

APPENDIX 1: FREQUENCY OF PERFECTS AND PRETERITES IN ENGLISH

By way of illustrating the rise of the perfect against the backdrop of the much more widespread and ancient preterite, I collected frequency data from Early English Books Online, comprising 755 million words of British English between the 1470s and the 1690s (<https://corpus.byu.edu/eebo/>, accessed on 09 Sept 2018), the Hansard Corpus, comprising 1.6 billion words of speeches from the British Parliament between 1803 and 2005 (<https://www.hansard-corpus.org/>, accessed on 09 Sept 2018), as well as COHA, 400 million words of American English between 1810 and 2009 (<https://corpus.byu.edu/coha/>, accessed on 09 Sept 2018). I searched for preterites and present perfects of two of the commonest lexemes, *be* and *do*, since they possess distinct shapes for the finite preterite and the non-finite past participle. The results are laid out in Tables 1–3, demonstrating how the perfect gradually carved out more and more territory from the consistently dominant preterite, though it has dwindled somewhat in American English over the latter half of the 20th and into the 21st c. (Tables 3a–e).

Table 1a. Frequency of *has been* in Early English Books Online¹

SECTION	ALL	1470s	1480s	1490s	1500s	1510s	1520s	1530s	1540s	1550s	1560s	1570s	1580s	1590s	1600s	1610s	1620s	1630s	1640s	1650s	1660s	1670s	1680s	1690s
FREQ	25624	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	32	12	14	56	236	992	2073	3664	7378	11167
WORDS (M)	755	0.7	3.7	2.0	1.3	0.9	3.0	7.1	8.7	7.2	16.1	26.9	32.0	24.1	40.0	42.9	38.6	42.8	47.1	99.5	63.5	74.6	92.6	79.7
PER MIL	33.94	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.80	0.28	0.36	1.31	5.01	9.97	32.65	49.11	79.69	140.08

¹ The first row lists all the sections of the corpus by decade. The second row gives the number of occurrences of the form in the relevant section, while the third row states how many words (in millions) that part of the corpus contains. The fourth row gives the frequencies per one million words, with the bars visualising those frequencies.

Table 1b. Frequency of *was* in Early English Books Online

SECTION	AL	1470s	1480s	1490s	1500s	1510s	1520s	1530s	1540s	1550s	1560s	1570s	1580s	1590s	1600s	1610s	1620s	1630s	1640s	1650s	1660s	1670s	1680s	1690s
FREQ	4077464	6157	39183	14471	9841	11054	25870	35327	52453	40727	81467	136153	167801	117537	216032	210999	193671	190967	234849	517709	305370	420853	558404	490569
WORDS (M)	755	0.7	3.7	2.0	1.3	0.9	3.0	7.1	8.7	7.2	16.1	26.9	32.0	24.1	40.0	42.9	38.6	42.8	47.1	99.5	63.5	74.6	92.6	79.7
PER MIL	5,400.61	8,645.89	10,570.18	7,262.72	7,639.99	11,683.54	8,501.66	4,975.64	6,022.38	5,641.31	5,064.81	5,056.33	5,251.13	4,875.96	5,396.59	4,918.22	5,028.77	4,459.14	4,983.11	5,205.57	4,809.60	5,641.40	6,031.33	6,153.67

Table 1c. Frequency of *has done* in Early English Books Online

SECTION	AL	1470s	1480s	1490s	1500s	1510s	1520s	1530s	1540s	1550s	1560s	1570s	1580s	1590s	1600s	1610s	1620s	1630s	1640s	1650s	1660s	1670s	1680s	1690s
FREQ	4102	0	1	0	3	0	1	0	1	6	0	0	0	1	26	30	30	58	92	212	349	740	1067	1485
WORDS (M)	755	0.7	3.7	2.0	1.3	0.9	3.0	7.1	8.7	7.2	16.1	26.9	32.0	24.1	40.0	42.9	38.6	42.8	47.1	99.5	63.5	74.6	92.6	79.7
PER MIL	5.43	0.00	0.27	0.00	2.33	0.00	0.33	0.00	0.11	0.83	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.65	0.70	0.78	1.35	1.95	2.13	5.50	9.92	11.52	18.63

Table 1d. Frequency of *have done* in Early English Books Online

SECTION	ALL	1470s	1480s	1490s	1500s	1510s	1520s	1530s	1540s	1550s	1560s	1570s	1580s	1590s	1600s	1610s	1620s	1630s	1640s	1650s	1660s	1670s	1680s	1690s
FREQ	49408	0	0	1	0	0	27	28	0	7	4	0	37	35	229	101	426	2563	5336	9575	6501	7630	8751	8157
WORDS (M)	755	0.7	3.7	2.0	1.3	0.9	3.0	7.1	8.7	7.2	16.1	26.9	32.0	24.1	40.0	42.9	38.6	42.8	47.1	99.5	63.5	74.6	92.6	79.7
PER MIL	65.44	0.00	0.00	0.50	0.00	0.00	8.87	3.94	0.00	0.97	0.25	0.00	1.16	1.45	5.72	2.35	11.05	59.85	113.22	96.28	102.39	102.28	94.52	102.32

Table 1e. Frequency of *did* in Early English Books Online

SECTION	ALL	1470s	1480s	1490s	1500s	1510s	1520s	1530s	1540s	1550s	1560s	1570s	1580s	1590s	1600s	1610s	1620s	1630s	1640s	1650s	1660s	1670s	1680s	1690s
FREQ	1048661	102	670	59	46	26	290	896	4814	7341	21130	35853	50241	47567	60767	69716	57983	59230	71260	145948	85440	103741	125147	100394
WORDS (M)	755	0.7	3.7	2.0	1.3	0.9	3.0	7.1	8.7	7.2	16.1	26.9	32.0	24.1	40.0	42.9	38.6	42.8	47.1	99.5	63.5	74.6	92.6	79.7
PER MIL	138.95	14.323	180.74	29.61	35.71	27.48	95.30	126.20	552.72	1016.84	1313.65	1331.48	1572.23	1973.29	1517.99	1625.02	1504.06	1383.04	1512.02	1467.51	1345.69	1390.62	1351.71	1259.34

Table 2a. Frequency of *has been* in the Hansard Corpus

SECTION	1800	1810	1820	1830	1840	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
FREQ	2262	2143	3474	7342	14253	18028	23113	24697	58015	72186	79018	134259	120667	159828	145196	179899	213857	220430	245680	217519	101742
PER MIL	.454	.300	.299	.261	.469	.546	.675	.665	.966	1.410	1.228	1.682	1.683	1.679	1.530	1.487	1.406	1.349	1.337	1.228	1.150

Table 2b. Frequency of *was* in the Hansard Corpus

SECTION	1800	1810	1820	1830	1840	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
FREQ	73147	120676	201934	472145	463060	488588	489309	560379	794264	501704	732801	410536	368701	452002	459995	615017	727703	733813	782258	744168	348285
PER MIL	14.702	16.914	17.387	16.822	15.245	14.809	14.299	15.104	13.232	9.806	11.330	5.143	5.142	4.748	4.849	5.084	4.786	4.492	4.257	4.201	3.937

Table 2c. Frequency of *has done* in the Hansard Corpus

SECTION	1800	1810	1820	1830	1840	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
FREQ	62	57	77	183	369	533	663	612	1323	1724	1833	4398	3725	4972	5299	7889	9611	9485	10548	9597	4679
PER MIL	12.46	7.99	6.63	6.52	12.15	16.16	19.38	16.50	22.04	33.70	28.34	55.10	51.96	52.23	55.87	65.22	63.21	58.07	57.41	54.18	52.90

Table 2d. Frequency of *have done* in the Hansard Corpus

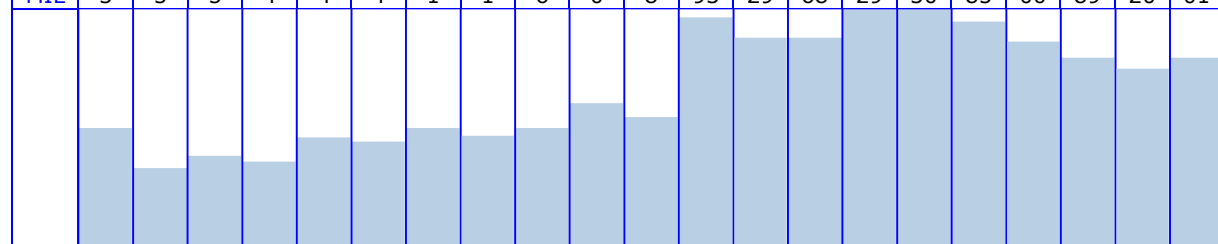
SECTION	1800	1810	1820	1830	1840	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
FREQ	334	325	601	1340	1854	1981	2293	2345	4007	4139	4733	10052	8265	11107	12452	15883	18982	18621	19456	17748	9200
PER MIL	67.13	45.55	51.75	47.74	61.04	60.04	67.01	63.21	66.76	80.90	73.18	125.93	115.29	116.68	131.29	131.30	124.85	114.00	105.89	100.20	104.01
																					

Table 2e. Frequency of *did* in the Hansard corpus

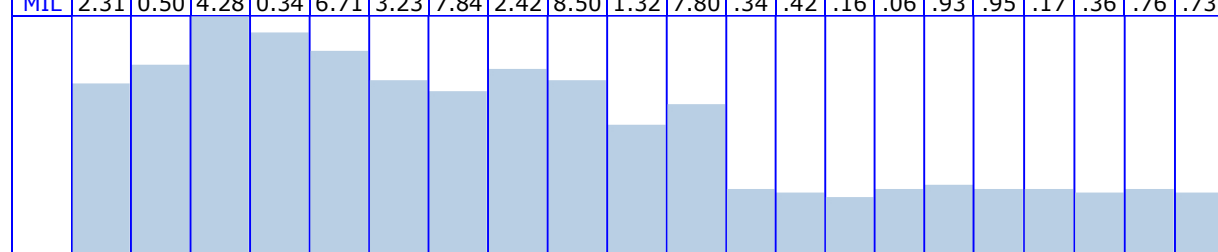
SECTION	1800	1810	1820	1830	1840	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
FREQ	8569	13559	27458	62316	62166	57843	56044	69097	104351	66064	95573	53825	46486	56463	63553	87207	104749	107343	118941	117923	56938
PER MIL	1.722.31	1.900.50	2.364.28	2.220.34	2.046.71	1.753.23	1.637.84	1.862.42	1.738.50	1.291.32	1.477.80	674.34	648.42	593.16	670.06	720.93	688.95	657.17	647.36	665.76	643.73
																					

Table 3a. Frequency of *has been* in COHA

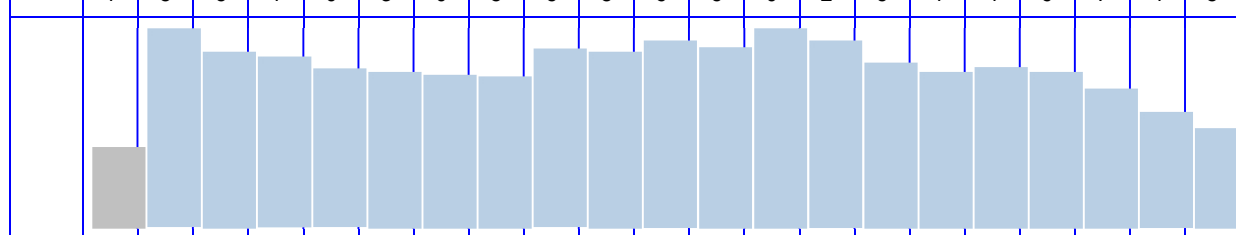
SECTION	AL L	1810	1820	1830	1840	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
FREQ	174641	630	3304	6324	6811	6973	7076	7643	9700	9748	11148	11170	13758	12501	10863	10327	10467	9995	9546	8702	7955
WORDS (M)	405	1.2	6.9	13.8	16.0	16.5	17.1	18.6	20.3	20.6	22.1	22.7	25.7	24.6	24.3	24.5	24.0	23.8	25.3	27.9	29.6
PER MIL	431.21	533.35	476.96	459.11	424.40	423.33	414.90	411.75	477.46	473.18	504.49	492.06	536.30	508.12	446.16	420.74	436.54	419.69	377.07	311.44	269.05
																					

Table 3b. Frequency of *was* in COHA

SECTION	AL L	18 10	18 20	18 30	18 40	18 50	18 60	187 0	188 0	189 0	190 0	191 0	192 0	193 0	194 0	195 0	19 60	19 70	198 0	19 90	20 00
FREQ	406 193 1	46 71	64 51 9	11 62 19	13 92 94	15 54 79	16 55 57	195 637	210 542	223 403	236 422	236 639	262 470	263 644	265 950	254 762	23 71 43	23 64 33	254 527	25 46 71	28 39 49
WORDS (M)	405	1.2	6.9	13.8	16.0	16.5	17.1	18.6	20.3	20.6	22.1	22.7	25.7	24.6	24.3	24.5	24.0	23.8	25.3	27.9	29.6
PER MIL	10, 029 .46	3,9 54. 44	9,3 13. 90	8,4 37. 20	8,6 79. 62	9,4 39. 19	9,7 07. 31	10, 539 .50	10, 363 .38	10, 844 .36	10, 698 .99	10, 424 .33	10, 231 .25	10, 716 .10	10, 922 .89	10, 379 .46	9,8 90. 34	9,9 27. 82	10, 054 .01	9,1 14. 42	9,6 03. 45

Table 3c. Frequency of *has* done in COHA

SECTION	AL L	18 10	18 20	18 30	18 40	18 50	18 60	18 70	18 80	18 90	19 00	19 10	19 20	19 30	19 40	19 50	19 60	19 70	19 80	19 90	20 00
FREQ	79 87	20	17 7	32 6	36 5	39 5	43 3	45 0	46 3	55 4	56 5	52 5	61 2	41 0	40 3	40 0	36 9	38 1	40 0	38 2	35 7
WORDS (M)	40 5	1.2	6.9	13.8	16.0	16.5	17.1	18.6	20.3	20.6	22.1	22.7	25.7	24.6	24.3	24.5	24.0	23.8	25.3	27.9	29.6
PER MIL	19. 72	16. 93	25. 55	23. 67	22. 74	23. 98	25. 39	24. 24	22. 79	26. 89	25. 57	23. 13	23. 86	16. 66	16. 55	16. 30	15. 39	16. 00	15. 80	13. 67	12. 07

Table 3d. Frequency of *have done* in COHA

SECTION	AL L	18 10	18 20	18 30	18 40	18 50	18 60	18 70	18 80	18 90	19 00	19 10	19 20	19 30	19 40	19 50	19 60	19 70	19 80	19 90	20 00
FREQ	22 61 9	63	67 6	10 59	11 26	13 50	13 14	15 12	15 64	14 95	13 94	15 43	14 25	11 48	10 49	10 54	95 4	97 0	10 01	94 2	98 0
WORDS (M)	40 5	1.2	6.9	13. 8	16. 0	16. 5	17. 1	18. 6	20. 3	20. 6	22. 1	22. 7	25. 7	24. 6	24. 3	24. 5	24. 0	23. 8	25. 3	27. 9	29. 6
PER MIL	55. 85	53. 34	97. 59	76. 88	70. 16	81. 96	77. 05	81. 46	76. 98	72. 57	63. 08	67. 97	55. 55	46. 66	43. 08	42. 94	39. 79	40. 73	39. 54	33. 71	33. 14

Table 3e. Frequency of *did* in COHA

SECTION	AL L	18 10	18 20	18 30	18 40	18 50	18 60	18 70	18 80	18 90	19 00	19 10	19 20	19 30	19 40	19 50	19 60	19 70	19 80	19 90	20 00
FREQ	66 29 94	94 0	64 90	12 69 0	15 73 4	19 92 1	22 92 0	27 74 8	30 69 3	29 41 8	34 38 9	38 32 2	40 98 9	43 26 4	44 68 8	44 24 1	45 14 7	45 17 4	46 51 7	55 30 9	58 40 0
WORDS (M)	40 5	1.2	6.9	13. 8	16. 0	16. 5	17. 1	18. 6	20. 3	20. 6	22. 1	22. 7	25. 7	24. 6	24. 3	24. 5	24. 0	23. 8	25. 3	27. 9	29. 6
PER MIL	1,6 37. 02	79 5.8 0	93 6.8 9	92 1.2 6	98 0.4 1	1,2 09. 41	1,3 43. 90	1,4 94. 86	1,5 10. 78	1,4 28. 00	1,5 56. 23	1,6 88. 15	1,5 97. 78	1,7 58. 51	1,8 35. 39	1,8 02. 46	1,8 82. 91	1,8 96. 86	1,8 37. 46	1,9 79. 45	1,9 75. 15