

How to talk about *sustainability* using authentic language! (Worksheet A)



In this worksheet, you will learn how to enrich your blog by finding suitable vocabulary for the topic you want to write about. For this, you will work with a so-called “corpus” on the website www.english-corpora.org.

Preparation of our corpus work



Before we get to know the different functions of the website, we have to prepare our corpus work a little. So, let's start!

Step 1 - Creating an account

1. Open www.english-corpora.org in your web browser. On the top menu bar, go to “my account” and select “Register”.
2. Fill in the blanks: Type in your school's email address, choose “**GERMANY**” as your country, and select “**Other**” under “Category”. Tick the box next to “I agree to the Terms and Conditions for this website”, and finally click on “submit”.
3. You should then receive a confirmation email to verify your account. Go to your school's email account, open the new email, and click on the link to finalise your registration.

Step 2 - Creating a virtual corpus (or a specialised corpus)

1. Go back to the home page of www.english-corpora.org. You should now be logged into your new account.
2. You now see a list of corpora (= plural of *corpus*) which you can choose from. Select the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA).
3. Underneath the text box, you will find “Texts/Virtual”. Click on this section, and then choose “Create Corpus”.
4. Although the new appearing web page might look confusing at first, the next steps are just as easy as the others:
Under “BLOG” in the “Genre/domain” section, choose every genre **except** “Acad” and “Legal” (since we want to concentrate on the language of blogs but excluding academic and legal texts). Then type in **sustainability** in the search field for “Words in text”, and click on “submit”.
5. You can save your findings right above the list of blogs that is returned. We want to call our new corpus “sustainability”, so this is what we should type in the respective field (→ “SAVE AS”).

Well done, you have now completed all necessary steps to start working with the corpus! 😊

This worksheet was downloaded from: Stahnke, Rieke, Marlena Wegesin & Lara Brede (2021). “Act responsible, think sustainable – Expanding vocabulary to write about *sustainability*.” In Le Foll, Elen (Ed.), *Creating Corpus-Informed Materials for the English as a Foreign Language Classroom*. <https://elenlefol.pressbooks.com>. CC-BY-NC 4.0.

Practice: Getting to know www.english-corpora.org and its functions




Concordance lines and the “List”-function

The first method to look for new words and phrases for your project is a very basic function of the website.

1. Since the COCA (= Corpus of Contemporary American English) is still selected, you simply click on “SEARCH”, and select the “List”-function (next to “Chart”, “Word” and “Browse”).
2. In this example, we want to know more about the use and the context of the word **sustainable**, which you should type into the text field. Before we submit our search, we need to select our own specialised corpus. To do so, click on “Texts/Virtual” and choose the newly created “sustainability” corpus from the list. Afterwards, click on “Find matching strings”.
3. You will now see a short table that tells you how often the word *sustainable* is found within our virtual (specialised) corpus.

Write down the frequency (“FREQ”): _____


4. When you click on “sustainable”, you will obtain a long list of examples that contain the word *sustainable*. These examples are called **concordance lines**. They show how *sustainable* is used in **context**. Before we take a closer look at those examples, we need to randomise the results by clicking on a number next to “FIND SAMPLE” in the top left corner to get a better overview of the data.


Have a closer look at the concordance lines. Choose **2** examples in which *sustainable* is followed by a **noun**. Write down these two nouns: 

1. _____

2. _____

Name: _____

5. Now click on each of these two concordance lines and write down the full sentences in which the word *sustainable* occurs. 

Look up any words you do not understand in a dictionary. 

1. _____

2. _____

6. Choose **one** of the nouns and write down your own sentence that includes the pair (*sustainable* + your choice of noun). 