

COMMUNITY
EXPECTATION
ATTENTION
REALIZATION

(?) HOW CAN THE ASSUMED RULES OF LANGUAGE BE
SUBVERTED AND EXPOSED?

HANG ON TO EVERY WORD

is a series of web games that explores how language constructs expectations/logics/worlds through. Through a series of games that toy with the structure of words and the web, the audience will be forced to more closely investigate the rules that they take for granted.

In a tangible sense, this project is a set of web-based word games that each toy with one aspect of English. The games (ideally) feel like a series of riddles that are oppositional to the player. The key is often simply figuring out how to play the game, not the puzzle itself.



HANG ON TO EVERY WORD.

It's a phrase we've all heard somewhere—describing a child captivated by his basketball idol's TED talk, or in a housewife's review of her favorite true crime podcast—but doubtfully ever investigated. The meaning of the phrase is obvious: pay attention. This time, let's direct that gaze inwards. Let's pay attention to the saying itself.

First, **HANG ON** can mean to keep a jacket your friend left on your couch, or to grab tightly onto your mom's hand in the rain. It can mean to wait a moment while your date pays the bill, to grit your teeth as your dad drives through an unpaved backroad, or of course, to pay attention. The phrase hangs on to multitudes, yet somehow, we're never confused.

Next, the word **EVERY** comes from a 14th century contraction of "each" (all) and "ever" (always). Ever each, ever-each, ever-each, every. The first attestation of **EVERY** comes from The Canterbury Tales, the text responsible for popularizing English in mainstream literature and displacing French and Latin. Every word we carelessly toss around contains a rich, layered history.

Finally, to have the ability to hang onto every **WORD** is to materialize language in our grasp. They are daggers you can have in an argument, snacks to binge eat when embarrassed, a fluorescent jungle gym to play on. The entirety of the English language is a physical thing that we can grasp.

We don't think about these features when we use words. We just know where they're allowed to be placed, so we awkwardly slot them into sentences like primitive pattern matching machines. We follow rules and sounds that we've internalized, but don't fully understand. That internalization lets us stop paying attention.

But if we know we exist in this storied world, if we are aware of the logic behind each phrase's construction, if we peer a little past our expectations—a sudden turn of phrase can have us careening down an alleyway that we'd never noticed, wandering along the street paved with translation, stubbornly unfamiliar, feet sliding, stumbling, slipping on the rain-slicked tongue—we can actually begin to hang on.

I hope you experience a little more in every word.

