

The Word of the Year: Goblin Mode [B2]

‘Goblin Mode’ è stata scelta come parola dell’anno dal pubblico e dal prestigioso Oxford English Dictionary. Descrive comportamenti egoistici e indolenti derivanti dal rifiuto degli standard irraggiungibili imposti da una società che ci vorrebbe perennemente perfetti e produttivi.



This year, for the first time in history, the Oxford English Dictionary asked the public to help them decide on their Word of the Year. More than three hundred thousand people voted for their favourite of three options. The winner (by a **landslide**) was ‘**goblin** mode’. The fact that the term was included in the top three at all surprised many people, who **argued** that the term was not **widely** known. However, the editors at Oxford Languages defended the public **choice**, saying that it does reflect the **ethos** of 2022. ‘Goblin mode’ describes **behaviour** that’s **self-indulgent**, **lazy** or **greedy**. A person in **goblin** mode typically **rejects** social norms and doesn’t care what anyone thinks of them. An example of **goblin** mode **behaviour** is **lying** on the sofa in dirty clothes, **binging** on Netflix while eating pizza. In most European folklore traditions, **goblins** are grotesque, malicious creatures. **They could not care less** about their appearance or reputation. Note that a person can ‘be in **goblin** mode’ or they can ‘go **goblin** mode’. The

term first appeared back in 2009, but became popular thanks to the [headline](#) on a celebrity news story posted on Twitter in February 2022. The [headline](#) read: “Julia Fox [opened up](#) about her difficult relationship with Kanye West: ‘He didn’t like when I went [goblin](#) mode’.” In fact, the [headline](#) was [fake](#); Julia Fox says she never used the term ‘[goblin](#) mode’. But, being [fake](#) didn’t stop it going viral and soon ‘[goblin](#) mode’ had become a meme.

[SICK OF SELF-IMPROVEMENT](#)

According to American lexicographer Ben Zimmer, “[goblin](#) mode really does speak to the times and the zeitgeist”. After the stress of the pandemic, going [goblin](#) mode seems to be a [backlash](#) against aspirational social media content that bombards us with images of beautiful people doing [wholesome](#) things like [baking](#) and yoga. Goblins don’t do [either](#)! So, if you’re [sick](#) of [self-improvement](#) videos giving [advice](#) on how [to get fitter](#), work harder and look better, like those with the popular hashtag #ThatGirl, it’s time to go [goblin](#) mode! To connect with other [goblins](#), try looking at the app BeReal. This photo-sharing app encourages people to share unfiltered, spontaneous images of their everyday life and not [edit out](#) their [goblin](#)-mode moments.

[METAVERSE](#)

The second-most voted word was ‘metaverse’, a term that was used four times more frequently in 2022 than in 2021. A metaverse is (or might be in the future) an immersive virtual reality environment where users interact with each other through avatars. It doesn’t exist yet, but some people believe it will be the next phase of the internet. There was an increase in use of the word ‘metaverse’ after Mark Zuckerberg changed Facebook’s name to Meta in October 2021. Although the term has only become popular recently, the concept of a virtual reality world called a Metaverse appeared thirty years ago in an American sci-fi novel called Snow Crash by Neal Stephenson.

#ISTANDWITH

In third place was #IStandWith, a hashtag used to show solidarity with a person or a cause. #IStandWithUkraine appeared soon after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in [late](#) February and have become very popular. They are examples of ‘hashtag activism’, the phenomenon of using the internet to connect and organise followers of a particular cause. Other well-known examples of hashtags used in hashtag activism are #BlackLives Matter, and #MeToo.

PERMACRISIS

Oxford Languages aren’t the only ones to choose a word of the year. The publishers of Collins Dictionary chose ‘permacrisis’ as their 2022 Word of the Year from a [shortlist](#) of ten. They define a permacrisis as ‘a prolonged period of instability or insecurity, especially one resulting from a series of catastrophic events.’ So, for example, the Covid pandemic followed by the war in Ukraine has caused a permacrisis.

KYIV, [GASLIGHTING](#), WOMAN

Also on the Collins [shortlist](#) was Kyiv, capital of Ukraine. Before the Russian invasion, the name of the capital was normally [spelled](#) in English as Kiev, pronounced /key-ev/. But this reflected the Russian pronunciation. After the invasion, most English-language journalists adopted the spelling K-y-i-v, pronounced /keev/, to reflect the city’s name in Ukrainian. The publishers of the Merriam Webster dictionary chose ‘[gaslighting](#)’ as their Word of the Year for 2022. ‘Gaslighting’ means [misleading](#) someone, especially using psychological manipulation. The term comes from a 1938 [stage play](#) called Gaslight about a husband who uses psychological tricks to make his wife think she’s [going mad](#). In an age of misinformation and [fake](#) news, [gaslighting](#) is becoming an essential term. And finally, Dictionary.com chose a Word of the Year that isn’t new, needs no explanation, but, in their view, reflects the [ethos](#) of 2022. Their [choice](#) was ‘woman’.

Glossary

- **self-indulgent** = autoindulgente
- **binging** = to binge: guardare Netflix all'infinito (lett. abbuffarsi)
- **spelled** = scrivere
- **gaslighting** = manipolazione psicologica maligna
- **choice** = scelta
- **ethos** = ethos
- **lazy** = pigro
- **They could not care less** = non ha importanza
- **wholesome** = sane
- **either** = nessuno
- **landslide** = grande vantaggio
- **edit out** = nascondere
- **misleading** = che trae in errore
- **going mad** = impazzire
- **headline** = titolo
- **rejects** = rifiutare
- **lying** = giacere
- **fake** = falso
- **behaviour** = comportamento
- **to get fitter** = mettersi in forma
- **stage play** = opera teatrale
- **greedy** = egoista
- **opened up** = aprirsi, sincerarsi
- **sick** = stanco
- **goblin** = folletto, gnomo
- **widely** = ampiamente
- **backlash** = contraccolpo
- **late** = tardo
- **argued** = argomentare
- **self-improvement** = auto-miglioramento
- **advice** = consigli
- **shortlist** = elenco di finalisti
- **baking** = cucinare dolci