

Communication evolve

Teenage slang create a culture that embraces memes

By Jess Hess

If you send a "K" response to sophomore **Camden Wybek**, watch out. He'll be annoyed. The frequent texter says, "I feel like we can all agree 'okay is good, 'ok is alright. K is disrespectful.'" Applying simple changes to a word can change its meaning drastically, but change is one of the biggest forms of slang-creation.

Language is an ever changing beast, with new terms and slang popping up indefinitely, and has been used since before the 1900's; "Dude" was one of the first slang words that appeared in print, used as another word for "guy."

Often times, slang words originate or get popularized from social outlets such as Vine, Twitter, Instagram, or Facebook.

"Take, for instance, memes or vines," said **Jacqui Sheehan**, an English and photography teacher. "There is an entire layer of comedic communication that happens because of those, and if you are not a part of that culture, if you don't pay attention, you aren't part of the joke. Absolutely, social media influences slang, and that works its way into conversation."

"There is an entire layer of comedic communication"

- Jacqui Sheehan

Vine popularized Nick Colletti's vine, "suh dude" in early 2015, which was just another form of saying "what's up?" 2015 also created "squad", "on fleek", and "basic," all often used in tweets, Instagram posts, and then spread around by popular celebrities such as Nicki Minaj.

In fact, #onfleek has been used over 2.2 million times on Instagram. Another common hashtag that is utilized is the abbreviation of "throwback Thursday", aka #tbt. It has been used more than 402.8 million times on Instagram. In fact, in May of 2017, Taraj P. Henson, a famous actress from "Hidden Figures" and many more, posted a #tbt to her senior pictures.

Corporations also use slang to

promote their brands and to be relatable to a youthful audience, such as IHOP, who tweeted "pancakes on fleek" in October of 2014.

Another company who utilizes slang to appeal to a millennial audience is Hamburger Helper. In November of 2017, they responded to a tweet with "I'm here for this," which is a phrase that means either being pleased by something or supporting it. However, slang is used by the masses until those who created it get tired of it, and move onto the next big word. As DJ Khaled coined in 2015, "another one."

Bella Sandefer, a freshman, said the reason adults don't understand most slang is because her generation helped develop it.

"K is disrespectful. I feel like we can all agree 'okay is good, 'ok is alright."

-Camden Wybek

"We see that stuff (slang) all the time, so it's just integrated into our language."

In fact, according to the Pew Research Center, 59 percent of adults aged 18-29 use Instagram while only 33 percent of adults aged 30-49 do. Of those aged 18-29, 36 percent of them use Twitter while only 23 percent of those aged 30-49 use Twitter.



Sophomore Jaelyn Reynolds contributes to the discussion with how media influences the slang she uses (Photo by Alexis Lee).

Slang also gives people an opportunity to have a distinctive stamp on their generation, students agreed.

"We've developed slang so we feel unique and different from other

generations, friend groups, and even individuals," Sandefer said, "we all have our own things that we do to want to



Freshman Russel Norman chimes into the discussion, laughing throughout (Photo by Alexis Lee).

feel different." Sheehan agrees, "we use language to show that we belong or to establish that someone doesn't."

As a member of the swim team, Sandefer's teammates now jokingly refer to her as "Hookfoot," a slang term they made up for her only because she once got a hook stuck in her foot in the high school locker room.

An example of modern slang would be "shade" or "throwing shade," often used to express disgust or hatred. Shade throwing is popular in tweets and in gossip celebrity magazines as is "beef," slang for arguments among famous performers.

Kanye West threw shade in his song, "Famous," at Taylor Swift nearly two years ago, insisting he made her famous and using crude words to describe her. He said he informed her she'd be mentioned, but Swift has since denied that she knew, and indirectly referenced West in her February 2016 Grammys speech.

Slang can also be used to make conversation simpler, particularly in text. Freshman **Jessica Guerrini** says, "almost all of my friends use slang when I text them. It's usually 'rn' meaning right now, 'ttyl', meaning talk to you later, and 'idk,' which means I don't know."

Memes also have a big impact on how slang is spread. A very popular word in 2016 and 2017 was "doggo," and while it's simply a funny version of the word "dog," there are many variations.

In fact, in an ad for the site

"Lucidchart" they made a chart to show the meanings of each term. For example, a small dog would be considered a pupper.

Another term that stemmed from memes is "same," used regularly during relatable situations. Something as simple as a chair falling over, or a child

"We see that stuff (slang) all the time, so it's just integrated into our language."

-Bella Sandefer

screaming in the supermarket could be used as a reference for it. Junior **Kellen Smiley** finds himself pointing at random objects or pictures and saying "same" periodically throughout the day. It is universal.

"My most commonly used form of slang would have to be saying 'same' to things that otherwise wouldn't make sense to some, but it certainly does to me."

Smiley also wonders where slang will go in the future.

"It's difficult to see where things will be in years to come because everything is always changing...Perhaps one day when our generation is older we will understand it more and so will our offspring and their's after."

Some students, however, dislike slang like junior **Jasmine Linville** because "it's just annoying to me. I have an English teacher for a dad and have grown up around proper grammar

"My most commonly used form of slang would have to be saying 'same' to things that otherwise wouldn't make sense"

-Kellen Smiley

and pronunciation." Junior **Elise Houk** also says "It's overused and obnoxious because there are better words we can

use." However, she says she sometimes calls her dog "woofer."

Not to mention, some believe that while slang could be the unanimous language of people, there are personal unique emotional deterrents that vary. Sandefer says "That's how language has evolved, we can just write out the same word and different ways and it completely changes the meaning. (If our language is all slang) it could make it feel like everybody is in a rush, because they're typing so fast and nobody has time for anyone else."

According to sophomore Camden Wybek, there are also positives to slang being the core language, "We get too caught up in 'this has to be this certain way.' I've got homework all day long, let me do it my way and get it done. If it's (slang) accepted worldwide like that, it'll make kids less stressed and more happy."

However, there are different levels to slang and meanings that make it all the more special. Wybek says, "If you're talking to someone and you say 'ily,' you're talking to them as a friend but if you straight up spell it out like 'I love you,' it means more." He also believes there is a strong separation in "okay,"

"We get too caught up in 'this has to be this certain way.'"

-Camden Wybek

"ok," and "k."

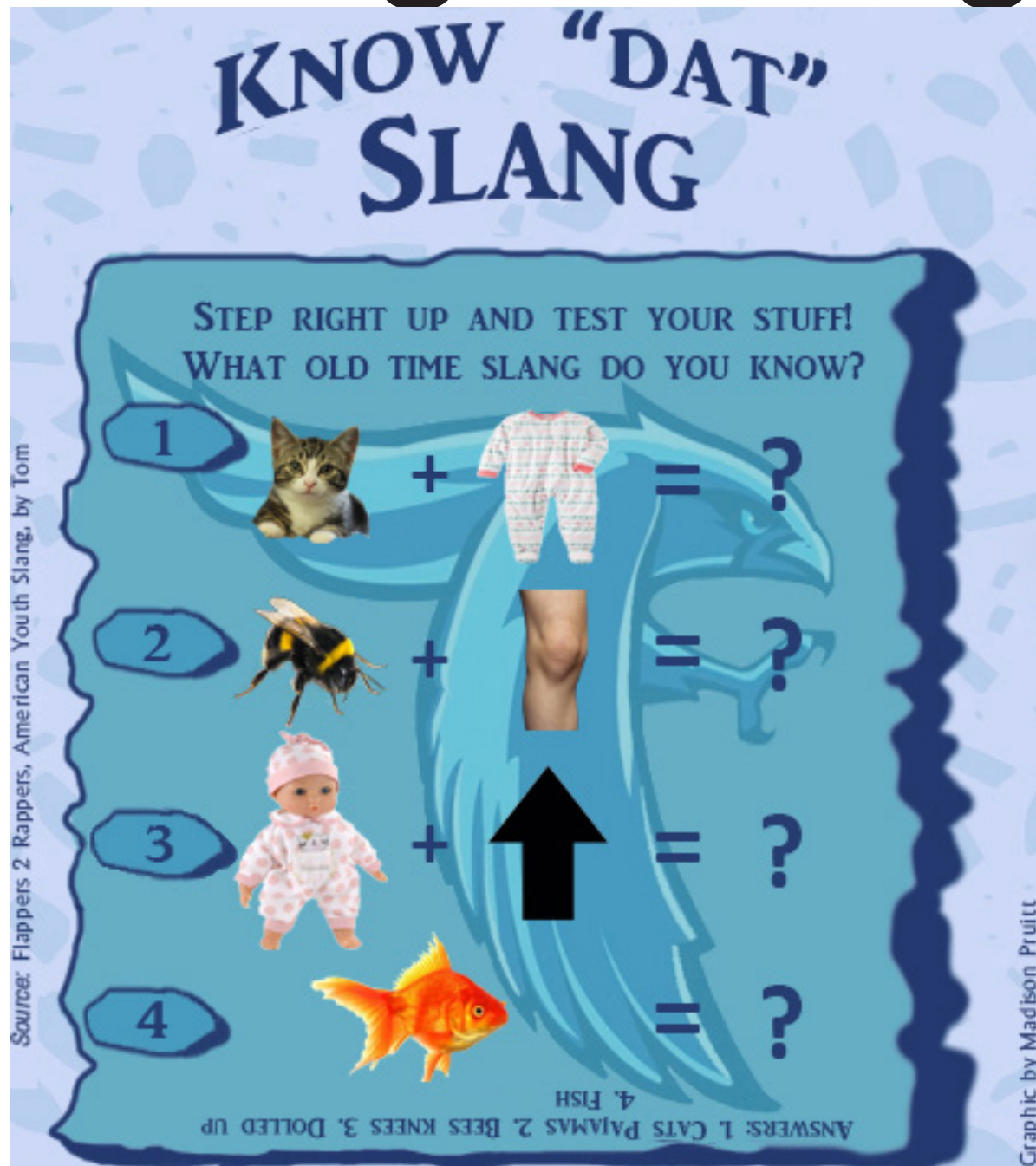
Junior **Alexis George** discovers her slang from "a lot of my friends, songs, and tv."

"I use shook because... Well, I get shook a lot. I've used Gucci Gang because the song is catchy." Shook means physically or mentally surprised or excited by an event or action. Gucci Gang is from Lil Pump's song, "Gucci Gang."

While it doesn't have an exact meaning, those who use it tend to be referencing either themselves or their group of friends. **Jaelyn Reynolds**, a sophomore said she used to commonly use "fetch," a term coined in the 2004 movie "Mean Girls".

Slang has forever modernized language, and will continue to evolve language for years to come. As **Russell Norman**, a freshman says, "Kids rule the world."

es, Slang changes lang



Sophomores Rachel Bates and Gracie Johnson joined in a on the group language discussion over slang. The wide-ranging discussion covered social media slang and parent's misuse of their kids' snappy lingo (Photo by Alexis Lee).

Slang is more than the euphemisms and jargon we use today, it also encompasses a large variety of phrases that have faded into obscurity or have become omnipresent with time. The graphic above shows a variety of slang from the 1920's along with their definitions below. See how many you know.

Definitions:

Cat's Pajamas - High Quality or Excellent

Bees Knees - It is the best or great

Dolled Up - Dressed up

Fish - Freshman