

Here's a tiny example of the kind of data George F studied before assigning characters to chords. These 121 words are the combination of the two lists of most common words in American English as shown below.

*the of and a to in is you that it he was for on are as with his they I at be  
this have from or one had by word but not what all were we when your  
can said there use an each which she do how their if will up about out  
many then them these so some her would make like him into time has  
look two more write go see number no way could people my than first  
water been call who oil its now find long down day did get come made  
may part only other new any over such our man me even most after  
also off before must well back through years much where*

## 121 words, 543 characters

	543 characters	
space	121	22.28%
e	52	9.58%
o	42	7.73%
t	34	6.26%
a	33	6.08%
h	32	5.89%
n	24	4.42%
r	24	4.42%
i	22	4.05%
w	21	3.87%
s	20	3.68%
m	18	3.31%
l	17	3.13%
u	15	2.76%
d	13	2.39%
y	12	2.21%
f	10	1.84%
c	9	1.66%
b	8	1.47%
g	4	0.74%
k	4	0.74%
p	4	0.74%
v	3	0.55%
j	0	0.00%
q	0	0.00%
x	0	0.00%
z	0	0.00%
th	13	4.79%
the	8	4.42%
er	9	3.31%
ou	8	2.95%
re	6	2.21%
wh	5	1.84%

These are the most common words in English, ranked in frequency order. The first 100 are said to make up about half of all written material. The first 25 make up about one-third of all printed material in English and the first 300 make up about sixty-five percent of all written material in English:

the, of, and, a, to, in, is, you, that, it, he, was, for, on, are, as, with, his, they, I, at, be, this, have, from, or, one, had, by, word, but, not, what, all, were, we, when, your, can, said, there, use, an, each, which, she, do, how, their, if, will, up, there, about, out, many, then, them, these, so, some, her, would, make, like, him, into, time, has, look, two, more, write, go, see, number, no, way, could, people, my, than, first, water, been, call, who, oil, its, now, find, long, down, day, did, get, come, made, may, part.

(Source: Fry, Edward Bernard et. al., *The Reading Teacher's Book of Lists, 4th Edition*. Paramus, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2000.)

Another study, *The Brown Corpus Standard Sample of Present-Day American English* (Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 1979), cites:

the, of, and, to, a, in, that, is, was, he, for, it, with, as, his, on, be, at, by, I, this, had, not, are, but, from, or, have, an, they, which, one, you, were, all, her, she, there, would, their, we, him, been, has, when, who, will, no, more, if, out, so, up, said, what, its, about, than, into, them, can, only, other, time, new, some, could, these, two, may, first, then, do, any, like, my, now, over, such, our, man, me, even, most, made, after, also, did, many, off, before, must, well, back, through, years, much, where, your, way.

a	be	down	he
about	been	each	her
after	before	even	him
all	but	find	his
also	by	first	how
an	call	for	I
and	can	from	if
any	come	get	in
are	could	go	into
as	day	had	is
at	did	has	it
back	do	have	its

like  
look  
long  
made  
make  
man  
many  
may  
me  
more  
most  
much  
must  
my  
new  
no  
not  
now  
number  
of  
off  
oil  
on  
one  
only  
or  
other  
our  
out  
over  
part  
people  
said

see  
she  
so  
some  
such  
than  
that  
the  
their  
them  
then  
there  
these  
they  
this  
through  
time  
to  
two  
up  
use  
was  
water  
way  
we  
well  
were  
what  
when  
where  
which  
who  
will

with  
word  
would  
write  
years  
you  
your