

## 4. Do We Need New Words?

The English language is always generating new words. New words can be created out of nothing (**neologisms**) or be formed by using other words – or parts of words – together in new combinations (what are called **compounds** and **blends**). Sometimes initials of words in a phrase might be used (**acronyms** and **initialisms**) and you might also see parts of words being added to the front or end of another word to give it a new form (**prefixes** and **suffixes**). Most A Level English Language courses look at how and why new words are formed, but there is also debate about whether we need new words and when (or whether) they should appear in dictionaries.

- Look at the list of some of the new words that have appeared (or suddenly become much more popular) in English over the last few years.
- Have you heard of these words before? Have you used any of them? Tick the relevant columns for each word.
- Choose two words from the list that you think are an important addition to the language. Try to come up with a sentence or two explaining why they are so important.
- Then choose two words from the list that you think are pointless and insignificant. What's the problem with these words and why do you think they shouldn't be included? Again, write a sentence or two explaining your thinking.
- Are there any other new words – or new meanings for older words – that you have heard about? Perhaps you could make a note of new and interesting uses of words over the next few months.
- What are your predictions for the most popular and widely-used words for the next 12 months?
- If you are interested in looking at the history of new words and slang terms that have appeared in the language, follow some of the links on pages 30-36 but in the meantime, [this article by one of the world's most respected slang lexicographers](#) (i.e. people who compile dictionaries of slang), Jonathon Green, is a very good read: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-27405988>

### Recent New Words

Word	Definition	Have heard/seen this word being used	Have used this word myself
Floss	A dance in which people twist their hips in one direction while swinging their arms in the opposite direction with the fists closed. Popularised by the game <i>Fortnite</i> .		
VAR	Video Assistant Referee. A system used in football to assist refereeing decisions.		

<b>Word</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Have heard/seen this word being used</b>	<b>Have used this word myself</b>
Gaslight	To manipulate or trick someone by pretending that they cannot trust what they see or hear until they doubt their own sanity.		
Twerving	A way of dancing that involves bending forward and shaking or thrusting your buttocks in a rhythmic motion.		
Dadbod	A term used to describe the typically flabby and unsculpted male physique that most dads have.		
Cancel culture	A way of describing the movement to 'cancel' - to publicly disapprove of and then attempt to ignore - celebrities or organisations because of their perceived immoral or unpopular actions.		
Climate strike	A protest in which people leave work, school or college when they should be attending to take part in a protest about climate change.		
Influencer	A person who uses social media to promote a particular way of life or commercial products to their online followers.		
Nonbinary	A word describing a sexual identity that does not conform to binary categories of male and female.		
Hamsterkaufing	Stockpiling food like a hamster storing food in its cheeks (from German)		
WFH	Working From Home		
Mansplaining	A patronising way of explaining something (by a man to a woman).		