longman https://www.ldoceonline.com/ and the Oxford https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/?cc=global dictionaries. They provide collocations and sample sentences as well as definitions.

• Notice on the top right that you can choose focus as a verb or noun

You could click on V for verb or N for noun ~ or on FOCUS to the right of one of those. For our sample search here, click on the V.

Exploring the Results

• Consider if you’d prefer to only view excerpts taken from Academic sources

If so, below the V and N and to the left of DEFINITIONS, click on the vertical rectangle that appears below the word ACADEMIC.
Examining Sample Excerpts

- Scroll down the page to the sample excerpts, also known as CONCORDANCE LINES

Scroll down through the excerpts. Notice that various forms of the verb **focus** appear in the center of the excerpts. (If you wanted to sort the excerpts by the middle column, you would click on SORT at the top of that column.)

**Note:** This resource will not allow you to directly search for the verb form of **focused**, but when you search for **focus**, the samples include that word. If you directly search for **focused**, the results will be for the adjective form.

- Notice that the words are color coded to indicate different parts of speech

There is no obvious guide provided for the color coding. Prepositions (e.g., for, in, on, with) tend to be highlighted in yellow.

- Consider what patterns appear in how the word **focus** (with or without verb endings) is used

In scrolling down through the sample excerpts, what word is most often highlighted in yellow to the right side of **focus**? The preposition that often appears there would tend to be one that writers frequently use immediately after the verb **focus**.

Exploring Collocates

- Scroll to the top of the sentences

To the right of the bar graph figure, the word **COLLOCATES** appears. A collocate is a word frequently used with or near another word. The verb **focus** plus one of its collocates would typically seem natural together.

- Click on the noun collocate **attention**.

The sample excerpts will shift to contain both the word **focus** and its collocate **attention**

- Notice what patterns you discover with that pair of words in those sample excerpts

What preposition (in yellow) often appears **after focus attention**?

What kinds of words often appear **between** the words **focus** and **attention**? You might notice that possessive forms (his, her, its, my, our, their) often appear there as well as words that refer to quantities (more, most, much).

Related Resources

Our DukeWritesSuite screencast tutorials walk you through the search process. Video screencasts and written transcripts are provided here: [https://dukewritessuite.com/word-and-phrase/](https://dukewritessuite.com/word-and-phrase/)