Regular Expressions

Data Wrangling, Session 5

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Code Horizons

April 2025

A brief introduction to regular expressions

Load the packages, as always

```
library(here) # manage file paths
library(socviz) # data and some useful functions

library(tidyverse) # your friend and mine
library(gapminder) # gapminder data
library(stringr)
```

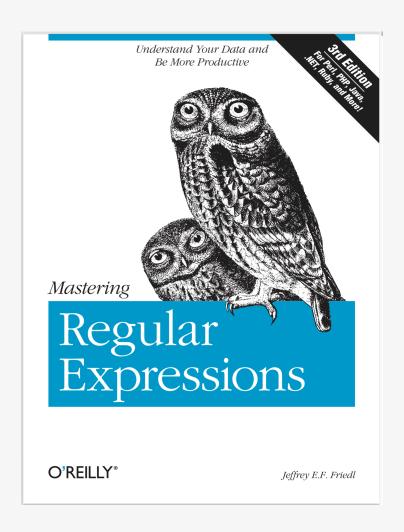
Regular Expressions

Or, waiter, there appears to be a language inside my language

stringr is your gateway to regexps

library(stringr) # It's loaded by default with library(tidyverse)

regexps are their own whole world



This book is a thing of beauty.

Searching for patterns

A regular expression is a way of searching for a piece of text, or *pattern*, inside some larger body of text, called a *string*.

Searching for patterns

Here I'll follow the exposition in Wickham & Grolemund (2017).

```
x ← c("apple", "banana", "pear")
str_view(x, "an", html=FALSE)
[2] | b<an><an>a
```

Searching for patterns

Escaping

Hang on, I see a further problem

We use strings to represent regular expressions. \ is also used as an escape symbol in strings. So to create the regular expression \. we need the string \\.

But ... how do you match a literal \?

```
x \leftarrow \text{"a}\b"
writeLines(x)
```

a\b

```
#> a\b
str_view(x, "\\\") # you need four!
```

[1] | a<\>b

But ... how do you match a literal \?

This is the price we pay for having to express searches for patterns using a language containing these same characters, which we may also want to search for.

I promise this will pay off

Matching start and end

Use ^ to match the start of a string.

Matching start and end

Use ^ to match the start of a string.

```
x \leftarrow c("apple", "banana", "pear") 
 <math>str_view(x, "^a") 
 [1] | <a>pple
```

Use \$ to match the end of a string.

```
str_view(x, "a$")
[2] | banan<a>
```

Matching start and end

To force a regular expression to only match a complete string, anchor it with both ^ and \$

```
x \leftarrow c("apple pie", "apple", "apple cake")
str_view(x, "apple> pie
[2] | <apple> cake

str_view(x, "^apple$")

[2] | <apple>
```

Matching character classes

\d matches any digit.

\s matches any whitespace (e.g. space, tab, newline).

abc matches a, b, or c.

^abc matches anything except a, b, or c.

Matching the *special* characters

Look for a literal character that normally has special meaning in a regex:

```
str_view(c("abc", "a.c", "a*c", "a c"), "a[.]c")

[2] | <a.c>

str_view(c("abc", "a.c", "a*c", "a c"), ".[*]c")

[3] | <a*c>
```

This works for most (but not all) regex metacharacters: $\$.|?*+()[\{.\ Unfortunately, a few characters have special meaning even inside a character class and must be handled with backslash escapes. These are <math>]\ ^$ and -

Alternation

Use parentheses to make the precedence of the 'or' operator | clear:

```
str_view(c("groy", "grey", "griy", "gray"), "gr(e|a)y")
[2] | <grey>
[4] | <gray>
```

Repeated patterns

- ? is 0 or 1
- + is 1 or more
- * is 0 or more

```
x \leftarrow "1888 is the longest year in Roman numerals: MDCCCLXXXVIII" str_view(x, "CC?")
```

[1] | 1888 is the longest year in Roman numerals: MD<CC><C>LXXXVIII

Repeated patterns

- ? is 0 or 1
- + is 1 or more
- * is 0 or more

```
str_view(x, "CC+")
```

[1] | 1888 is the longest year in Roman numerals: MD<CCC>LXXXVIII

Repeated patterns

- ? is 0 or 1
- + is 1 or more
- * is 0 or more

```
x \leftarrow "1888 is the longest year in Roman numerals: MDCCCLXXXVIII" str_view(x, 'C[LX]+')
```

[1] | 1888 is the longest year in Roman numerals: MDCC<CLXXX>VIII

```
{n} is exactly n
{n,} is n or more
{,m} is at most m
{n,m} is between n and m
```

```
str_view(x, "C{2}")
```

[1] | 1888 is the longest year in Roman numerals: MD<CC>CLXXXVIII

```
{n} is exactly n
{n,} is n or more
{,m} is at most m
{n,m} is between n and m
```

```
str_view(x, "C{2,}")
```

[1] | 1888 is the longest year in Roman numerals: MD<CCC>LXXXVIII

```
{n} is exactly n
{n,} is n or more
{,m} is at most m
{n,m} is between n and m
```

```
str_view(x, "C{2,3}")
```

[1] | 1888 is the longest year in Roman numerals: MD<CCC>LXXXVIII

```
{n} is exactly n
{n,} is n or more
{,m} is at most m
{n,m} is between n and m
```

By default regexps use *greedy* matches. You can make them match the *shortest* string possible by putting a ? after them. **This is often very useful!**

```
str_view(x, 'C{2,3}?')
[1] | 1888 is the longest year in Roman numerals: MD<CC>CLXXXVIII
```

```
{n} is exactly n
{n,} is n or more
{,m} is at most m
{n,m} is between n and m
```

By default these are *greedy* matches. You can make them "lazy", matching the shortest string possible by putting a ? after them. This is often very useful!

```
str_view(x, 'C[LX]+?')
```

[1] | 1888 is the longest year in Roman numerals: MDCC<CL>XXXVIII

And finally ... backreferences

fruit # built into stringr

[4] [7] [10] [13] [16] [22] [25] [28] [31] [37] [40] [43] [46] [49] [52]	"apple" "banana" "blackberry" "blueberry" "canary melon" "cherry" "cloudberry" "cucumber" "date" "eggplant" "fig" "grape" "honeydew" "jambul" "kumquat" "loquat" "mango" "nut"	"apricot" "bell pepper" "blackcurrant" "boysenberry" "cantaloupe" "chili pepper" "coconut" "currant" "dragonfruit" "elderberry" "goji berry" "grapefruit" "huckleberry" "jujube" "lemon" "lychee" "mulberry" "olive"	"avocado" "bilberry" "blood orange" "breadfruit" "cherimoya" "clementine" "cranberry" "damson" "durian" "feijoa" "gooseberry" "guava" "jackfruit" "kiwi fruit" "lime" "mandarine" "nectarine" "orange"
[55]	"pamelo"	"papaya"	"passionfruit"

Grouping and backreferences

Find all fruits that have a repeated pair of letters:

```
str_view(fruit, "(..)\\1", match = TRUE)

[4]  | b<anan>a
[20]  | <coco>nut
[22]  | <cucu>mber
[41]  | <juju>be
[56]  | <papa>ya
[73]  | s<alal> berry
```

Grouping and backreferences

Backreferences and grouping will be very useful for string replacements.

OK that was a lot



Learning and testing regexps

Practice with a tester like https://regexr.com or https://regex101.com

Or an app like Patterns

The regex engine or "flavor" used by stringr is Perl- or PCRE2-like.

Regexps in practice

Example: Politics and Placenames

library(ukelection2019)

Example: Politics and Placenames

library(ukelection2019)

ukvote2019

```
# A tibble: 3,320 × 13
           constituency electorate party_name candidate
votes vote_share_percent
   <chr> <chr>
                              <int> <chr>
                                                <chr>
<int>
                   <dbl>
1 W07000... Aberavon
                              50747 Labour
                                                Stephen ...
17008
                    53.8
                              50747 Conservat... Charlott...
 2 W07000... Aberavon
6518
                   20.6
                              50747 The Brexi... Glenda D...
3 W07000... Aberavon
3108
                    9.8
4 W07000... Aberavon
                              50747 Plaid Cym... Nigel Hu...
2711
                    8.6
                              50747 Liberal D... Sheila K...
 5 W07000... Aberavon
1072
                              50747 Independe... Captain ...
 6 W07000... Aberavon
                   2.3
7 W07000... Aberavon
                                                Giorgia ...
                              50747 Green
                              44699 Conservat... Robin Mi...
 8 W07000... Aberconwy
                    46.1
14687
                              44699 Labour
 9 W07000... Aberconwy
                                                Emily Ow...
12653
                    39.7
10 W07000... Aberconwy
                              44699 Plaid Cym... Lisa Goo...
2704
                    8.5
```

library(ukelection2019)

ukvote2019 ▷
group_by(constituency)

A tibble: 3,320 × 13 # Groups: constituency [650] constituency electorate party_name candidate votes vote_share_percent <chr> <chr> <int> <chr> <chr> <int> <dbl> 1 W07000... Aberavon 50747 Labour Stephen ... 17008 53.8 2 W07000... Aberavon 50747 Conservat... Charlott... 6518 3 W07000... Aberavon 50747 The Brexi... Glenda D... 9.8 3108 50747 Plaid Cym... Nigel Hu... 4 W07000... Aberavon 2711 50747 Liberal D... Sheila K... 5 W07000... Aberavon 3.4 50747 Independe... Captain ... 6 W07000... Aberavon 2.3 731 7 W07000... Aberavon 50747 Green Giorgia ... 450 1.4 8 W07000... Aberconwy 44699 Conservat... Robin Mi... 14687 46.1 9 W07000... Aberconwy 44699 Labour Emily Ow... 12653 39.7 44699 Plaid Cym... Lisa Goo... 10 W07000... Aberconwy

library(ukelection2019)

ukvote2019 ▷
 group_by(constituency) ▷
 slice_max(votes)

```
# A tibble: 650 × 13
# Groups: constituency [650]
           constituency electorate party_name candidate
votes vote_share_percent
   <chr> <chr>
                               <int> <chr>
                                                 <chr>
<int>
                    <dbl>
1 W07000... Aberavon
                               50747 Labour
                                                 Stephen ...
17008
                     53.8
 2 W07000... Aberconwy
                               44699 Conservat... Robin Mi...
14687
                     46.1
                               62489 Scottish ... Kirsty B...
3 S14000... Aberdeen No...
20205
                               65719 Scottish ... Stephen ...
4 S14000... Aberdeen So...
20388
                     44.7
 5 S14000... Aberdeenshi...
                               72640 Conservat... Andrew B...
22752
                     42.7
                               64008 Scottish ... Neil Gray
 6 S14000... Airdrie & S...
17929
                     45.1
                               72617 Conservat... Leo Doch...
7 E14000... Aldershot
27980
                     58.4
                               60138 Conservat... Wendy Mo...
 8 E14000... Aldridge-Br...
27850
                     70.8
 9 E14000... Altrincham ...
                               73096 Conservat... Graham B...
26311
10 W07000... Alyn & Dees...
                               62783 Labour
                                                 Mark Tami
```

```
library(ukelection2019)

ukvote2019 ▷
  group_by(constituency) ▷
  slice_max(votes) ▷
  ungroup()
```

# A tibble: 650 × 13	
cid constituency elec	ctorate party_name candidate
votes vote_share_percent	
<chr> <chr></chr></chr>	<int> <chr> <chr></chr></chr></int>
<int> <dbl></dbl></int>	
1 W07000 Aberavon	50747 Labour Stephen
17008 53.8	
2 W07000 Aberconwy	44699 Conservat… Robin Mi…
14687 46.1	
3 S14000 Aberdeen No	62489 Scottish Kirsty B
20205 54	
4 S14000 Aberdeen So	65719 Scottish … Stephen …
20388 44.7	
5 S14000 Aberdeenshi	72640 Conservat Andrew B
22752 42.7	
6 S14000 Airdrie & S	64008 Scottish … Neil Gray
17929 45.1	70/47 Occasional Law Back
7 E14000 Aldershot	72617 Conservat Leo Doch
27980 58.4	(0470.0
8 E14000 Aldridge-Br	60138 Conservat Wendy Mo
27850 70.8	77.00/ Caraca
9 E14000 Altrincham	73096 Conservat Graham B
26311 48	(2707 Labarra Marila Tanà
	62783 Labour Mark Tami
18271 42.5	

```
library(ukelection2019)

ukvote2019 ▷
  group_by(constituency) ▷
  slice_max(votes) ▷
  ungroup() ▷
  select(constituency, party_name)
```

A tibble: 650 × 2 constituency party_name <chr> <chr> 1 Aberavon Labour Conservative 2 Aberconwy 3 Aberdeen North Scottish National Party 4 Aberdeen South Scottish National Party 5 Aberdeenshire West & Kincardine Conservative 6 Airdrie & Shotts Scottish National Party 7 Aldershot Conservative 8 Aldridge-Brownhills Conservative 9 Altrincham & Sale West Conservative 10 Alyn & Deeside Labour # i 640 more rows

```
library(ukelection2019)
ukvote2019 ▷
  group by(constituency) ▷
  slice max(votes) ▷
  ungroup() >
  select(constituency, party_name) >
  mutate(shire = str_detect(constituency, "shire"),
         field = str detect(constituency, "field"),
         dale = str detect(constituency, "dale"),
         pool = str_detect(constituency, "pool"),
         ton = str_detect(constituency, "(ton$)|(ton )"),
         wood = str_detect(constituency, "(wood$)|(wood )"),
         saint = str_detect(constituency, "(St )|(Saint)"),
         port = str_detect(constituency, "(Port)|(port)"),
         ford = str_detect(constituency, "(ford$)|(ford )"),
         by = str_detect(constituency, "(by$)|(by )"),
         boro = str_detect(constituency, "(boro$)|(boro )|(borough$)|(borough)"),
         ley = str_detect(constituency, "(ley$)|(ley )|(leigh$)|(leigh )"))
```

```
# A tibble: 650 × 14
  constituency party_name shire field dale pool ton
wood saint port ford
  <chr>
              <chr>
                        <lq1> <lq1> <lq1> <lq1> <lq1> <lq1>
<lq1> <lq1> <lq1> <lq1> <lq1>
1 Aberavon
              Labour
                        FALSE FALSE FALSE FALSE
FALSE FALSE FALSE
2 Aberconwy Conservat... FALSE FALSE FALSE FALSE
FALSE FALSE FALSE
3 Aberdeen No... Scottish ... FALSE FALSE FALSE FALSE
FALSE FALSE FALSE
4 Aberdeen So... Scottish ... FALSE FALSE FALSE FALSE
FALSE FALSE FALSE
5 Aberdeenshi... Conservat... TRUE FALSE FALSE FALSE FALSE
FALSE FALSE FALSE
6 Airdrie & S... Scottish ... FALSE FALSE FALSE FALSE
FALSE FALSE FALSE
7 Aldershot Conservat... FALSE FALSE FALSE FALSE
FALSE FALSE FALSE
8 Aldridge-Br... Conservat... FALSE FALSE FALSE FALSE
FALSE FALSE FALSE
9 Altrincham ... Conservat... FALSE FALSE FALSE FALSE
FALSE FALSE FALSE
10 Alyn & Dees... Labour
                        FALSE FALSE FALSE FALSE
FALSE FALSE FALSE
```

```
library(ukelection2019)
ukvote2019 ▷
  group by(constituency) ▷
  slice max(votes) ▷
  ungroup() >
  select(constituency, party_name) >
  mutate(shire = str_detect(constituency, "shire"),
         field = str detect(constituency, "field"),
        dale = str_detect(constituency, "dale"),
         pool = str_detect(constituency, "pool"),
         ton = str_detect(constituency, "(ton$)|(ton )"),
        wood = str_detect(constituency, "(wood$)|(wood )"),
         saint = str_detect(constituency, "(St )|(Saint)"),
        port = str_detect(constituency, "(Port)|(port)"),
         ford = str_detect(constituency, "(ford$)|(ford )"),
         by = str_detect(constituency, "(by$)|(by )"),
         boro = str_detect(constituency, "(boro$)|(boro )|(borough$)|(borough)"),
         ley = str_detect(constituency, "(ley$)|(ley )|(leigh$)|(leigh )")) ▷
  pivot longer(shire:ley, names to = "toponym")
```

```
# A tibble: 7,800 × 4
  constituency party_name toponym value
                        <chr> <lql>
  <chr>
              <chr>
                        shire FALSE
1 Aberavon
              Labour
2 Aberavon
              Labour
                        field FALSE
3 Aberavon
              Labour
                        dale
                               FALSE
4 Aberavon
              Labour
                        pool FALSE
5 Aberavon
              Labour
                        ton
                               FALSE
                               FALSE
6 Aberavon
              Labour
                        wood
7 Aberavon
              Labour
                         saint FALSE
8 Aberavon
              Labour
                        port
                               FALSE
9 Aberavon
              Labour
                        ford
                               FALSE
                                FALSE
10 Aberavon
              Labour
                        by
# i 7,790 more rows
```

```
place_tab ← ukvote2019 ▷
  group_by(constituency) ▷
  slice_max(votes) ▷
  ungroup() ▷
  select(constituency, party_name) ▷
  mutate(shire = str_detect(constituency, "shire"),
        field = str_detect(constituency, "field"),
        dale = str_detect(constituency, "dale"),
        pool = str_detect(constituency, "pool"),
        ton = str detect(constituency, "(ton$)|(ton )"),
        wood = str_detect(constituency, "(wood$)|(wood )"),
        saint = str_detect(constituency, "(St )|(Saint)"),
        port = str_detect(constituency, "(Port)|(port)"),
        ford = str_detect(constituency, "(ford$)|(ford )"),
        by = str_detect(constituency, "(by$)|(by )"),
        boro = str_detect(constituency, "(boro$)|(boro )|(borough$)|(borough)"),
        ley = str_detect(constituency, "(ley$)|(ley )|(leigh$)|(leigh )")) >
  pivot_longer(shire:ley, names_to = "toponym")
```

place_tab

```
# A tibble: 7,800 × 4
  constituency party_name toponym value
                         <chr> <lgl>
               <chr>
   <chr>
                         shire FALSE
 1 Aberavon
               Labour
                         field FALSE
 2 Aberavon
               Labour
 3 Aberavon
               Labour
                         dale FALSE
                         pool FALSE
 4 Aberavon
               Labour
                                FALSE
 5 Aberavon
               Labour
                         ton
                         wood FALSE
 6 Aberavon
               Labour
 7 Aberavon
               Labour
                         saint FALSE
                               FALSE
 8 Aberavon
               Labour
                                FALSE
 9 Aberavon
               Labour
                                FALSE
10 Aberavon
              Labour
# i 7,790 more rows
```

place_tab ▷
 group_by(party_name, toponym)

```
# A tibble: 7,800 × 4
# Groups: party_name, toponym [120]
  constituency party_name toponym value
  <chr>
              <chr>
                        <chr> <lgl>
1 Aberavon
              Labour
                        shire FALSE
                        field FALSE
 2 Aberavon
              Labour
                        dale FALSE
3 Aberavon
              Labour
                        pool FALSE
 4 Aberavon
              Labour
 5 Aberavon
                        ton FALSE
              Labour
6 Aberavon
              Labour
                        wood FALSE
                        saint FALSE
7 Aberavon
              Labour
                        port FALSE
8 Aberavon
              Labour
                        ford FALSE
9 Aberavon
              Labour
                               FALSE
10 Aberavon
              Labour
# i 7,790 more rows
```

```
place_tab ▷
  group_by(party_name, toponym) ▷
  filter(party_name %in% c("Conservative", "Labour"))
```

```
# A tibble: 6,816 × 4
# Groups: party_name, toponym [24]
  constituency party_name toponym value
  <chr>
              <chr>
                        <chr> <lgl>
1 Aberavon
              Labour
                        shire FALSE
                        field FALSE
 2 Aberavon
              Labour
                        dale FALSE
 3 Aberavon
              Labour
                        pool FALSE
 4 Aberavon
              Labour
                        ton FALSE
 5 Aberavon
              Labour
 6 Aberavon
              Labour
                        wood FALSE
                        saint FALSE
7 Aberavon
              Labour
                        port FALSE
8 Aberavon
              Labour
                        ford FALSE
9 Aberavon
              Labour
                               FALSE
10 Aberavon
              Labour
# i 6,806 more rows
```

```
place_tab ▷
group_by(party_name, toponym) ▷
filter(party_name %in% c("Conservative", "Labour")) ▷
group_by(toponym, party_name)
```

```
# A tibble: 6,816 × 4
# Groups: toponym, party_name [24]
  constituency party_name toponym value
  <chr>
              <chr>
                        <chr> <lgl>
1 Aberavon
              Labour
                        shire FALSE
 2 Aberavon
              Labour
                        field FALSE
                        dale FALSE
 3 Aberavon
              Labour
                       pool FALSE
 4 Aberavon
              Labour
                        ton FALSE
5 Aberavon
              Labour
 6 Aberavon
              Labour
                        wood FALSE
                        saint FALSE
7 Aberavon
              Labour
                        port FALSE
8 Aberavon
              Labour
                        ford FALSE
9 Aberavon
              Labour
                               FALSE
10 Aberavon
              Labour
# i 6,806 more rows
```

```
place_tab ▷
group_by(party_name, toponym) ▷
filter(party_name %in% c("Conservative", "Labour")) ▷
group_by(toponym, party_name) ▷
summarize(freq = sum(value))
```

```
# A tibble: 24 × 3
# Groups: toponym [12]
  toponym party_name
                     freq
  <chr> <chr>
                    <int>
         Conservative
1 boro
        Labour
2 boro
         Conservative
 3 by
         Labour
 4 by
5 dale Conservative 3
        Labour
6 dale
7 field Conservative 10
8 field Labour
9 ford Conservative
10 ford
        Labour
                       12
# i 14 more rows
```

```
place_tab ▷
  group_by(party_name, toponym) ▷
  filter(party_name %in% c("Conservative", "Labour")) ▷
  group_by(toponym, party_name) ▷
  summarize(freq = sum(value)) ▷
  mutate(pct = freq/sum(freq))
```

```
# A tibble: 24 × 4
# Groups: toponym [12]
  toponym party_name freq pct
  <chr> <chr>
                   <int> <dbl>
        Conservative 7 0.875
1 boro
                     1 0.125
        Labour
 2 boro
         Conservative 6 0.75
 3 by
        Labour 2 0.25
 4 by
       Conservative 3 0.75
 5 dale
                    1 0.25
        Labour
6 dale
7 field Conservative 10 0.5
                     10 0.5
8 field Labour
       Conservative 17 0.586
9 ford
10 ford
        Labour
                      12 0.414
# i 14 more rows
```

```
place_tab ▷
  group_by(party_name, toponym) ▷
  filter(party_name %in% c("Conservative", "Labour")) ▷
  group_by(toponym, party_name) ▷
  summarize(freq = sum(value)) ▷
  mutate(pct = freq/sum(freq)) ▷
  filter(party_name = "Conservative")
```

```
# A tibble: 12 × 4
# Groups: toponym [12]
  toponym party_name freq pct
  <chr> <chr>
                    <int> <dbl>
        Conservative 7 0.875
1 boro
         Conservative 6 0.75
 2 by
 3 dale Conservative 3 0.75
4 field Conservative 10 0.5
                    17 0.586
 5 ford
        Conservative
         Conservative 26 0.722
 6 lev
        Conservative 2 0.286
 7 pool
       Conservative 3 0.333
 8 port
9 saint Conservative
                     3 0.5
10 shire Conservative 37 0.974
11 ton
         Conservative
                     37 0.507
12 wood
         Conservative
                     7 0.636
```

```
place_tab D
  group_by(party_name, toponym) D
  filter(party_name %in% c("Conservative", "Labour")) D
  group_by(toponym, party_name) D
  summarize(freq = sum(value)) D
  mutate(pct = freq/sum(freq)) D
  filter(party_name = "Conservative") D
  arrange(desc(pct))
```

```
# A tibble: 12 × 4
# Groups: toponym [12]
  toponym party_name freq pct
                    <int> <dbl>
  <chr> <chr>
1 shire Conservative 37 0.974
        Conservative 7 0.875
 2 boro
         Conservative 6 0.75
 3 by
         Conservative 3 0.75
 4 dale
5 ley
         Conservative 26 0.722
         Conservative
                     7 0.636
 6 wood
 7 ford
         Conservative 17 0.586
         Conservative 37 0.507
 8 ton
9 field Conservative
                     10 0.5
10 saint Conservative
                      3 0.5
11 port
         Conservative
                      3 0.333
                      2 0.286
12 pool
         Conservative
```

```
place_tab D
  group_by(party_name, toponym) D
  filter(party_name %in% c("Conservative", "Labour")) D
  group_by(toponym, party_name) D
  summarize(freq = sum(value)) D
  mutate(pct = freq/sum(freq)) D
  filter(party_name = "Conservative") D
  arrange(desc(pct))
```

```
# A tibble: 12 × 4
# Groups: toponym [12]
  toponym party_name freq pct
                    <int> <dbl>
  <chr> <chr>
1 shire Conservative 37 0.974
        Conservative 7 0.875
 2 boro
         Conservative 6 0.75
 3 by
         Conservative 3 0.75
 4 dale
5 ley
         Conservative 26 0.722
         Conservative
                     7 0.636
 6 wood
 7 ford
         Conservative 17 0.586
         Conservative 37 0.507
 8 ton
9 field Conservative
                     10 0.5
10 saint Conservative
                      3 0.5
11 port
         Conservative
                      3 0.333
                      2 0.286
12 pool
         Conservative
```