

How new words are created

Topic: New words

Aims:

- To learn how new words are created
- To practise formation of words
- To practise pronunciation

Level: Intermediate

Introduction

This lesson looks at how new words are created in English. It encourages learners to analyse words they already know and to understand more about meaning from form. It also encourages them to experiment with new words and possible meanings – an important skill in manipulating language.

Procedure

Tell students that new words enter the English language all the time – there are thousands every year. Explain that English grows so quickly because:

- There are many ways in which new words are created.
- Native speakers like playing with the language.
- There are no wrong or right new words – if they are used by speakers, they can enter the language (this may be an unfamiliar concept for some speakers of other languages where new words are more controlled than in English).

Matching exercise: Worksheet A

- Learners match words with method of formation. Avoid too much discussion of meaning at this stage, and encourage learners to look at form to help guess meaning.

Answers:

- Scuba – c) (self-contained underwater breathing apparatus)
 - Brunch – a)
 - Exam – b)
 - Racist – d)
 - Ping-pong – g)
 - Igloo – h)
 - Diskette – d)
 - Bungalow – h) (Hindi)
 - Biohazard – d)
 - Brainstorm – f)
 - To chair – e)
 - Britpop – a) (British pop music)
 - Chocoholic – a) (an addict to chocolate)
 - Yuppy – c) (young urban professional)
- Ask learners if they know any examples themselves.

Compounds: Worksheet B

- Ask learners the meaning of words. Encourage them to make guesses.

Answers:

snail-mail – *normal (slow) post, as opposed to e-mail*

teleshopping – *shopping using the television and telephone*

user-friendly – *easy to use*

technophobe – *someone who has a phobia about technology*

coffee-matic – *a machine which serves coffee automatically*

brainstorm – *give answers to a question very quickly, without analysing them*

Rhyming pairs: Worksheet C

- Ask learners to complete the sentences using the rhyming pairs. They can use rhyme to help. This may be more difficult than you expect, so be prepared to assist.
- Point out that some pairs of words are hyphenated, some separate, and some use 'and' to connect them.
- Then ask learners to match each sentence to a meaning, using context to help.

Answers:

1. Seeing a spider, even on the TV, always gives me the *heebie-jeebies* (*g - feelings of disgust and discomfort*)
2. She never cleans her room – she just throws everything *willy-nilly* (*f - randomly*)
3. He's a really keen student – an *eager beaver* if ever I saw one! (*c – very enthusiastic*)
4. I do like that old piano music, especially *boogie-woogie* (*d - a style of music*)
5. Are you angry? No? Not even a *teensy-weensy* bit? (*b - very small*)
6. She doesn't like the countryside because she misses the *hustle and bustle* of the big city (*h - the noise and busy people*)
7. The whole problem was very *hush hush* - no-one knew about it until it was over (*a - kept secret*)
8. It doesn't surprise me the police stopped his car – it was *zigzagging* all over the place. (*e - move from right to left*)

Blends: Worksheet D

- Use the example to show learners how words are mixed together, and how meaning is mixed also. Then ask them to break each word down into two. If they find it difficult, use the original words to help them.

Answers:

- Electricity + execute
- Travel + monologue
- smoke + fog
- twist + fiddle
- Oxford + Cambridge (*a name for both universities*)
- motor + hotel
- smart + jazzy
- rock + documentary

Borrowing: Worksheet E

- Remind learners of the example in question 1, Bungalow, then ask them to put the words into four groups, German, Arabic, Spanish and Hindi. Ask them if they know any more examples.

Answers:

German	Arabic	Spanish	Hindi
Poodle	Mirror	Guitar	Shampoo
Hamburger	Average	Patio	Cot
Luck	Zero	Lunch	Jungle
Rocket	Coffee	Tornado	Cheetah

Conversion: Worksheet F

- Tell learners you are now going to look at changing the way we use a word. This is called **conversion**. Remind them they may need to change the form of some words to –ed and –ing forms.

Answers:

- People in Britain worry about drinking tap water, so there is a big market in bottled water.
- Stop that hammering – the noise is driving me crazy!
- Their car broke down and they had to thumb a lift.
- I'm covered in mess because I've been wall-papering the bedroom.
- She's so critical of him behind his back - she's always bad-mouthing him. (*Criticising him*)
- He was spooning food into his mouth so quickly that most of it seemed to end up on his shirt.
- Don't forget to bookmark this webpage – it seems very useful.

- **Learners' words: Worksheet G**
- Tell learners they now have a chance to be creative with vocabulary, like native speakers are.
 - **Loaning** – ask learners to think about a word from their own language that expresses an idea that doesn't exist in English
 - **Blending** – here learners mix two words together.
 - **Conversion** – learners take an English noun and make it a verb, or an adjective
- Ask learners to write a sentence using each new word to share with the group.