

## How new words are created

### Topic

Word formation, creativity with language

### Learning outcomes

- Explain some different ways that words in English are created
- Use words that have been created in different ways
- Create new words in English

### Age and level

13-17, Adults (B1+)

### Time

Approximately 60-70 minutes

### Materials

- Student worksheet
- Exercises worksheet

### Introduction

This lesson looks at how new words are created in English. Students begin by considering the different methods used to create new words, e.g. compound nouns, mixing words together, borrowing from other languages etc. In groups, they then analyse each method in more depth, reviewing vocabulary as they do so. Finally, they work in groups to invent some new words using any of the methods. This develops their knowledge of word formation and their creativity.

**Procedure**

<b>Lead-in (5 mins)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain that the English language changes all the time. Over time, some words are no longer used and new words are added – around 800-1,000 new words are added to English language dictionaries every year.</li> <li>• Ask students to say why they think English speakers create new words. Some examples might be:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To talk about a new cultural or technical concept</li> <li>○ For a sense of belonging / identity</li> <li>○ People like playing with language</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Explain that new words can be created in many different ways. In this lesson, students will learn how new words are created – and will create some new ones themselves.</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> The English language does not have an official regulatory body, so there are no wrong or right new words in English - if they are used by enough speakers, they can enter the language. This may be an unfamiliar concept for some speakers of other languages where new words are more regulated than in English.</p>
<b>Task 1: Introducing how new words are created (10-15 mins)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Display or hand out the student worksheet. Refer students to <b>Task 1</b>. Remind them that new words are created using several different methods.</li> <li>• In pairs or small groups, students match words 1-15 with the methods used to create them (methods a-h). An example is provided (scuba = c). Avoid too much discussion of meaning at this stage and encourage learners to look at form to help guess meaning.</li> <li>• Check answers with the whole class and elicit / explain meanings.</li> </ul> <p><b>Answers:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. scuba – c (self-contained underwater breathing apparatus)</li> <li>2. brunch – a (mixing ‘breakfast’ and ‘brunch’, a meal eaten late morning)</li> <li>3. exam – b (abbreviated from ‘examination’)</li> <li>4. racist – d (add the suffix -ist to denote a person who has these beliefs)</li> <li>5. snail-mail – g (refers to sending mail by post i.e. slowly like a snail)</li> <li>6. igloo – h (from the language Inuktitut, meaning ‘house’)</li> <li>7. touristy – d (add the suffix -y to a noun to make an adjective meaning ‘typical of tourists’ – note that it’s informal)</li> <li>8. bungalow – h (from the language Hindi, meaning a single-storey house)</li> </ol>

	<p>9. biohazard – d (add the prefix 'bio' – life – meaning a hazard / danger to people, animals, the environment)</p> <p>10. seat belt – f (if necessary, explain the meanings of the words)</p> <p>11. chair (v) – e (noun changed to verb, meaning be the person in charge of a meeting)</p> <p>12. staycation– a (mixing 'stay' and 'vacation', meaning a holiday at home)</p> <p>13. ASAP – c (<b>as soon as possible</b>)</p> <p>14. decaf – b (abbreviated from 'decaffeinated' e.g. I'll have a decaf)</p> <p>15. motorway – f (a wide road – especially in the UK - for traffic travelling quickly)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask students if they know any examples themselves.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Task 2: Finding and sharing examples (20 mins)</b></p>	<p><b>Before the lesson:</b> Make copies of the exercises provided on the <b>Exercises</b> worksheet. Cut up the <b>answer keys</b>. The answer keys are provided at the end of the Exercises worksheet.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put students into pairs or small groups. Explain that they will do different exercises which give examples of words created using different methods.</li> <li>• Give each pair / group 1-2 different exercises, e.g. exercise A to one pair / group, exercise B to another and so on. It doesn't matter if more than one pair / group has the same exercise. It doesn't matter if you don't use all the exercises.</li> <li>• Give students 10 minutes to do the exercise(s). As they finish, hand them the relevant answer key so they can check the answers themselves. If they still have time, give them another exercise to do.</li> <li>• After 10 minutes, ask them to choose the most interesting word(s) from their exercise(s).</li> <li>• Invite pairs / groups to share and teach their interesting words to the rest of the class. If you have a larger class, put individual members of pairs / groups together to form new groups. They share their interesting words.</li> <li>• Encourage students to make notes of the words they like. Ask for general feedback about words they find interesting.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Task 3: Creating new words (30 mins)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put students back into their original pairs / groups. Explain that they will create some new English words using any of the methods that they have learned about in this lesson.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If necessary, elicit / provide some examples:                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mixing two words and their meanings together (e.g. I'd like a <b>chocoffee</b> – a mix of 'chocolate' and 'coffee')</li> <li>○ Using part of a word (e.g. This exercise is <b>diff</b> – difficult)</li> <li>○ Forming a word from the letters of a phrase (e.g. They set up a <b>VELTO</b> – virtual education and learning technology organisation)</li> <li>○ Adding a prefix or a suffix (e.g. I'm excited about the party. I've got <b>prejoy</b> – the feeling of excitement before an event)</li> <li>○ Changing the way a word is used e.g. noun becomes verb (e.g. I took the lift but she <b>staired</b> it – climb stairs)</li> <li>○ Joining two words (e.g. We have such a <b>mindlink</b> – a deep connection between people)</li> <li>○ Repeating words or adding words that sound similar (e.g. He made my <b>wish-dish</b> for my birthday – favourite meal)</li> <li>○ Taking a word from another language – ask students which words in their language would be useful in English</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Give pairs / groups some time to invent their words. They should only use one method once, and they should write an example sentence using each word they invent. Walk around and help students as they work.</li> <li>• After a time limit, ask students to share their words. With a smaller class, ask each pair / group in turn to read one of their sentences. Other students must guess what the word means. With a large class, pairs / groups can share their words / sentences in larger groups. Alternatively, they could write their words on paper which are stuck / passed around the room, then others write their guesses.</li> <li>• Ask students to vote for their favourite invented new word.</li> </ul>
<b>Homework</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students write a short story / paragraph using five of the words learned in the lesson – or five invented words.</li> </ul>

Adapted from a lesson contributed by

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