



Teacher Resource

New Words

Focus Questions

Discuss the BTN story as a class and record the main points of the discussion. Students will then respond to the following:

1. Name at least two words that were added to the Cambridge dictionary recently.
2. Language changes for different reasons. Give an example of one.
3. Give an example of a new word that was made up to describe something that didn't exist before.
4. What impact has social media had on language changing?
5. What was surprising about this story?

Activity: Inquiry

Discuss the BTN New Words story as a class and ask students to pose questions about new words and the evolution of the English language. Students can complete the following KWLH organiser to explore their knowledge and consider what they would like to know and learn.

What I know	What I want to know	What I learnt

Students can develop their own key questions to investigate or respond to one or more of the questions below.

- Who decides what words go in an English dictionary?
- Where do words come from?
- Why does language change over time?
- Why do we have to make up new words?
- Why do the meanings of some words change over time?
- What words come from other languages?
- What is compounding in English language?
- What is a linguist?

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KEY LEARNING

Students will explore the evolution of the English language.

CURRICULUM

English – Year 5

Understand how to use knowledge of known words, base words, prefixes and suffixes, word origins, letter patterns and spelling generalisations to spell new words.

Explore less common plurals and understand how a suffix changes the meaning or grammatical form of a word.

English – Year 6

Understand how to use knowledge of known words, word origins including some Latin and Greek roots, base words, prefixes, suffixes, letter patterns and spelling generalisations to spell new words including technical words.

Identify the relationship between words, sounds, imagery and language patterns in narratives and poetry such as ballads, limericks and free verse.

English – Year 7

Understand how to use spelling rules and word origins, for example Greek and Latin roots, base words, suffixes, prefixes, spelling patterns and generalisations to learn new words and how to spell them.

Activity: New Vocabulary

After watching the BTN New Words story students will make a list of the new words that have been added to the Cambridge Dictionary in 2025.

BROLIGARCHY	SKIBIDI	DELULU
TRADWIFE	LEWK	INSPO

Ask students if they use any of the new words in their everyday conversation. Students will respond to one or more of the following:

- What do you think the meaning is of each of the new words? Swap your definitions with a partner and ask them to add to or change the definition. Check these against the dictionary definition.
- Think of situations when you would use these phrases and put into a sentence.
- Create an illustrated dictionary of the new words.
- Add words and their definitions to your list that have come from other languages, for example, tsunami, doppelganger and déjà vu.
- Explore a word in the English dictionary that has multiple meanings.
- What is the difference between a linguist, a lexicographer and an etymologist?

Activity: Invent a Word

Challenge students to invent their own word which they would like introduced into the English language. Students will invent a word they believe we need or is missing from the English language. Students will then try to get their classmates to use the word with the aim to get the word to 'stick' and become a part of their everyday language. Encourage students to have fun inventing their new words!

Students will experiment with grammar to invent their new word. To invent a new word, students can:

- Change a noun into a verb.
- Change a verb into an adjective.
- Connect two words together.
- Add a prefix or suffix.
- Make up a word which is completely original!

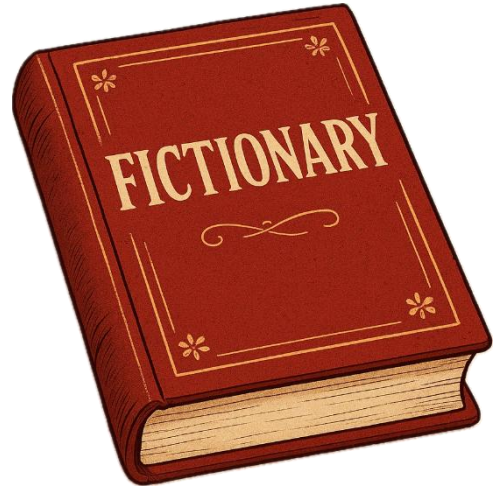
Students will share their invented words with the class and create a class dictionary which contains all of their words and meanings. Students will find a creative way to use as many of the new words as they can, for example a word search or a rap.

Reflection

- How successful were you in getting your classmates to use your new word? Hold a class poll to see which word was most popular.
- What did you enjoy about this activity?

Activity: Fictionary Game

In small groups, students will play the game “fictionary”. Fictionary is a fun game where players try to trick each other with fake definitions of real words.



What you will need to play the game

- A dictionary or list of unusual words
- Paper and pens for each student
- 4-10 players.

How to play the game

- Choose a Dictionary Master for the first round. They will choose an unusual or obscure word from the dictionary that no one is likely to know.
- The Dictionary Master writes down the real definition on a piece of paper and announces the word and spelling of the word.
- Every other player will then write down a made-up definition for that, that sounds believable. They will give their definitions to the Dictionary Master.
- The Dictionary Master will shuffle the made-up definitions with the real one.
- The Dictionary Master reads all the definitions in random order without saying which is correct.
- Each player (not including the Dictionary Master) votes for the definition they think is the real definition (but they can't vote for their own definition).
- Scoring – 1 point if you guess the real definition, 1 point for each player who picks your fake definition. The Dictionary Master doesn't score that round.
- For each round a new Dictionary Master is chosen.

Below is an example

Word: *Cacophony*

Correct definition

- *a mix of loud and unpleasant sounds happening all at once*

Fictional definitions

- *a rare tropical fruit that tastes like chocolate cookies*
- *the scientific term for the rumbling noise your stomach makes when it's hungry*
- *an ancient Egyptian type of music which features the xylophone*

Useful Websites

- [New Dictionary Words](#) – BTN Newsbreak
- [Delulu, tradwife and skibidi all enter the Cambridge Dictionary](#) – ABC News
- [New Dictionary Words 2017](#) – BTN
- [The evolution of English language](#) – ABC Education
- [Where did English come from?](#) – TEDEd
- [How did English evolve?](#) – TEDEd
- [Word of the Year 2023](#) – BTN Newsbreak
- [Word of the Year 2024](#) – BTN Newsbreak
- [Should schools ban slag?](#) – BTN Newsbreak
- [Why does language change over time?](#) – BBC Bitesize