

Collocations and Concordances

Collocations are words which often occur together (either adjacent or in close proximity) and which to the native speaker sound correct when used together. Thus in English we say a *heavy rain* but not usually a *strong rain*.

A concordance is a list produced by a computer that shows all of the examples of a particular word in a large database (usually millions of words of text). It shows the words searched for on the computer screen or in a printout, each instance in a separate line showing a certain number of words that come before and after. Here is an example of three lines from the Lextutor concordance program for the word **freezing**.

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spectacle; in fact, a FREEZING autumn dulls the blaze. The best ef  
're up there in that FREEZING climate and all of us have to try a  
Cadbury's Flake. It's FREEZING cold, about ninety degrees in the o
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The programs included here will help you to see which words can go together and “sound right.” These programs are not difficult, but a little explanation, I believe, would be helpful; so I have provided a short tutorial for each one.