

Introduction to College Grammar D

NAME _____

Using an online concordancer to take a “grammar safari”

What is a concordance?

Traditionally, it's a book that tells you where and how words are used in particular texts and how many times they are used. They have been compiled and used by scholars for hundreds of years. For example there are concordances of the Bible or of Shakespeare's plays. For example, a concordance to Shakespeare can tell you exactly where the word “interest” (or any other word) is used in any or all of Shakespeare's plays and poetry. Constructing a concordance used to take a long time and a lot of work. Today, computers make the job of “concordancing” very fast and easy. Computers can search many thousands of pages of text in a fraction of a second.

What is a concordancer?

It's a tool for finding words or phrases in examples of real language. The one we're going to use is an online concordancer. We put in a word or combination of words, and the concordancer searches through its text “bank” for examples of those words or phrases.

How can a concordancer help with grammar?

This tool can find and display many examples of any word or phrase. That means we can easily see how certain grammar structures are being used in the real world. Adjective clauses are good for this kind of “research” because they depend on special words—relative pronouns and other relative structures.

EXERCISE 1:

1. Use your internet browser (try Google Chrome) to navigate to this webpage:
<http://www.lex tutor.ca/concordancers>
2. It's also linked to our class webpage at **whijor.weebly.com**
3. Click on “Clean Sentences Conc (English)” on the right side of the screen. This is probably the best database of text (corpus) for us to use. You'll see “Sentence Concordance Proto” at the top of the screen.
4. In the box on the left, enter the word or phrase that you want to search for. For the “output” controls, select “natural” and “small font.” This will be easier to read than some other formats.
5. After you've entered the target word or phrase, click on “SUBMIT.” You'll get a list of sentences with that phrase placed exactly in the middle of the screen—or maybe you'll get nothing (“Zero Hits”).

6. Read over the examples. Try to find one that you understand well and that seems to you like a good example of a relative clause.
7. Copy and paste your chosen sentence into a WORD document. Save it, print it, and bring it to class next time. (You may want to re-format the font to make it smaller).
8. **Collect at least one example for ten (10) of the items on the list below** (include punctuation and spaces).

who	, who	whom	, whom	whose
of which	about which	to which	for which	on which
of whom	about whom	to whom	for whom	on whom
of whose	about whose	to whose	for whose	on whose

WRITING PRACTICE:

- Write a paragraph describing the ideal spouse (wife or husband) for you. If you already have a spouse, you can describe that person—or describe the ideal parent.

In your description, try to use each of these relative words/phrases at least once:

who *that* *whose* *whom* *to/for whom*

You can start your description like this:

The man/woman that I marry must be someone who . . . who . . . and who . . .

- Write or type your description (150 to 200 words) on separate paper. Please DOUBLE SPACE. Put your name, the name of the class, and the date at the top of the paper.