Is, mainly British, were living in some squalor; the other exhibitions were IN nouses, old shops, small factory spaces, offices and warehouse example. The weather might be described as 'wet' or 'dry' (W or D) and IN a humid temperate climate such as Britain experiences, it might riculum is delivered. One powerful message put across by the curriculum IN most schools is that knowledge can be divided into compartmer rouble, we do, but it's not like the trouble we had half an hour ago, when IN fact there were three lines, sections of which there were no trait read aloud to others. Opportunities for oral **READING** arise naturally IN the course of the day; for instance, in the activity of group prediation may differ from traditional hand-made **CONCORDANCES IN** several ways. One is that they will be much more complete: the understood until he reached Milan. 'How old were you when you arrived' IN Italy?' The American journalist broke into his thoughts. 'I had jus seum and the Museum of Modern Art, keen in discerning what was good IN **THE** arts of many ages and styles. As for working art critics, the tering official Brian Hill, who felt it necessary to take aside both captains IN the 21<sup>ST</sup> minute and warn them about each team's tactics. Wi ed. (2) Operational information has undergone several media revolutions IN the last **CENTURY**. In principle, now that operational information year to year (reflecting to some extent the ownership of the biggest hits IN each year), the aggregate market share of the five biggest com ises a narrowing of the focus from arts education in general, to one area **IN** particular, namely English lessons and the fictional literature typ his title er the festival of the horse was, shall I say dreamed up, erm and **IN** fact we had one or two horses, Clydesdale horses, on show dow I a brace of exquisitely faded woods. It was merely that he never wanted **IN** a tournament round to risk anything which might upset his endle

# Reading concordances with algorithms: using FlexiConc for children's literature in CLiC

In the hands-on session, we will use FlexiConc to study literary fiction

via the CLiC web app (Mahlberg et al. 2020a).

This document serves as a step-by-step guide to the activities.

Our case study examines body part nouns in 19<sup>th</sup> century children's literature. It aims to find repeated patterns of language use supported by FlexiConc. Patterns of body language serve as a useful example because there are textual similarities across different nouns (cf. Mahlberg 2013, Mahlberg et al. 2020b).

https://clic-fiction.com/flexiconc

This handout builds on work funded by the "Reading Concordances in the 21st Century" research project supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) (grant references: AH/X002047/1 & AH/X002047/2) and the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) (grant reference: 508235423). Reading concordances with algorithms: using FlexiConc for children's literature in CLIC© 2025 by Nathan Dykes, Stephanie Evert, Michaela Mahlberg, Alexander Piperski is licensed under <u>CC BY-NC 4.0</u>





# Part 1: technical steps

In this part, we will take you through a pre-defined set of analysis steps using FlexiConc in CLiC. Don't think too much about the concordance lines resulting from your steps just yet – you'll get a chance to do that in the second part.

### Activity 1: running a concordance search in FlexiConc

Background: This step explains how to create a concordance using the FlexiConc mode in CLiC. The concordance search is the basis for all subsequent steps

You will search for hands in non-quotes, that is, all parts of the ChiLit novels that are outside of quotation marks. All further activities will be based on this initial concordance.

- 1. To use FlexiConc in CLiC, simply select the FlexiConc tab to the right of the page. The first step is to choose a corpus, a subset, and query terms.
- 2. Enter the search term *hands* in non-quotes of the ChiLit corpus. The search term is what we call the 'node'.
- 3. After setting your search terms, click the **confirmation button** to start searching the corpus.
- 4. You will see the resulting concordance in the main window.

Search in CLiC	
Search the corpora:	
ChiLit - Children's Lite	erature ×
Only in subsets:	
Non-quotes	•
Search for terms:	
hands	
Whole phrase	Any word 🔾



This handout builds on work funded by the "Reading Concordances in the 21st Century" research project supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) (grant







### Activity 2: zooming in – select by a token-level string attribute

**Background:** We will select lines where the token immediately to the left of the node (= the body part noun *hands*) is *her*. The word *her* ('string value') is specified in the uppermost field, and the position - 1 corresponds to the 'token offset'. The token offset specifies the position relative to the node, where negative values count 'downwards' from the left of the node term (-1, -2, ...), and positive values count 'upwards' (1,2, ...).

- 1. Set the string value to her
- 2. Set the token offset to -1
- 3. All other settings remain unchanged



#### Your results should look like this:

No	le	Right	Book I	In bk.
her elbows on the drawing-board before her, and clasping her han	ds over her face, seemed for some minutes to be thinking		LadyAud	_
while she sat silently thinking, she removed one of her han	ds from before her face, and fidgeted nervously with the ribbon		LadyAud	
her great blue eyes glittering in the dusk, and her han	ds clutching at the black ribbon about her throat, as if		LadyAud	
the wood-work at his side, and put one of her han	ds, which had grown white in her new and easy service		LadyAud	_
still sat with her face averted from her lover, her han	ds hanging listlessly in her lap, and her pale gray eyes		LadyAud	
looking as fresh and radiant as the flowers in her han	ds. The baronet caught her in his strong arms as she		LadyAud	1
shoulders, folded her work, shut her work-box, and crossing her han	ds in her lap, sat with her gray eyes fixed upon		LadyAud	+
I know it very well indeed." 1 My lady warmed her han	ds once more, and then taking up the big muff which		LadyAud	+
sat with work primly folded upon her lap, and her han	ds lying clasped together on her work, and never stirred when		LadyAud	+

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# Activity 3: adding information to concordance lines – annotate with sentence transformers

Background: Annotation refers to the (automatic) addition of further information to the concordance lines. In corpus linguistics, such information is typically added in the form of tags. Here we add information on how 'similar' concordance lines are. This similarity is based on similarity scores generated with the help of sentence transformers from large language models (Reimers & Gurevych 2019).

The embedding annotations that sentence transformers provide can form the basis for *clustering* algorithms (cf. section 5). In FlexicConc, clustering is used to form partitions based on the similarity between concordance lines.

As illustrated in the second screenshot below, our annotation algorithms can use a context window with upper and lower bounds.

Note: Annotations are different from algorithms in that you won't see immediate changes to your concordance after running an annotation step. Adding annotation means adding tags, or in the case of sentence transformers, embeddings that can then be used by certain algorithms.

- 1. Scroll up to the query to find the add annotation menu.
- 2. Select annotate with Sentence Transformers
- 3. In the option window, set the lower bound to -5 and the upper bound to 5. This determines which part of the concordance is used to calculate embeddings. (So sentences are not really sentences, but stretches of text defined by word length)
- 4. Click confirm in the concordance window.

Search	in CLiC
Search	the corpora:
ChiLit	t - Children's Literature 🗙
Only in	subsets:
Non-	quotes 🔹
Search	for terms:
hands	
<b>O</b> V	Vhole phrase Any word 🔾
	Add annotation
	Annotate Association Scores
	Token-level Frequency List
Select I	Annotate with Sentence
* The li	t.
her	Annotate with SpaCy Embeddings
The tol	Annotate with spaCy POS
word	Annotate with TF-IDF

Annotate with Sentence Transformers
The positional attribute to extract tokens from (e.g., 'word').
word
The lower bound of the window (inclusive). If None, uses the entire line.
-5
The upper bound of the window (inclusive). If None, uses the entire line.
5
The name of the pretrained Sentence Transformer model.
all-MiniLM-L6-v2



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# Activity 4: Clustering with embeddings

#### **Background:**

Clusters are groups of concordance lines that are more similar to one another than to the remaining lines in the concordance. In the clustering methods FlexiConc supports in CLiC, the analyst determines how many groups are formed. The clustering algorithm produces precisely that number of concordance groups so that similar lines appear together.

To perform clustering, you first need to annotate the concordance with one of the available embedding methods (cf. section 3). The similarity scores resulting from this annotation serve as the basis for the clustering algorithm to form groups.

In this example, we use k-means clustering. On the scikit-learn website, you can find more details about how different clustering algorithms work: https://scikitlearn.org/stable/modules/clustering.html.

To perform a clustering, scroll down to Add algorithm.

- 1. Choose Flat clustering by embeddings
- 2. Change the number of clusters to 10 and leave everything else as-is.



Flat Clustering by Em	beddir	ngs	×
* The metadata colur embeddings for each	nn con I line.	taining	
embeddings_senter	nce_tra	ansformers	-
The number of partiti	ions/cl	usters to cr	eate.
10			*
me metric to compu	te dista	ances betw	een Clueterier
only).	r Aggi	omerative (	Liustering
only).	r Aggli	omerative (	Liustering
cosine The linkage criterion Clustering (used only 'agglomerative').	for Aggi when	omerative ( glomerative method is	e
cosine The linkage criterion Clustering (used only 'agglomerative'). average	for Aggi	omerative ( glomerative method is	e
cosine The linkage criterion Clustering (used only 'agglomerative'). average The clustering metho or 'kmeans'). Default	for Agi when d to us is 'agg	glomerative glomerative method is se ('agglom lomerative'	e erative'
cosine The linkage criterion Clustering (used only 'agglomerative'). average The clustering metho or 'kmeans'). Default kmeans	for Aggi when d to us is 'agg	omerative ( glomerative method is se ('agglom lomerative'	e erative'

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The results of the clustering algorithm are displayed as partitions. So in practice, a partition is a cluster. The first group of concordance lines - cluster 0 - is uncollapsed by default, so you can see all the lines that the clustering algorithm puts together in cluster 0. You can collapse and uncollapse clusters by clicking on their partition labels.

Partition	hands	Cluster_0
in the towns of Norway. <code>1 "Oh!" exclaimed Erica, dropping her</code>	hands	from before her glowing face, "if I dared but think
at her words; and as she spoke she moved her	hands	as though to emphasize what she said; while all the
hoarse laugh rang through the banqueting hall. Matilda put her	hands	to her head. I "Oh, dear!" she cried, "I feel so
slap me, I would" she covered her face with her	hands	and shuddered. 1 "What would you do?" Matilda anxiously inquired, as
am sure I wish thatthat_ island" 1 Selina placed her	hands	before Matilda's mouth. "Hush, hush, Matilda, don't say it. You
you will begin to hate me now!" I Leila removed her	hands	from her face, and hastily brushed away her tears; then
see itshe was now covering her eyes with her	hands.	1 Lydia jumped up on the chair and took down the
heart, and He shall direct thy path." She removed her	hands,	she looked up, and in a firm voice she said
could not stand it, she covered her face with her	hands.	1 Selina spoke aside for a few minutes to Dame Burton
glance she threw at Miss Forest. Annie stood with her	hands	clasped, and a little frown of perplexity between her brows
again covered her face, and bowed her head over her	hands.	She did not speak for a moment, but presently Mr
me. I must to the kitchen," said Christina, crossing her	hands	over her breast, to still her trembling heart, for she
and apple-checked, entered with a bowl of cream in her	hands.	McTurk kissed her. Beetle followed suit, with exemplary calm. Both
I'll tell you what it is,' said Amy folding her	hands,	and standing with her face raised, 'it won't do now
began to speak at once, but Dora put up <mark>her</mark>	hands	to her ears and said $\ensuremath{\mathbb{I}}$ 'One at a time, please
fur coat and a lot of yellow flowers in her	hands.	She stopped to speak to me, and asked me how
Meta, and bring my things. R. M." 1 Ethel put her	hands	to her forehead. It was as if she had been
to be hurt whenever Mary was taken out of her	hands;	and she went to announce the design, in dread lest
But why don't you scream now?' Alice asked, holding her	hands	ready to put over her ears again. 1 'Why, I've done
RE OLD, FATHER WILLIAM," said the Caterpillar. I Alice folded her	hands,	and began: $\ensuremath{\mathbb{I}}$ 'You are old, Father William,' the young man
the little woman ran off towards the town, wringing her	hands,	and Jack ran beside her. 1 "How am I to find
over with the best dragon poison, and" $\tabla$ Effie clasped her	hands	and skipped with joy and cried: "Oh, Harry! I know
her hair flying up over the housetops. She put her	hands	to her back, took Diamond, and set him down in
welcoming you. Hold out your hands." $\tabla$ Griselda held out her	hands,	and stood gazing up into the sky. In a minute
said Mother, "oh, yes," and Bobbie and Peter felt her	hands	tighten on their arms. 1 "Poor old Mammy, you ARE tired
we had, honour bright I would." 1 She held out her	hands	and Phyllis turned out her little empty pocket to show
Partition	hands	Cluster_1
Partition	hands	Cluster_2

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# Activity 5: branching out – navigating the analysis tree

#### **Background:**

A key feature of FlexiConc is its analysis tree. An analysis tree documents all the algorithms that are applied in the course of one specific concordance analysis. The tree provides two key advantages:

- 1) Research documentation: **the tree tracks all steps of your analysis**, and the tree itself can be shared and restored (see section 7).
- 2) We can quickly return to a previous step and take alternative routes by creating new branches.

Here, we use 2) to examine *his* + *hands* in the same way that we selected concordance lines for *her* + *body-part noun*.

- 1. Scroll up to the previous node Select by a token-level attribute where you selected her.
- 2. Click on the **branch** icon in the bottom right corner.

Select by a Token-Level Attribute	
* The value to match against.	Add annotation
her	
The positional attribute to check (e.g., 'word').	
word	
The offset from the concordance node to apply the check.	
-1	
If True, performs a case-sensitive match.	
If True, use regex matching instead of exact matching.	
If True, invert the selection (i.e., select lines where the match fails).	

This step creates a **new branch** where all steps up until the one you branched off from are the same.

The following steps (in our case, *flat clustering by embeddings*) are not copied over from the 'old' branch. You can always go back to your previous branch by clicking **1** next to the tree symbol.

- In the newly-created branch 2, change the value to match against to his.
   On running this change, our branches will contain different selections of the overall concordance (her cheeks / neck ... vs. his cheeks/neck ...).
- 4. Click on the tree symbol to see a visualization of the entire analysis

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Select by a Token-Level Attribute	Add annotation
* The value to match against.	→¥ <sup>2</sup> 1 2 +
The positional attribute to check (e.g., 'word').	Random Sort

In the tree, you can click on any current branch to switch back to the analysis.

5. click on 2 to go back to the branch that you just created (containing lines with his to the left of the node).







# Activity 6: Clustering the new results

In this step, we add a clustering step to our new branch 2. This will allow us to identify groups in the use of *his hands* in the same way we did for *her hands*.

- 1. Add the *Flat clustering by embeddings algorithm* to branch 2.
- 2. Cluster the lines into 10 partitions.

Since the similarity scores based on sentence embeddings were calculated for the entire concordance, you **don't need to add a new annotation layer**! – Remember: *annotation* is not the same as an *algorithm*.

Partition	hands	Cluster_0
a parting kick. 1 "Nice boy, Tommy," said East, shoving his	hands	in his pockets, and strolling to the fire. 1 "Worst sort
would be very kind of you." 1 Mr. Peasemarsh put his	hands	in his pockets and laughed, and they did not like
out your pockets," said the constable. I Cyril desperately plunged his	hands	in his pockets, stood still a moment, and then began
fight, when, to every one's amazement, Oliver coolly put his	hands	back into his pockets, and walking up to Loman said
a melancholy upon the boy, for, slowly strolling with his	hands	in his pockets, he crooned:"Oh, Paddy dear, and did
straw hat at the back of his head, and his	hands	in his pockets, was staring at workmen as they moved
jape with 'em. Shut up a bit!" 1 He drove his	hands	into his pockets and stared out of window at the
All the time that Laura spoke, Frank stood, with his	hands	in his pockets, where he seemed evidently searching for something
dogs," so his Lordship knitted his brows, and thrust his	hands	into his waistcoat pockets, walking up and down the room
At this moment the Unicorn sauntered by them, with his	hands	in his pockets. I had the best of it this
Museum steps except the nice one. He stood with his	hands	in his pockets just as though he was quite used
so sad before. The governor had stood with both his	hands	in his pockets; now he took his handkerchief out of
better success. During all these trials Peterkin sat with his	hands	in his pockets, gazing with a most melancholy visage at
broken biscuit and a can of water. Then, thrusting his	hands	into his pockets, he walked up and down the deck
Alan had stopped opposite to me, his hat cocked, his	hands	in his breeches pockets, his head a little on one
offer to touch either of them. He glanced at his	hands,	and Oliver did the same; but they both shook their
he could make nothing of it. So he put his	hands	in his pockets, and went in to have his tea
been standing just inside one of the stable-doors, with his	hands	in his pockets, and had heard and seen all that
with sitting. And first of all he strolled with his	hands	in his pockets up to the crossing, where the girl
right," said Bobbie. 1 "All the same," said Peter, with his	hands	in his pockets, "I don't exactly look forward to telling
they were washing in the cold river," said Peter, his	hands	in his pockets, "not in hot water." I "This is a
bie, indignantly. 1 "Nyang, nyang!" said Peter, disagreeably, and put his	hands	in his pockets. 1 "He did, of course," said Phyllis, in
Hugh John lounged along through the early dusk with his	hands	in his pockets, looking out for a cause of offence

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# Activity 7: Saving and sharing your research with the analysis tree

#### **Background:**

We introduced the analysis tree in Activity 5. We now want to show more of what this feature can do for you:

1) An analysis can result in a large number of branches and algorithms. To gain an overview of these, you can look at the analysis tree. so it is helpful to see an overview of all steps.

2) The analysis may take longer than one session. Using the tree, you can save your work and pick up where you started.

3) We might want to share our steps with a colleague or in a publication.

To support reasons 2 and 3 given above, trees can be saved and loaded. This is done by exporting the tree to a JSON file, which you can store on your computer.

- 1. Go back to the analysis tree view
- 2. Click on save to file.
- 3. Name your tree rc21\_cl2025\_example.json
- 4. Save it in a location where you'll be able to find it again!











# Part 2: interpretation

In this part, we'll take a closer look at selected concordance views from the steps that you just applied to focus more on what they tell us about the use of 'hands'. We will also try out some additional options to see how they affect the results. Don't worry if you don't make it through all steps – if you save your analysis tree to a file, you can load it back up anytime to recover your steps!

# Activity 1: clusters for her + hands

- 1. Go to branch 1 of your analysis tree. To access it, you can load the JSON file for the tree that we just created to get there. If that doesn't work, use this link.
- 2. By default, the overview shows you the concordance lines in cluster\_0, which is the first partition.
- 3. Click on the partition label for a given cluster to collapse and un-collapse the lines.

	Partition	hands	Cluster_0		-
in the towns of Norway. 1	on examica enca, aropping ne		nom before her gronning lade, in raarea bar-	ink	
at her word	s; and as she spoke she moved he	hands	as though to emphasize what she said; while a	all the	
hoarse laugh rang through t	he banqueting hall. Matilda put <mark>he</mark>	hands	to her head. 1 "Oh, dear!" she cried, "I feel so		
slap me, I wou	ld" she covered her face with he	hands	and shuddered. 1 "What would you do?" Matil	da anxiously inquired, as	
am sure I wish that	that_ island" 1 Selina placed he	hands	before Matilda's mouth. "Hush, hush, Matilda,	don't say it. You	
you will begin to	hate me now!" 1 Leila removed he	hands	from her face, and hastily brushed away her to	ears; then	
see itshe v	vas now covering her eyes with her	hands.	1 Lydia jumped up on the chair and took dow	n the	
heart, and He shal	I direct thy path." She removed her	hands,	she looked up, and in a firm voice she said		
could not star	nd it, she covered her face with her	hands.	1 Selina spoke aside for a few minutes to Dam	e Burton	
glance she threw a	t Miss Forest. Annie stood with he	hands	clasped, and a little frown of perplexity betwee	en her brows	
again covered her	face, and bowed her head over he	hands.	She did not speak for a moment, but present	y Mr	
me. I must to the	kitchen," said Christina, crossing he	hands	over her breast, to still her trembling heart, fo	r she	
and apple-checked, e	ntered with a bowl of cream in he	hands.	McTurk kissed her. Beetle followed suit, with e	xemplary calm. Both	
I'll tell y	ou what it is,' said Amy folding he	hands,	and standing with her face raised, 'it won't do	now	
began to :	speak at once, but Dora put up he	hands	to her ears and said 1 'One at a time, please		
fur coa	t and a lot of yellow flowers in he	hands.	She stopped to speak to me, and asked me h	ow	
Meta, and brir	ng my things. R. M." 1 Ethel put he	hands	to her forehead. It was as if she had been		
to be hurt w	henever Mary was taken out of he	hands;	and she went to announce the design, in drea	d lest	
But why don't you scr	eam now?' Alice asked, holding he	hands	ready to put over her ears again. I 'Why, I've	done	
		Node	•		
	Partition	hand	Cluster_0		
	Partition	hands	Cluster_1	_	
	Partition	hands	Cluster_2		
	Partition	hands	s Cluster_3		
	Partition	hand	S Cluster_4		
	Partition	hands	Cluster_5		
	Partition	hands	Cluster_6		
	Partition	hands	Cluster_7		
	Partition	hands	Cluster_8		
	Partition	hands	Cluster_9		

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DFG Deutsche Forschung

#### Look at the concordances for some of the clusters

1. What are the differences between clusters 2 and 5?

2. How would you describe these similarities compared to patterns that you might identify through other means such sorting?

3. Change the number of clusters to a) 5 and b) to 15. What changes do you see? Which number of clusters seems to work best in term of seeing similarities across concordance lines

### Activity 2: clusters for *his* + hands

Go to branch 2 of your analysis tree (link) to find the clusters for *his* + *hands*.

1. How do the uses of hands in cluster 0 compare to what you saw for her hands?

# Activity 3: KWICGroups for hands

#### **Background:**

In this activity we will use the KWICGrouper. In CLiC, the KWICGrouper offers the analyst an option to select words in a specificied context around the node and group lines together that contain these words. CLiC then displays those lines at the top that contain most of the selected context words. In FlexiConc we have a KWICGrouper option that allows you to rank concordance lines based on type or token frequency. We also support regular expressions to make the search more flexible.

1. Create a new **branch 3** in your analysis tree and find the KWICGrouper Ranker. Enter the values *his, her* and *with*.

If this takes you too much time, use the <u>link</u> to take you to the concordance lines.

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	Image: 2 minipage     Add algorithm		KWIC Grouper Ranker     ×       * A list of terms to search for within the tokens.						
			his   × her   × with   ×						
e.g. 'sa	Sort by Corpus Position	S.	The token attribute to search within (e.g., 'word').						
	Sort by Token-Level Attribute		word						
	Random Sort		Matching strategy for search_terms						
	KWIC Grouper Ranker		literal 👻						
	Flat Clustering by Embeddings	1	If True, the search is case-sensitive.						
	Partition by Metadata Attribute	_	<ul> <li>If True, include node-level tokens in the search.</li> </ul>						
	Partition by Ngrams		The lower bound of the window (offset range).						
	Select by Metadata	<b>•</b>							
			The upper bound of the window (offset range).						
			If True, count unique types within each line; otherwise, count all matches.						

#### Your results should look like this:

ID	Left	Node	Right	Book	In bk.	Ranking: KWIC Grouper Ranker
303	to ask her to do, and with her nice cool	hands	she tied his tie for him, while the children stood	pan	-	3
355	her, and next, taking the golden snake with both her	hands,	she bent the pure soft metal round $his$ neck, and	quatermain	- 1	3
366 w	vork-table, while Hugh was placed before <mark>her</mark> , <mark>with his</mark>	hands	behind $his$ back, and desired to look $his$ mother full	crofton		3
367	way between her and her visitor. He stood, with his	hands	still behind <mark>his</mark> back, gazing up at Mr Tooke, <mark>with</mark>	crofton		
528ers	, and while <mark>her</mark> husband, <mark>with</mark> smutted face and black	hands,	was filing his locks in his attic, how little did	peasant	-	
747	start up and spring to her side. She stood with	hands	clasped, and wondering eyes. The pilgrim—his hat on t	dove	- 1	
811	seen her coming he could have caught her with his	hands.	$\ensuremath{\mathbbm I}$ She only went a short way down the hedge, and	woodmagic	- 1	
900	herself in <mark>with</mark> him in the dark, where, <mark>with her</mark>	hands	in his long silky curls, and sitting on the ground	redclyffe	-	
1008 is	asseveration, and her father covered his face with his	hands	in thanksgiving. I After this, he seemed somewhat inclin	daisy	- 1	

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**2.** What kinds of features are highlighted through this use of the KWICGrouper ? Do you see functional similarities between highly-ranked lines?

# Part 3: Recap questions

- 1. Were there any findings about body language that surprised yout?
- 2. How might you continue this analysis?
- 3. What were your main learnings from this session?

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