

# THRILLDULGING

## The Secrets of Making New Words

Have you ever realized that there isn't a word for something you want to say? It might be that you're trying to describe something new, like a new idea, a new technology or a new activity. It might be that the word you want to use has associations that you don't like. Whatever the problem, you can try to use an existing word and hope that your meaning is clear – or you can create a new word to fit your needs.

### How New Words Are Created

Words are entering the language all the time. How many? No one knows for sure, but dictionaries add a few thousand new words every year. Some stick around\*, some don't.

### Old Word, New Meaning

You don't always need a new word – you can take an old one and give it a new use. The word "troll", for instance, is as old as fairy tales. But, of course, it means something different on the internet.

You can also turn one **part of speech**<sup>1</sup> into another. The simplest form of this is using a noun as a verb, which is how English often works anyway. We say "a murder" and "to murder", for example, so why not turn "a message" into "to message"?

### Stick Some Bits On

Also, there's always the option of using **prefixes**<sup>2</sup> and **suffixes**<sup>3</sup>. There are lots to choose from. You can even use several of them at once! Say you start with a word like "defenestrate" (= to throw someone out of a window). That's already got the *de-* prefix and *-ate* suffix... but let's add a few more. The action of throwing someone out of a window is *defenestration* (score: 2 suffixes). Someone who thinks this is a good idea could be a *defenestrationist* (3 suffixes). Motivated by *defenestrationistic* (4 suffixes) feelings, he (or she) might act *defenestrationistically* (5 suffixes). Of course, someone else might be an *antidefenestrationist* (2 prefixes). Perhaps the *defenestrationist* would pretend to be *antidefenestrationist* by acting *pseudoantidefenestrationistically* (for a grand total of 33 letters, 3 prefixes and 5 suffixes). Now say that five times!

Sometimes a part of a word ends up becoming a new prefix or suffix, as has happened with the second part of the word "entertainment". This was borrowed for "edutainment", meaning a TV programme both entertaining and educating.



# IN WORDISTRY!

Since then, it has been used in many new ways. Can you guess the meanings of retortainment, advertainment, militainment and irritainment?

## Frankenwords

Another fun way to create new words is to put two words together, either simply (as in "fanmail", meaning letters from your fans) or by using part of each word (like "dramedy", a TV show which is both a drama and a comedy). Words made this way are sometimes called Frankenwords, because they are made from bits and pieces of other words – as Frankenstein's monster was made from bits and pieces of other people.

## Acronyms

You make an acronym by taking the first letters of a phrase and pronouncing them as a word. We usually know when we're using an acronym: we say ASAP or POTUS, but we know that they are not real words. ASAP stands for as soon as possible, POTUS for president

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of the United States. But did you know that radar, laser and sonar are also acronyms?

## Loan Words

Feeling multicultural – or just lazy? Why not steal a word from another language? The word "neologism" (= new word) is an example of this, as it was first made up by the French (*neologisme*) and then stolen by Brits. Another example is "pistol", which was an English version of a German copy of the Czech original, *pišt'ala*.

## Stealing Names

While we're talking about stealing words from other places, names can be a good place to start, too. We have the word "mesmerize" (= to have someone's attention completely) after Dr Mesmer, a famous hypnotist, and "stentorian" (= loud-voiced), after an ancient Greek man called Stentor who had a voice "as loud as ten men". Or we can use a company or product name, as we do when we "google" something or "hoover" the carpet.

## Made-Up Words

If you can't find an existing word to modify or steal, you can always just make something up. Purely made-up words don't often get used very much, but some do. In one book by the children's writer Dr Seuss, a boy promises: "I'll sail to Ka-Troo. And bring back an IT-KUTCH, a PREEP, and a PROO, a NERKLE, a NERD, and

a SEERSUCKER, too!" You won't hear many people using preep, proo or nerkle, but I'm pretty sure you know a few nerds.

## The Happy Mistake

Sometimes a mistake leads to another new word. If you play video games, you might have seen "pwn" [pəʊn], meaning "completely defeat". This began as a typo for "own", which also has the same slang meaning. The Oxford English Dictionary once listed *pwn* as its word of the day! **Paul Farrington-Douglas (UK)**

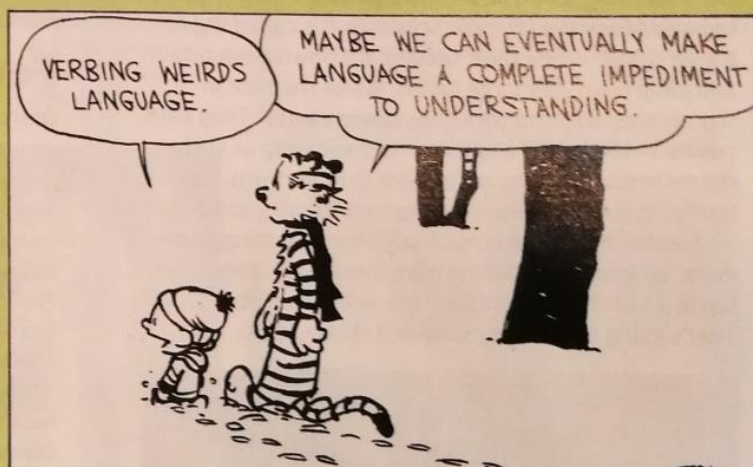
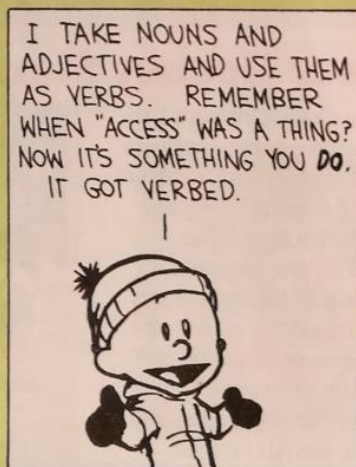
## T-A-S-K

- I. Frankenwords are the most common type of new words today, probably because they're so fun to make up. See if you can match these Frankenwords with their root words and then work out what they mean. Try to use them in your own sentences.

<b>FRENEMY</b>	chill out camping wardrobe
<b>GLAMPING</b>	friend relax
<b>CHILLAX</b>	enemy glamorous
<b>FLOORDROBE</b>	floor

- II. What do you think the title "Thrilldugling in Wordistry" means? How were these words created?

**S** Solutions in TF and next month on the Bridge website



impediment – překážka

When Calvin says that "verbing weards language" he means that changing other parts of speech (nouns, adjectives) into verbs makes language strange. But to say it, he actually changes a noun (verb) and an adjective (weird) into verbs himself. It was meant as a joke, but it really shows how effective the trick is.

## Vocabulary

- part of speech [spi:tʃ] – slovní druh
- prefix [ˈpri:fiks] – předpona
- suffix [ˈsʌfiks] – přípona
- acronym [ˈækronɪm] – zkratka

s loan [ləʊn] – výpůjčka

## Glossary\*

to stick around – to stay somewhere, to continue being used