

MARTIN CUTTS

OXFORD
GUIDE

— *to* —

PLAIN
ENGLISH

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Appendix:

COMMONEST WORDS

This appendix shows, in priority order, the most commonly used nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs in written and spoken English, according to data derived mainly from the British National Corpus of 100 million words. The website <http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/bncfreq/> (Leech, G, Rayson, P, and Wilson, A (2001) *Word Frequencies in Written and Spoken English* (London)) also shows the frequency with which the words are used. Frequency is not the same as understandability. But if most of the words in your writing are from these lists, you should find that most readers will be familiar with them.

TOP 150 NOUNS

week	idea	price	woman
market	need	Mr	home
society	man	side	face
time	family	body	cost
member	use	control	system
court	million	government	question
figure	day	business	friend
year	fact	report	position
end	study	process	case
effect	community	work	information
police	thing	night	authority
people	head	line	course
state	name	action	part
result	kind	life	power
city	child	eye	road
way	month	law	minute
word	job	issue	group

change	right	force	church
minister	girl	school	condition
education	problem	car	paper
number	water	term	bank
per cent	war	order	century
rate	moment	country	section
type	service	council	hundred
world	other	period	activity
interest	mother	matter	table
hour	father	point	death
research	place	policy	building
house	form	centre	sort
development	person	act	sense
door	age	health	staff
subject	hand	lot	team
area	room	decision	experience
money	reason	street	student
office	value	patient	Mrs
programme	party	industry	language
company	level	mind	
book	view	class	

TOP 300 VERBS

going	kill	set	discuss
agree	do	spend	get
end	run	represent	pay
be	build	would	die
help	used	move	place
open	will	return	make
occur	write	rise	hear
have	involve	can	hope
start	drive	play	love
reach	say	draw	go

include	enter	manage	enable
create	present	refuse	aim
pick	prepare	marry	publish
see	protect	identify	complete
believe	point	prevent	shoot
walk	improve	care	express
prove	adopt	thank	cost
know	arrive	regard	appoint
allow	fill	voice	avoid
sell	confirm	compare	sound
wear	ensure	teach	supply
take	mention	collect	suppose
meet	let's	obtain	check
wait	plan	lay	order
argue	fight	employ	finish
could	stare	announce	laugh
lead	pull	reveal	observe
shall	miss	issue	determine
catch	demand	note	realise
think	refer	state	reply
live	intend	release	tend
cause	imagine	forget	extend
enjoy	act	operate	drink
come	drop	mind	save
stand	beat	indicate	arise
pass	relate	answer	strike
introduce	push	emerge	listen
give	attempt	wonder	notice
happen	affect	record	settle
lie	hit	mark	design
eat	born	maintain	define
look	close	depend	ring
carry	discover	deny	treat
accept	associate	suffer	fit

propose	admit	expect	reduce
share	perform	increase	try
examine	test	mean	buy
ignore	assume	read	establish
control	result	cover	call
study	experience	become	speak
link	replace	let	join
remove	travel	grow	provide
recognise	touch	leave	stop
press	may	require	wish
visit	talk	report	keep
bear	watch	work	send
respond	should	continue	seek
throw	appear	claim	hold
shake	raise	need	receive
survive	use	lose	achieve
exist	produce	support	turn
hang	base	feel	decide
arrange	find	add	choose
encourage	sit	cut	follow
sign	apply	seem	win
concentrate	want	fall	deal
force	offer	form	begin
attend	break	might	understand
lift	tell	change	face
reflect	consider	stay	bring
fly	learn	ask	develop
cross	must	remember	fail
smile	suggest	contain	like
gain	explain	show	describe
approach	put	remain	serve

TOP 150 ADJECTIVES

other	major	dead	professional
good	sure	obvious	wide
new	clear	european	direct
old	economic	specific	foreign
great	only	future	dark
high	likely	central	simple
small	real	appropriate	cold
different	black	environmental	recent
large	particular	similar	ready
local	international	top	concerned
social	special	positive	green
important	difficult	human	American
long	certain	soviet	useful
young	open	senior	various
national	previous	true	effective
British	interested	basic	close
right	whole	nuclear	western
early	total	common	fine
possible	fair	military	traditional
big	white	necessary	English
little	prime	original	Scottish
political	essential	single	wrong
able	free	successful	German
late	significant	personal	present
general	beautiful	aware	independent
full	short	hard	royal
far	industrial	hon	deep
low	civil	private	natural
public	easy	popular	interesting
available	sorry	poor	individual
bad	primary	heavy	considerable
main	strong	financial	nice

involved	hot	complete	extra
French	modern	happy	normal
physical	existing	medical	past
following	labour	final	serious
left	responsible	blue	male
current	legal	red	

TOP 150 ADVERBS

far	down	once	round
so	around	most	easily
together	back	long	normally
up	rather	again	along
probably	on	simply	forward
then	else	never	though
today	there	especially	best
out	sometimes	why	entirely
actually	still	soon	please
now	thus	off	earlier
ever	even	clearly	slowly
only	ago	really	previously
at least	too	at all	finally
just	yesterday	always	through
enough	here	more than	relatively
more	home	about	tonight
less	where	further	quickly
also	all	better	up to
for example	however	a little	apparently
very	usually	like	extremely
therefore	over	currently	recently
well	indeed	before	above
particularly	in	immediately	early
how	certainly	completely	fairly
either	as	somewhere	anyway

tomorrow	for instance	twice	much
merely	all right	exactly	both
in particular	nearly	below	often
a bit	slightly	carefully	away
highly	largely	straight	perhaps
instead	surely	okay	right
increasingly	as well	otherwise	already
suddenly	hardly	hard	yet
eventually	possibly	maybe	later
alone	ahead	directly	almost
equally	obviously	mainly	of course
generally	no longer	when	
fully	nevertheless	quite	