

Task 1 Guess the definition

Guess the correct definition with a partner. The word slang describes a way of speaking. Do you think slang is:

- A) An abbreviation of 'special language', originally used by spies?
- B) Technical language used by university students?
- C) Very informal language, not usually found in a dictionary?

Task 2 Song lyrics

Song lyrics often contain slang words and expressions. Match the song slang with the correct meaning.

1 'cuz / 'coz / 'cause

2 gonna

3 wanna

4 gotta

5 yeah

6 I ain't

A have got to

B I'm not

C going to

D yes

E because

F want to

Task 3 Write

'Translate' these song lyrics with a partner. Write the words in standard English.

1 Yeah yeah yeah _____

2 I wanna hold your hand _____

3 I gotta go now _____

4 Cuz I ain't stupid _____

5 He's gonna make you cry _____

Task 4 Slang: How do young Brits speak?

Read the text very quickly to answer this question:

Does the writer think that slang is good/bad/neither good nor bad?

Slang: How do young Brits speak?

Language changes all the time. New words and phrases appear and evolve. The words and pronunciations used by young people in the UK can be radically different to those used by adults. Living in a multicultural society has an effect on language, especially on young people, whose friends are often from a mix of backgrounds. TV and music also have a massive impact on the language of the young. Often UK singers will even sing in American accents without realising.

Young Brits use lots of language that you usually can't find in most dictionaries. These highly informal words and expressions are known as slang. It is not possible to come up with a complete list of modern British slang. By the time the list was completed, it would be out of date. New words come and go like fashions. However, here are a few examples:

* Safe!, Sorted!, Sound!, Cool! or Wicked! mean That's good or, I understand.

* Instead of using different tag questions like ...isn't it?, ...can't you? or don't they?, people use innit (e.g., It's hot here, isn't it? = It's hot here, innit!, He can dance really well, can't he? = He can dance really well, innit! or They always say that, don't they =They always say that, innit.).

* Instead of saying very, really or completely use well (e.g., I'm well tired or You got it well wrong!).

* Whatever means I don't care (E.g., A: But the teacher says we can't leave until we've finished. B:Whatever. I'm going).

* He's fine or He's fit both mean He's good looking. Fine and fit can describe a boy or a girl.

* A hoodie is a young person who wears a jacket with a hood (after all, it rains a lot in the UK). It is a negative term and suggests that the young person might be interested in committing a crime.

If some British people use language like this then it's no surprise that some students say that even after years of studying English they still can't understand native speakers. But perhaps learners should not worry about communicating with native speakers so much. Research commissioned by the British Council shows that most of the English spoken in the world today is spoken between non-native speakers of the language. In fact, when we think about "International English", there is no such thing as a native or non-native speaker.

So how important is it to understand these slang words and expressions? If you watch films or TV in English, read magazines in English, chat online in English or are interested in English song lyrics then understanding slang can be very useful. You probably won't see any slang in your English exam though.

<http://www.englishonline.org.cn/en/vocabulary-grammar/read-about-uk/cant-speak>

<http://www.englishonline.org.cn/en/vocabulary-grammar/read-about-uk/hinglish#>

Task 5 Vocabulary

Here are some words and expressions from the article. Underline the words in the text and then match them with the descriptions.

- 1 accent
 - 2 background
 - 3 come and go
 - 4 come up with
 - 5 commit a crime
 - 6 evolve
 - 7 impact
 - 8 native speaker
 - 9 radically
 - 10 out of date
- A do something illegal
B change
C arrive and leave
D education, family and social situation
E old
F a person speaking their first language
G a way of speaking associated with a region or country
H effect
I extremely
J produce

Task 6 True or false?

Read the text in more detail and decide if these statements are true or false.

- 1 Young Brits often speak like their parents.
- 2 TV, music, and friends from different cultural background have an effect on how young people speak.
- 3 British singers sometimes don't know that they change their accent when they sing.
- 4 Modern slang changes very quickly.
- 5 'Innit' means 'in a minute'.
- 6 'Fit' is only used to describe boys.

7 English students should try to speak to native speakers of English as much as possible.

8 More English is spoken by non-native speakers than by native speakers.

9 It is essential to learn some British slang.

Task 7 Dialogues

Complete the mini dialogues with the slang words in the box.

Hoodie innit well whatever wicked Yeah

a)

A: I've just passed my exam!

B: 1 _____! Well done!

b)

A: You said at eight, 2 _____?

B: 3 _____, don't be late.

c)

A: Did you know Mark's brother has just cycled around the world.

B: Wow! He must be 4 _____ tired.

d)

A: You look like a 5 _____ with those clothes on. Why don't you wear something else.

B: 6 _____.

Task 8 Discussion

Discuss these questions:

Some people say that people who use slang are lazy. Do you agree?

Do you have similar slang words and expressions in your language?

How difficult is it to use slang in a foreign language?

Do you need to use slang to communicate with non-native speakers?

When should you not use slang?

Tag questions (isn't it?, are we?, don't you? etc) are common in English. Does your language have a similar structure?

If you want to find the meaning of a new word what do you do?

How is your language influenced by other languages?