

Which or what?
A study of interrogative determiners in present-day English

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The determiner slot in English interrogative Noun Phrases allows for three possible occupants, namely *which*, *what* and *whose*, and their variants ending in *-ever*: *whichever*, *whatever* and *whosever*. In this paper we will be looking only at the first two of these, *which* and *what*, in structures like the following: *Which films do you like?* / *What films do you like?* These expressions are close in meaning, so the question arises what factors influence the choice of one over the other determiner. Our aim in this paper is twofold: first we will demonstrate how interrogative NPs such as those exemplified above can be retrieved from the British component of the International Corpus of English (ICE-GB), using Fuzzy Tree Fragments (FTFs). The second aim of the paper is to show how the search results can be used to investigate what determines the choice of determiner in NPs like those shown above.