

Voyant Tools and Complexity Measures

English 295: Lighting the Page ♦ Spring 2020

Procedure

1. Spend about an hour familiarizing yourself with [Voyant Tools](#), guided by [this set of instructions](#), taking notes as you go.
2. Prepare text files of at least two samples of your own writing and at least two other pieces of writing to which you'd like to compare your writing. (The second page of this handout has instructions for making these files.)
3. Use your files as the inputs to do further work with Voyant Tools.
4. Finally, use the same files to activate the built-in text analysis tools in a word processing program such as Word. In word, if you go to Word→Preferences→Spelling & Grammar, you can check “show readability statistics.” Then run the spell check (under Tools) and at the end, you'll get a summary of your statistics. Do this for each of your text files and capture the data so that you can compare your writing to the other texts.
5. Capture and describe your most interesting findings in your learning journal.

Creating Text Files for Textual Analysis

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Procedure for Mac

1. Find and open the application called TextEdit.
 - a. (You can also use other plain-text editing programs. I use the free version of BBEdit, for example. But make sure the program is capable of doing true text files, and absolutely do not use Word.)
2. From the “Format” menu, select “Make Plain Text.”
3. Open (or paste in), edit, and save your files as you wish to. Your file extensions should always be txt.
4. If your software has trouble processing the files, check for unusual characters. Watch especially for curly apostrophes and quotation marks, which can often be changed into straight versions (which work better for text processing) by doing a find-and-replace operation for each kind of punctuation. If you have further trouble after that, feel free to send me the file, and I’ll try to help.

Procedure for Windows

1. Find and open the application called Notepad.
2. Open (or paste in), edit, and save your files as you wish to, being sure to select text (txt) as the file format whenever you save.
3. Your file extensions should always be txt.
4. If your software has trouble processing the files, check for unusual characters. Watch especially for curly apostrophes and quotation marks, which can often be changed into straight versions (which work better for text processing) by doing a find-and-replace operation for each kind of punctuation. If you have further trouble after that, feel free to send me the file, and I’ll try to help.