



# Word Frequencies in Written and Spoken English: Based on the British National Corpus

*Geoffrey Leech, Paul Rayson, Andrew Wilson*

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*Word Frequencies in Written and Spoken English* is a landmark volume in the development of vocabulary frequency studies. Whereas previous books have in general given frequency information about the written language only, this book provides information on both speech and writing. It not only gives information about the language as a whole, but also about the differences between spoken and written English, and between different spoken and written varieties of the language. The frequencies are derived from a wide ranging and up-to-date corpus of English: the British National Corpus, which was compiled from over 4,000 written texts and spoken transcriptions representing the present day language in the UK. The book is based on a new version of the corpus (available from 2001) providing more accurate grammatical information, which is essential (for example) for distinguishing words like leaves (noun) and leaves (verb) with different meanings. The book begins with a general introduction, explaining why such information is important and highlighting interesting linguistic findings that emerge from the statistical analysis of the British National Corpus vocabulary. It also contains twenty four 'interest boxes' which highlight and comment on different aspects of frequency - for example, the most common colour words in English in order of frequency, and a comparison of male words (e.g. man) and female words (e.g. woman) in terms of their frequency.

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