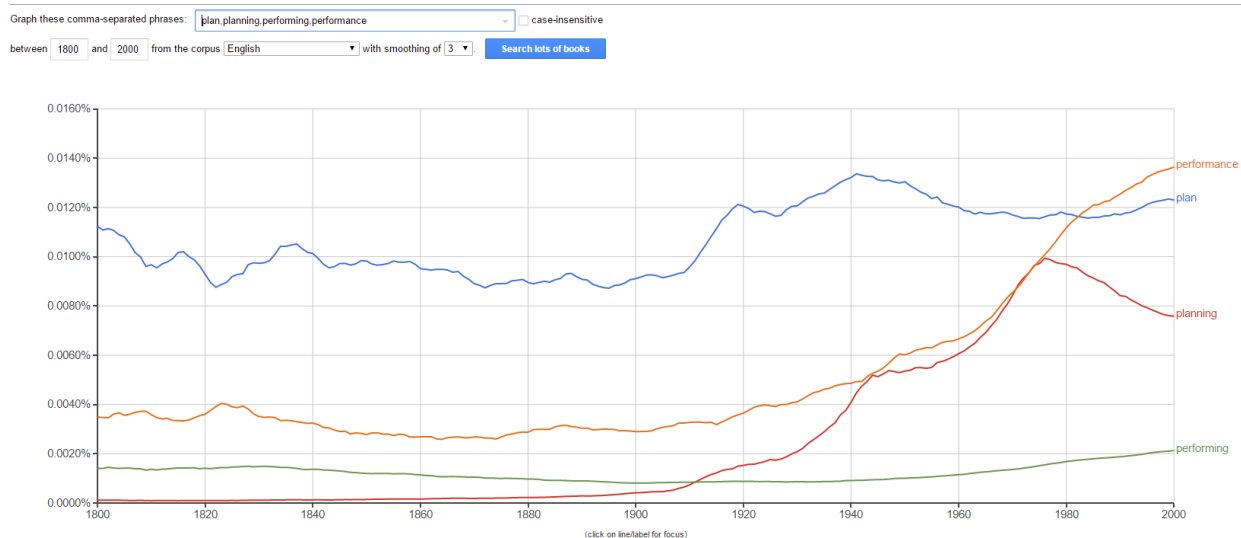


Planning Words

March 3, 2017

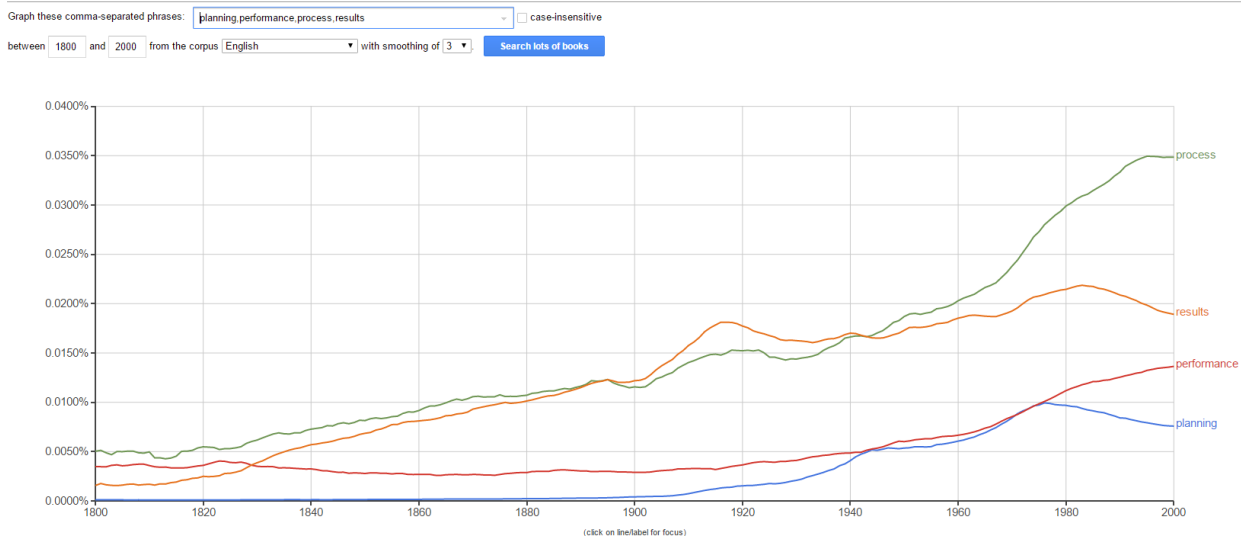
Here are some charts showing the relative usage of words related to planning and performance from 1800 to 2000.

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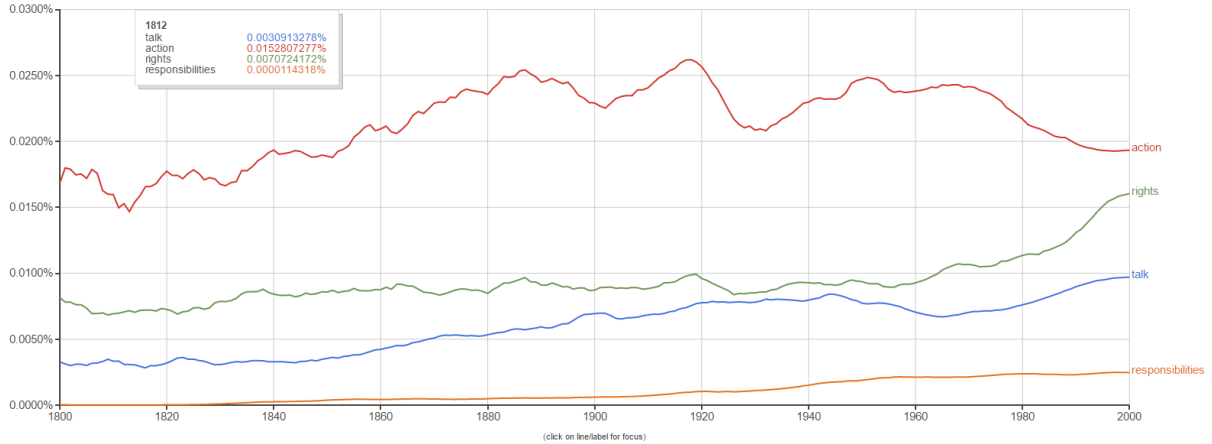
The chart above shows that incidence of the words “planning” and “performance” tracked each other closely from the mid-1940s until the mid-1970s, when emphasis on performance continued to increase while focus on planning declined. The chart below shows that from the mid-1940s processes began to draw more attention than results. Indeed, in the mid-1980s focus on results began a gradual decline.

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Google Books Ngram Viewer

Graph these comma-separated phrases: case-insensitive
between 1800 and 2000 from the corpus English with smoothing of 3

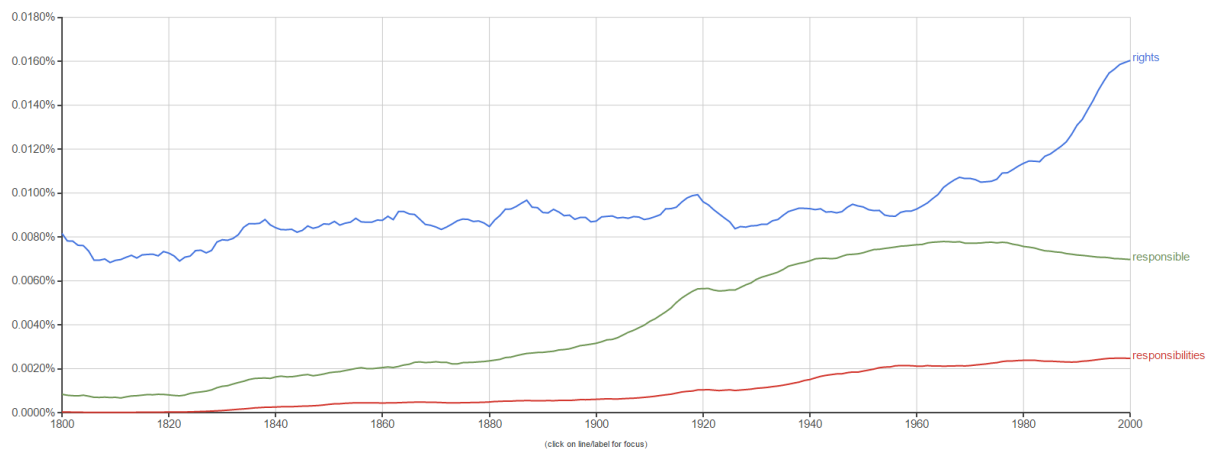


Contrary to common wisdom, the chart above shows that action has long been favored over talk, at least in terms of written word usage. However, the gap has narrowed somewhat over time. Emphasis on responsibilities has always been low, trending upward only slightly. From the mid-1950s focus on “rights” has trended upward, accelerating in the late 1980s, far outstripping “responsibilities”.

As shown in the chart below, following a gradual rise in usage of the term “responsible” from 1880 until the mid-1960s, the gap between usage of that term and the word “rights” shrunk and approached parity. However, the gap widened dramatically thereafter.

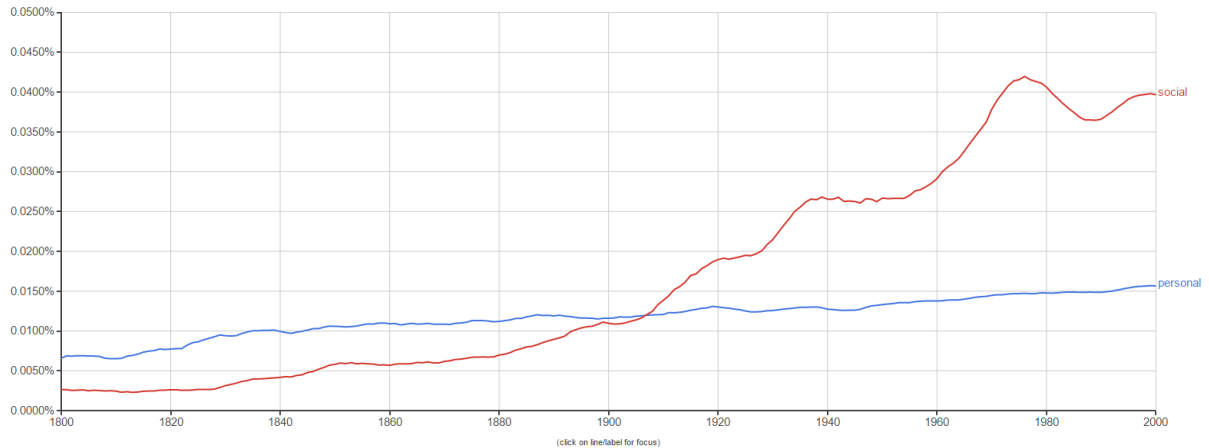
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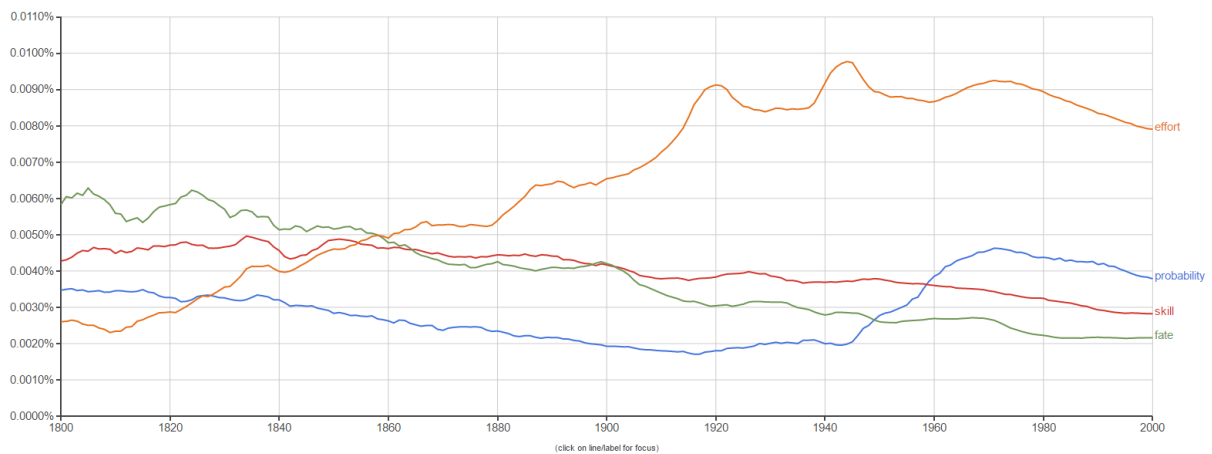
Graph these comma-separated phrases: case-insensitive
between 1800 and 2000 from the corpus English with smoothing of 3



The chart above shows that reference to personal affairs has trended upward only slightly in 200 years, and beginning around 1910 increasingly more attention has been paid to sociability. The chart below shows that references to “effort” passed “fate” around 1860 and have far outstripped references to “skill” ever since. However, references to “probability” climbed steeply from the late 1940s until the early 1970s, reflecting a somewhat more scientific view of the term “fate”.

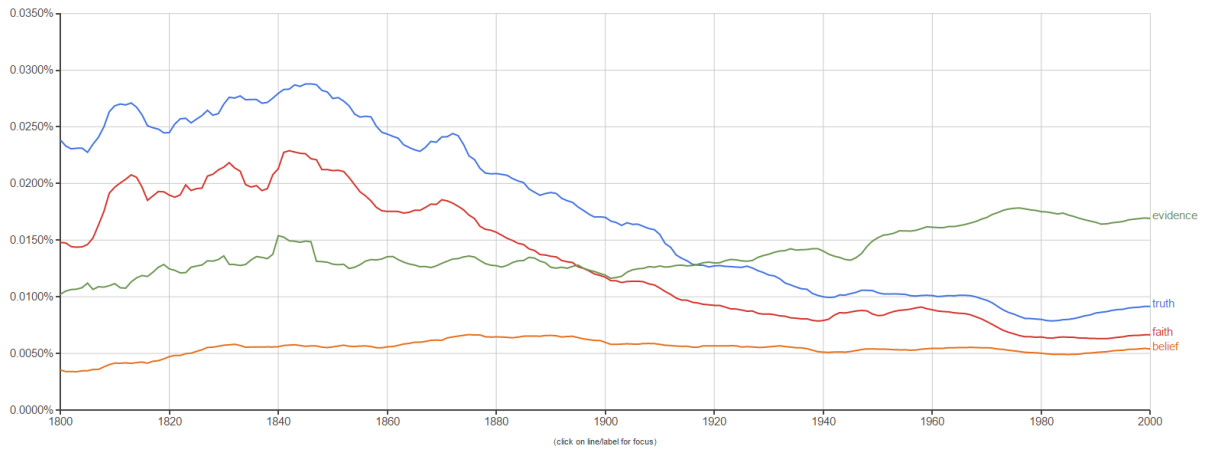
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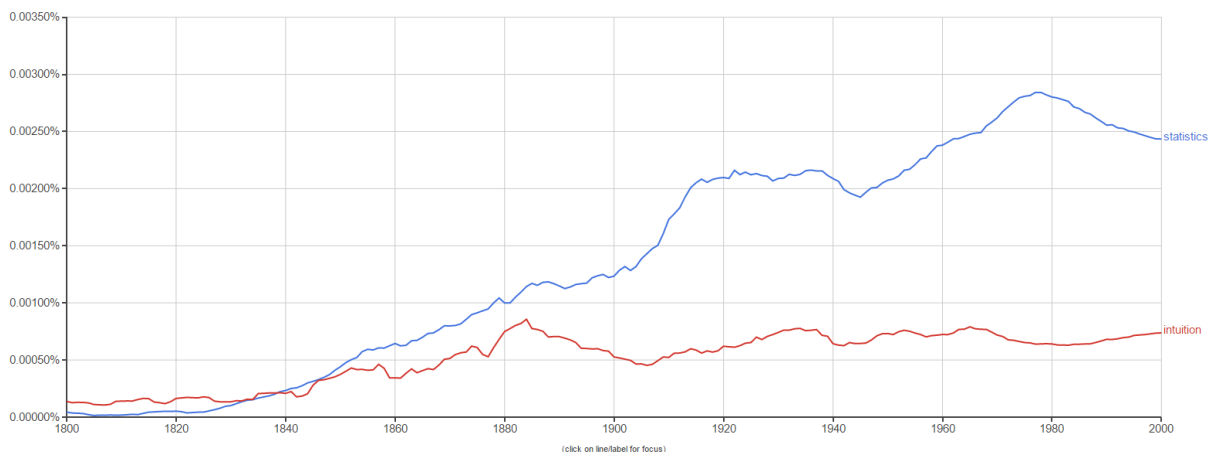
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The chart above shows that references to “truth” and “faith” have declined in parallel over the past two centuries, while references to “evidence” surpassed “truth” around 1917 and have trended gradually upward since then. The chart below shows that references to statistics began to surpass “intuition” in the late 1840s. While the gap remains substantial, references to statistics began to decline in the late 1970s.

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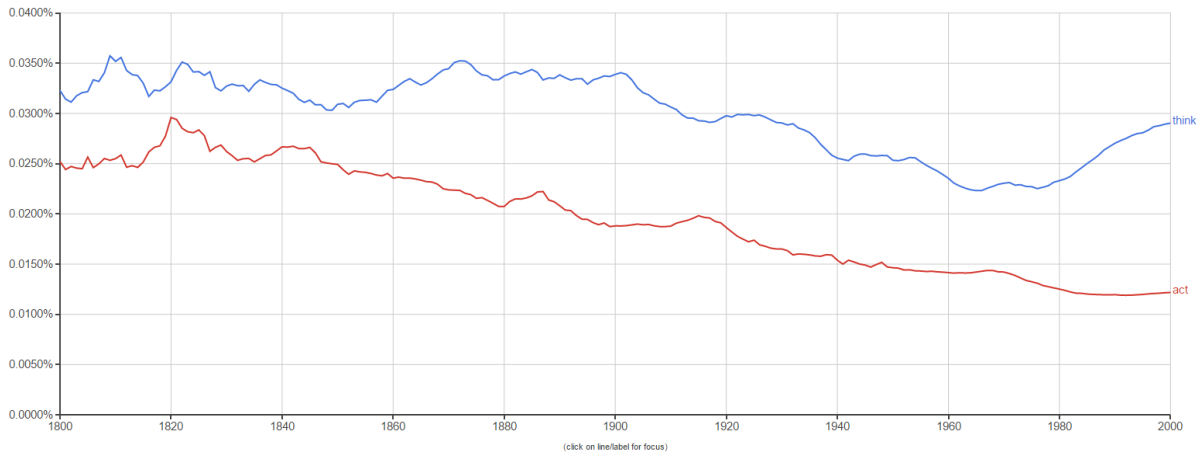
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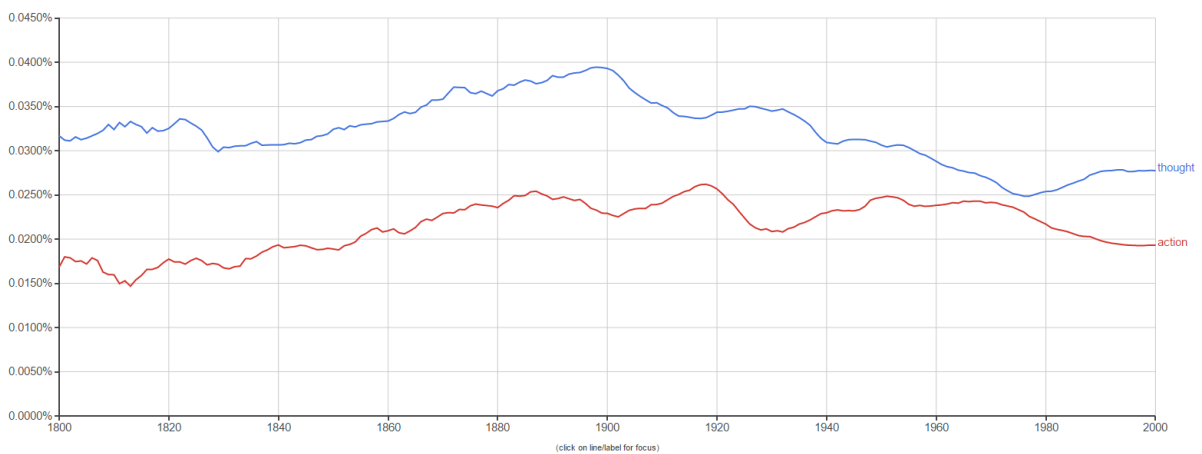


These two charts, above and below, show that references to thinking and thought have always exceeded those for acting and action. However, the chart below shows the gap narrowed in the early to mid-1970s before widening again.

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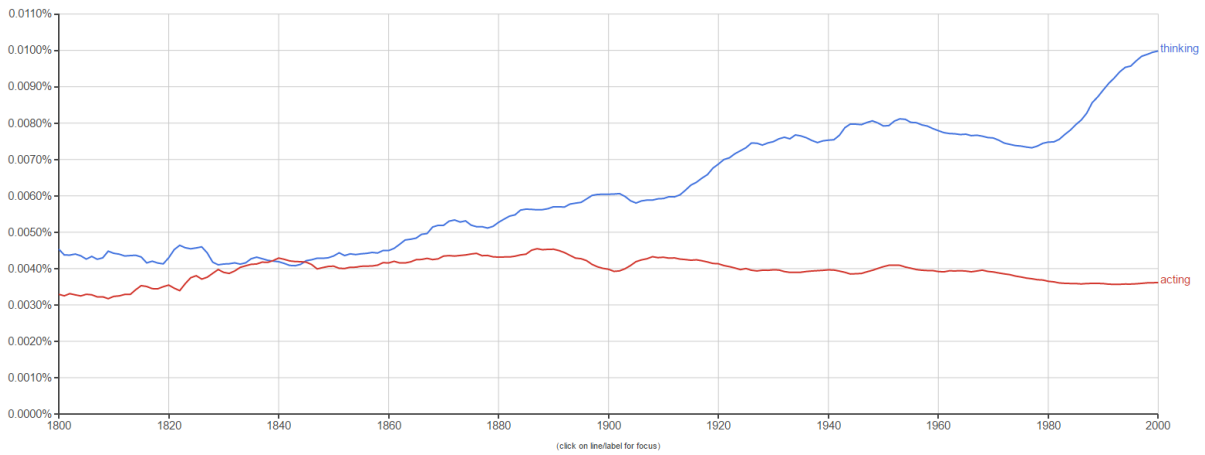
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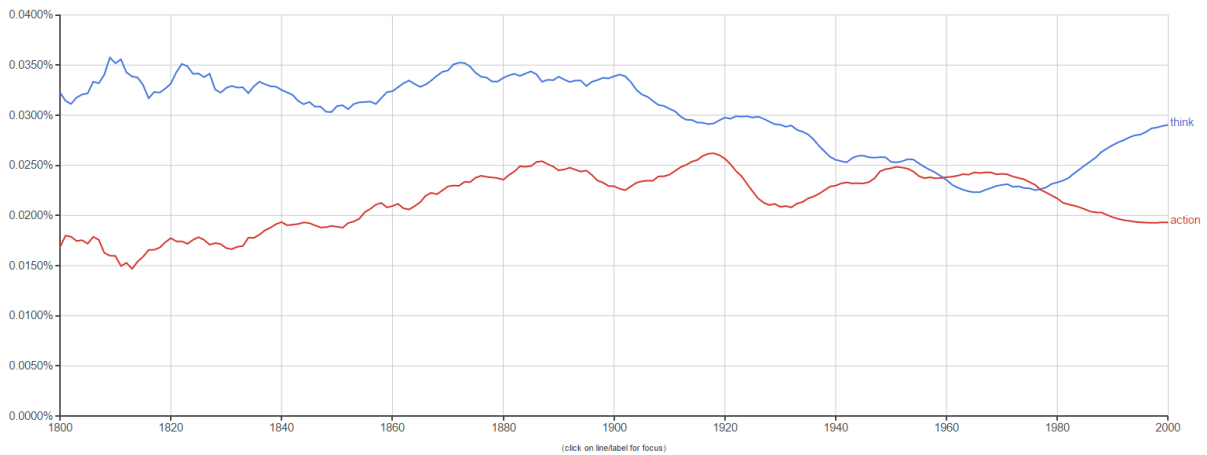
Graph these comma-separated phrases: case-insensitive
between and from the corpus with smoothing of



The disparity is further highlighted in these two charts. The one above shows that references to “acting” have remained relatively constant for 200 years, whereas references to “thinking” have trended upward since the mid-1840s. The chart below shows that references to “think” roughly matched references to “action” from 1960 until the mid-1970s, when the gap began to widen again. The chart above shows that references to “thinking” climbed steeply from the late 1970s through 2000.

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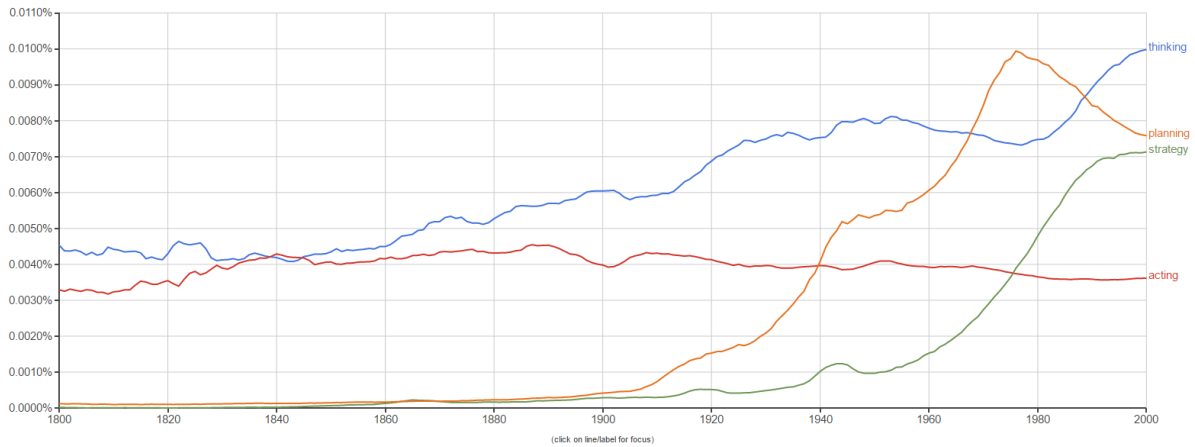
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This final chart shows increasing emphasis on “strategy” from the early 1950s, closely paralleling the more frequent usage of the word “planning” until the mid-1970s, when focus on planning began to decline to the point of near convergence with “strategy” by the end of the millennium.

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From the late 1960s to the late 1980s, references to “planning” exceeded those for “thinking”, but in the late 1970s, the frequency of usage of those two terms headed in opposite directions. What might one be led to think by such evidence? Should we be thinking about planning to do anything about it?

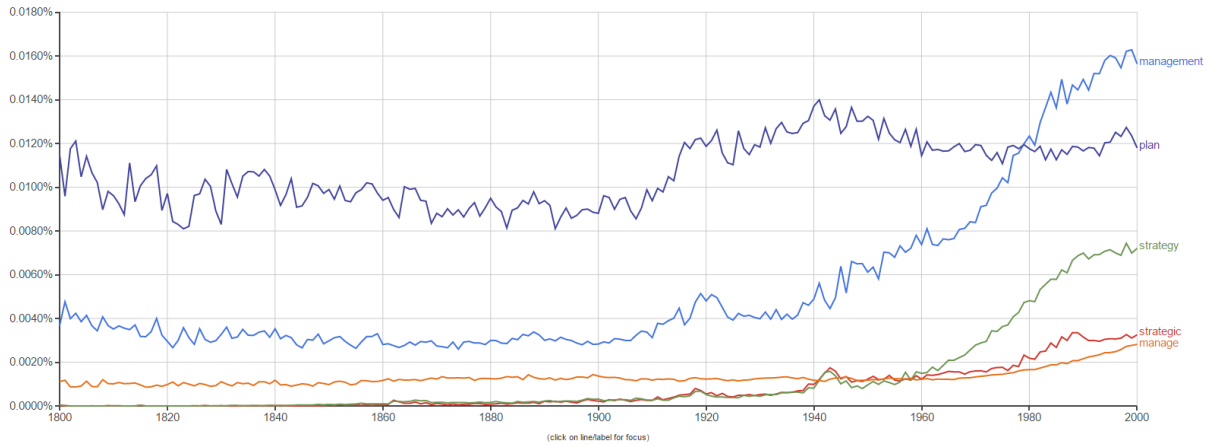
March 4 Addendum

A [discussion thread](#) on LinkedIn prompted this addendum. Viewers may draw their own conclusions (and questions) about the following charts – particularly about the data for 2000 - 2008.

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Graph these comma-separated phrases: case-insensitive
between and from the corpus with smoothing of

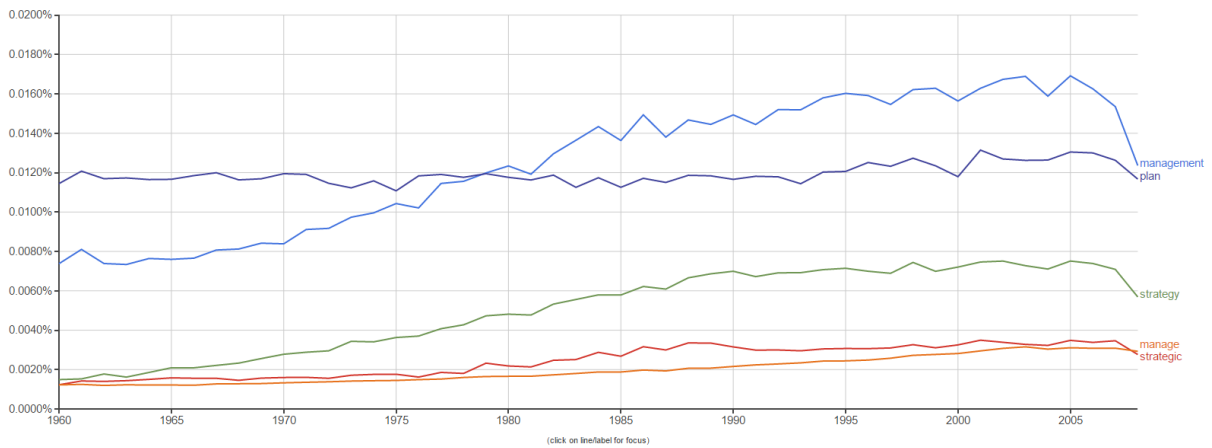
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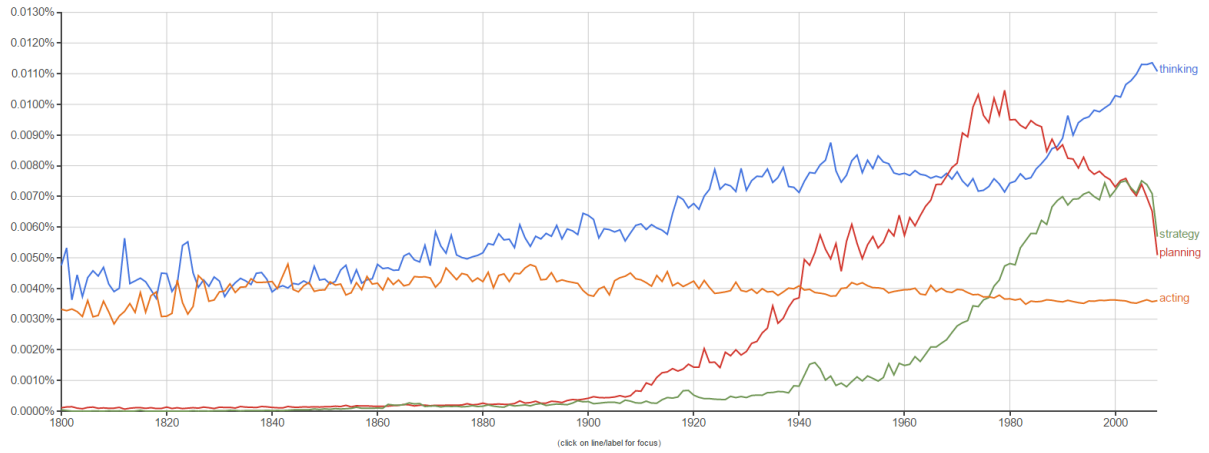
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Graph these comma-separated phrases: case-insensitive
between 1800 and 2008 from the corpus English with smoothing of 3 Search lots of books

