The Word and Phrase resource can support you in better understanding how language has been used by other writers. After searching for a particular word, you can explore patterns of language use in the sample sentences that Word and Phrase provides.

The information below will guide you through major aspects of Word and Phrase searches. You can also watch our screencast tutorials, which will walk you through the search process, on our DukeWrites Suite page. Transcripts are provided for each tutorial: https://dukewritessuite.com/word-and-phrase/

**Note:** The Word and Phrase site will be phased out in late December 2020. Before then, you might watch our fifth COCA screencast here. That screencast tutorial explains where and how you can access information similar to that provided by the Word and Phrase corpus.

**Doing a Sample Search**

- Click on the link below, then click on **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

  **Note:** 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 word **problems** will not yield search results; use **problem** instead).

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

  **Note:** This resource houses a smaller collection of words than an online dictionary would, so your chosen word might not always be included

- 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 this sample search, click on the **V** to see verb examples

- Consider if you are only interested in seeing academic samples with that word
  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 Sentences

- On the lower part of the page, examine the sample sentences. As you scroll down, notice that various forms of the verb **focus** appear in the center of those sentences. Although this resource will not let you search for the verb form **focused**, you can find sample sentences containing that word by searching for **focus**. (If you do a search for **focused** on Word and Phrase, the results will be for the adjective form.)

- Notice that the words are color coded to indicate their parts of speech. Prepositions (e.g., for, in, on, with) are highlighted in yellow

- Consider what patterns you see in how the word **focus** (with or without verb endings) is used in those sentences. In scrolling down, what word do you often see in yellow to the right side of **focus**? That would indicate what preposition writers often use with the verb

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 another word. The verb **focus** plus one of its collocates would typically seem natural together

- Click on the collocate word **attention**. After a delay, you will see sample sentences containing both the word **focus** and its collocate **attention**

- Notice what patterns you see with that pair of words in those sentences

  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

Remember that you can view our screencast tutorials for the Word and Phrase resource on our DukeWrites Suite website. The screencasts as well as transcripts for those are provided here: [https://dukewritessuite.com/word-and-phrase/](https://dukewritessuite.com/word-and-phrase/)