

DukeWrites Enrichment Suite

Word and Phrase: Doing academic searches

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This is Rene Caputo, ESL specialist for Duke University's Thompson Writing Program. In an earlier screencast tutorial, we explored how you can do a simple search in this Word and Phrase corpus and also how to search for collocates, those words that work well when they're near each other.

Let's look at some other features of Word and Phrase that you might find helpful. First, we're going to enter on the left here. And now I'm going to choose the *Academic* section.

In the search field, I'm going to enter affect. Notice here we have the choice of the verb or the noun. And I'm going to choose the verb. We have various definitions here. And as you can see, the first one is to have an effect upon.

And what's different about this from the non-academic one that we looked at in an earlier tutorial, is that here we can see the disciplines or fields that the sample sentences will come from. I am going to choose Science. And now below we have sample sentences that come from Science journals.

If you recall from our earlier tutorial, what you can do is look at the sample sentences for patterns of how language has been used. So, let's see what patterns we can find here. We have quite a few "affected by." Remember that yellow is prepositions in here. We also have "affected *in*" ~ another preposition.

If when we're looking at some of these we see another word that interests us, such as potential, we can go ahead and click on that. And what will come up is some sample sentences with potential, as you have probably guessed.

Now I've got a rather slow connection at the moment ~ there we go (ha ha ha). And again here, we can go ahead and look for different patterns.

Now if you were interested in what's happening on the left side, we can click on the SORT here. Ok. And now you can see the words on the left are in alphabetical order. So, we have "potential of adversely affecting," "potential to adversely affect." So, some patterns with potential and affect. We have "potential and affects."

This seems to be popular ~ “potential factor affecting.” “Potential risk factors affecting,” “potential for affecting.” So, these are some things you can look for. Some patterns. And what else do we see?

“Potential to negatively affect,” “potential to positively affect,” and “potential to significantly affect.” And then a lot here ~ “potential to affect.” So quite a few patterns of language usage that we can notice here.

We can also click here to sort on the right. And now we have alphabetical on the right instead of on the left. So that is one way that you can use this.

I’m going to go back to the basic page again. And again to our verb affect. Remember that here we have a list of collocates. So, these are words that are often used closely together. And we can see that some of the words that we noticed when we were looking at the sample sentences are here.

“Adversely, significantly, negatively, and positively.” If we were interested in seeing how affect is used with one of these collocates here, we could click on ~ let’s see ~ attitude. And what we’ll get is some samples that show our original word “affect” plus “attitude.”

A lot here of “affect attitude, affect attitudes, affected by attitudes.” What else do we have? “Affect implicitly measured attitudes” and “affects implicitly measured attitudes.”

So, remember that this site is really useful if you want to explore the way that language is used. And what is particularly nice is that in this section, we know ~ this section of Word and Phrase ~ we know that all the examples are from academic journals.

And if you don’t use the collocate, you can choose amongst those disciplines that we saw earlier. So that’s it for this tutorial on using Word and Phrase. Have fun exploring.