

DukeWrites Enrichment Suite

COCA: Using the Word search option

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Hi, I'm Rene Caputo, ESL specialist with Duke University's Thompson Writing Program. Today, we're going to explore another feature of COCA, the Corpus of Contemporary American English.

We're looking at the main page of COCA [<https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/>]. This resource provides you with a large searchable collection of journal articles, newspaper articles, and much more. You can use COCA to explore how certain words or phrases have been used. Today, we're going to explore a newer search feature of COCA.

Here, above the search field, the search is now set to a List form. This is the default. You can do list searches for either a word or phrase ~ and we've explored that in our earlier screencasts. If you've never used COCA before, or just not very much, you might find it helpful to watch my earlier screencasts, particularly COCA: Introduction and registration.

For this screencast, we're going to search using the newer Word feature. At the right, you can get a brief overview of what this offers you. First, we're told that you can do this for 60,000 words within the COCA corpus.

And you'll be provided with related topics to your word. Collocates and clusters, words often used with your word. Concordance display, which for this part of COCA means segments of sentences including your word. Synonyms. And then websites that use your word ~ perhaps the most.

For this search, you can only put one word in the search field. And we're going to search for Experience. Near the top here, we can see that we have results for the noun form. And the verb form is just here. You can click on that hyperlink.

These are the sources that are included in this collection. Everything from blogposts to fiction, newspapers, and academic journal articles.

Below that, we have some definitions. And these are links to additional definitions. While those dictionaries are helpful, to find even more detailed definitions, you might want to visit the Longman Dictionary and the Oxford Learners Dictionary. Those do an excellent job of showing the difference between the count and non-count use of experience. That is, what's the difference between experience and experiences as nouns. I'll provide links to those dictionaries in the transcript.

Longman Dictionary

<https://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/experience>

Oxford Learners Dictionary

https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/english/experience_1?q=experience

Below the definitions are links to several websites that offer you video clips that include your word. And they can be helpful with pronunciation.

These sites provide translations of your word into other languages. At the top here, we have topics that might use the word a lot or be related to the word.

And collocates. Collocates. This section is one of the most valuable parts of the Word search on COCA. Collocates are simply words that often used together with the word you've searched for. So if you use these collocates with the noun experience, they would tend to sound fairly natural.

For example, it's common to say: learning experience, user experience, share or gain experience, previous or firsthand experience. If you click on one of these hyperlinked words, you'll go to a separate page focused on that word. But you can get more collocate information by clicking here.

On this page, we have different columns of collocates that would work well with the word experience. These are sorted by parts of speech. Nouns on the left. Adjective, verb, and adverb.

Near the top of the page are words that are used very frequently with the word experience in the COCA resource. If you scroll down, these are words that are used less often as collocates with the word experience in COCA. This is really valuable information that can help you study language use.

Let's go back a page. As we go further down, we can see synonyms for our word. Again, hyperlinked for some of those. And then we have word clusters. What are some groups of words that experience is often used in? So these are organized by how that is set up.

So this is experience with one word to the right or one word to the left. And so on. Experience in, with, or for. From experience, learning experience, human experience. Experience for me, experience is not, experience working with.

So again, a really great way to study language use. As we continue down, you can see different sites that might include many more examples of the word experience. But there are many examples right here. Again, this is an opportunity to look at usage and language patterns.

So we have: Experience as a field soldier. Experience as a member. That might be a form that would be useful for a job interview or a letter for an application. That you have experience as a something. My experience at Prima. So your experience at a company or a location. Sounds like a company to me.

As we scroll down, we see [it's] often used with the word "in" afterwards, with the word "of" afterwards, or with the word "with" afterwards. So again, lots of possibilities to look at how language is used with the word experience. And we see that quite a few of these, if you're interested in academic usage, are academic examples.

If you're looking for more information about how to use COCA and this resource, these links up here will lead you to more information. Also, don't forget to check out the other screencasts that we've provided for you on COCA and other resources that can be helpful for improving language use.

Have fun exploring!