

What Is Etymology?

English is one of the biggest languages in the world. It has vocabulary words from most other languages, and it keeps changing over time. New words are created. Old words change their meanings. We combine old words in new ways to make different words. Our language changes with our culture.

The study of how words develop and change over time is called **etymology**. This word comes from the Greek words **etimos**, which means “true,” and **-ology**, which means “the study of.” The etymology of English words is interesting because English comes from so many places and cultures. Learning how words start will help you understand English better. It will also help you learn how people change language over time.

Here are some ways we add new words to English.

Ways to Make Words	Examples
Add word parts at the beginning or the end of a word.	perfect + -ly = perfectly perfect + im- = imperfect
Put two words together to make a compound word.	mouth + wash = mouthwash
Use the first letters of words to make a new word.	radio detection and ranging = radar
Change a word’s part of speech.	television (noun) → televise (verb) write (verb) → writer (noun)
Copy a word from another language.	karaoke — Japanese for <i>kara</i> (empty) and <i>oke</i> (orchestra)
Copy a word from entertainers, speakers or other famous people or products.	dream team (from sports) spam (from computer technology)
Slang	scrunchy yada-yada-yada

Acronyms

An **acronym** is a word made from the first (or important) letters of words in a phrase or a title. Some of these words are capitalized, especially when they are new words. As these words become more common, they are often written in lowercase letters.

radio **d**etecting and **r**anging = **radar**

United **N**ations **I**nternational **C**hildren's **E**mergency **F**und = **UNICEF**

Write the correct letter to match each acronym with its full name.

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 1. ____ JPEG | A. North Atlantic Treaty Organization |
| 2. ____ OPEC | B. Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome |
| 3. ____ NATO | C. Zone Improvement Plan |
| 4. ____ AIDS | D. DeoxyriboNucleic Acid |
| 5. ____ BYO | E. Surface-to-Air Missile |
| 6. ____ DNA | F. Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries |
| 7. ____ laser | G. Very Important Person |
| 8. ____ SAM | H. Joint Photographic Experts Group |
| 9. ____ IBM | I. Electronic Mail |
| 10. ____ AC | J. Compact Disk — Read-Only Memory |
| 11. ____ e-mail | K. International Business Machines |
| 12. ____ CD-ROM | L. Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation |
| 13. ____ VIP | M. Alternating Current |
| 14. ____ ZIP | N. Bring Your Own |

Slang ③

Choose a slang word from the box to replace the underlined word or words in the sentence.

hopping

reggie

wasted

word

blast

grody

24/7

torqued

hardcore

grazed

1. Jeb does extreme surfing.



2. This party is very lively!

3. We chose food from the buffet.

4. Take a right turn at the next light.

5. "I just had lunch with Orlando Bloom."

"Are you serious?"

"It's the truth!"

6. Lisa was really upset when I read her diary to her dad.

7. We had a wonderful time on our trip.

8. Who left this disgusting cheese on my desk?

9. Jeb ruined his new watch in the accident.

10. No wonder Trish gets good grades. She studies all the time.

Cultural and Regional Vocabulary ①

People who speak English don't all use the same words to mean the same things. For example, an **elevator** in the U.S. is a **lift** in England.

Each group of words below means about the same thing to different groups of people. Choose one word from each group and use it in a sentence. Then compare your word choices and sentences with someone else's choices.

1. sofa, couch, davenport, settee, divan, chaise longue, loveseat

2. firefly, lightning bug

3. soda, pop, Coke, phosphate, tonic

4. hero, torpedo, grinder, submarine, hoagie, poor boy

5. sneakers, tennis shoes, gym shoes, running shoes, Nikes

6. thongs, sandals, flip-flops

7. won ton, ravioli, kreplach, pirogi
