

Jargon

Definition of Jargon

Jargon is a literary term that is defined as the use of specific phrases and words in a particular situation, profession, or trade. These specialized terms are used to convey hidden meanings accepted and understood in that field. Jargon examples are found in literary and non-literary pieces of writing.

The use of jargon becomes essential in [prose](#) or [verse](#) or some technical pieces of writing, when the writer intends to convey something only to the readers who are aware of these terms. Therefore, jargon was taken in early times as a trade language, or as a language of a specific profession, as it is somewhat unintelligible for other people who do not belong to that particular profession. In fact, specific terms were developed to meet the needs of the group of people working within the same field or occupation.

Jargon and Slang

Jargon is sometimes wrongly confused with [slang](#), and people often take it in the same sense but a difference is always there.

Slang is a type of informal category of language developed within a certain [community](#), and consists of words or phrases whose literal meanings are different than the actual meanings. Hence, it is not understood by people outside of that community or circle. Slang is more common in spoken language than written.

Jargon, on the other hand, is broadly associated with a subject, occupation, or business that makes use of standard words or phrases, and frequently comprised of abbreviations, such as LOC (loss of consciousness), or TRO (temporary restraining order). However, unlike slang, its terms are developed and composed deliberately for the convenience of a specific

profession, or section of society. We can see the difference in the two sentences given below.

Did you hook up with him? (*Slang*)

Getting on a soapbox (*Jargon*)

Examples of Jargon in Literature

Example #1: *Hamlet* (By William Shakespeare)

Historical Legal Jargon

HAMLET to HORATIO:

“Why, may not that be the skull of a **lawyer**? Where be his quiddities now, his quillities, his cases, his **tenures**, and his tricks? Why does he suffer this mad knave now to knock him about the scone with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of **battery**? Hum! This fellow might be in’s time a great buyer of land, with his **statutes**, his **recognizances**, his fines, his double vouchers, his **recoveries**: is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? Will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures? The very **conveyances** of his lands will scarcely lie in this box; and must the inheritor himself have no more, ha?”

Here, you can see the use of words specifically related to the field of law, marked in bold. These are legal words used at the time of Shakespeare.

Example #2: *Patient Education: Nonallergic Rhinitis* (By Robert H Fletcher and Phillip L Lieberman)

Medical Jargon

“Certain medications can cause or worsen **nasal** symptoms (especially **congestion**). These include the following: birth control

the following drugs: Cough and cold medicines (pseudoephedrine, phenylephrine, and

beta blockers), **antidepressants**, medications for **erectile dysfunction**, and some medications for **prostatic** enlargement. If **rhinitis** symptoms are bothersome and one of these medications is used, [ask](#) the prescriber if the medication could be aggravating the condition.”

This passage is full of medical jargon, such as those shown in bold. Perhaps only those in the medical community would fully understand all of these terms.

Example #3: *Marek v Lane* (By U.S. Supreme Court Ruling)

Modern Legal Jargon

“In August 2008, 19 individuals brought a putative **class action** lawsuit in the U. S. District Court for the Northern District of California against Facebook and the companies that had participated in Beacon, **alleging** violations of various federal and state **privacy laws**. The **putative** class comprised only those individuals whose personal information had been obtained and disclosed by Beacon during the approximately one-month period in which the program’s default [setting](#) was opt out rather than opt in. The complaint sought **damages** and various forms of **equitable relief**, including an **injunction** barring the **defendants** from continuing the program.”

This ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court is full of modern legal jargon. The terms shown in bold are a good example of jargon that is not likely to be understood by the typical person.

Function of Jargon

The use of jargon is significant in prose and verse. It seems unintelligible to the people who do not know the meanings of the specialized terms. Jargon in literature is used to emphasize a situation, or to refer to something exotic. In fact, the use of jargon in literature shows the dexterity of the writer, of having knowledge of other spheres. Writers use jargon to make a certain [character](#) seem real in [fiction](#), as well as in plays and poetry.

