

Slang

Definition of Slang

Words that are not a part of standard vocabulary or language, and which are used informally, are called “slang.” These words are more commonly used in speech than in writing.

Every culture and every region across the globe has its own slang. Some of these include American slang, Costa Rican slang, Spanish slang and South African slang. European English regions, such as Wales, Ireland, and Scotland also have their own slang.

Examples of Slang in Literature

Example #1:

They all sat wondering how they were going to attack the enemy with the water balloon. One of the little boys finally suggested, “I can run up on him from behind that tree, jump right on him, and *Bob’s your uncle* – mission accomplished!”

The slang term used in this sentence is “*Bob’s your uncle*,” which means “there you have it.” This phrase found its origin when, in 1887, British Prime Minister Robert Gascoyne-Cecil appointed his nephew, Arthur Balfour, to the seat of Minister for Ireland. Balfour referred to his uncle as “Uncle Bob,” and the people decided it was a simple matter to be proclaimed Prime Minister if “Bob’s your uncle.” This slang is mostly used by British citizens.

Example #2:

“Last night was *flop*. I was supposed to go to a party with my friends, but they *flopped* on me. They are all such *floppers*.”

Here the slang term being used is “flop,” which means a planned event does not happen. A “flopper” is someone who cancels the plans at the last minute.

Example #3:

“I’m so upset about my birthday party pictures. My brother is making faces behind me in every picture, what a *photo bomb*!”

In the sentence above, “photo bomb” is the slang term. This is when a person or an object accidentally or intentionally appears in the background of a photo and as a result, ruins it.

Example #4:

“I got a job promotion even though I don’t go to work half the time. I’m *so sick*.”

Here, the slang term used is “sick,” which literally means “ill.” However, in slang it refers to something being *awesome* or *cool*. This type of slang terminology is mostly used by teenagers.

Example #5:

“I can’t believe she went and told my father about everything just to get me in trouble, what a *hater*.”

The slang term used here is “hater,” which refers to someone who is jealous or angry towards another person because of their success.

Example #6:

“The students caught cheating on the test were *given the third-degree* by the principal.”

The slang used in the sentence above is “third-degree,” which means “to be interrogated.”

Example #7:

“I can’t believe my life has passed so quickly. Now that I am in the hospital, I’ll probably just *kick the bucket* here.”

The slang being used here is “kick the bucket,” which means *to die*. Some people believe that this term is derived from the historical practice of having a person sentenced to hanging stand on a bucket – rope tied around his neck. The bucket was then kicked out from under his feet, leaving him hanging by the neck.

Example #8:

“The kids were ready to *bite my arm off* just because I promised to take them to the candy store.”

The slang phrase being used here is “bite my arm off,” which means to “get overexcited.”

Function of Slang

Slang allows a person to become creative in the use of language. Some people use slang in order to communicate with each other informally. Similarly, people using slang are able to identify other members of their subculture easily.

There is a special Slang Dictionary that contains such words and their meanings. When a new word is created in the slang language, and a majority of people start using it, then it is added into the language. If it does not gain enough popularity, it is forgotten.

One of the reasons slang is around is that people believe that, by using slang, they will be able to set themselves apart from others and be unique. However, others believe that this is an improper way of speaking or writing, and strongly criticize its use. Children who use slang while speaking end up using it while writing in school, which is discouraged in the academic world.