

The Name Is the Key

Depending on where in the UK you go, the name used for a chavvy person might differ... greatly. Charver, dobber, gazza, kev, knacker, mev, smick, yob – there are plenty of names to describe the type, but they all more or less refer to the same subculture. Chav,

however, takes the crown as the most widely used word.

The etymology of the word remains unclear, with linguists being divided between multiple possible origins. There was, for example, a popular theory about the word being an acronym for 'council-housed and violent', but it's been debunked and is now regarded as a backronym.

One of the most plausible theories says that the word originated from the Romani word for boy – *chavi*. Although the English word *chavvy* has been around since the 1860s, its current meaning only started gaining momentum at the beginning of the 20th Century. The word was officially inducted into the Oxford English Dictionary in 2003. The current definition of the word explicitly states that its usage is considered derogatory.

The Stereotype

The stereotypical chav either represents the lower working class or the jobless. They like sportswear, headwear and tattoos, but have a peculiar taste for fake Burberry. By the upper class, they're considered to be pitifully ridiculous in their distastefulness. The average male chav is aggressive, uses *chavspeak*, swears a lot, is extremely lazy and his favourite hobbies are vandalism and drinking. The female stereotype of a chav, a chavette, has Botox-filled lips, an extremely thick coat of bronzing powder on the entire face and gargantuan eyebrows. She's probably a young, single mother. Her hobbies? Smoking ciggies and chewing gum.

Chavs are considered to be leeches who live off welfare, don't contribute anything to society and generally just exist as, at times slightly scary and annoying amusement for the rest of Britain. For some, it's easy to pigeonhole an entire social class as *chavs* without a second thought. Although the word is rude to thousands of people who wouldn't like to be seen as lazy and dull, the term *chav* doesn't bear the same weight as racial or sexual slurs and is still commonly used without much repercussion.

But Are They Really?

The big question is – are chavs chavs by choice, or by force? Is being a chav a

- 1 depending on sth | w zależności od czegoś
- chavvy | pozbawiony klasy
- 2 however | jednak/ze
- divided | podzielony
- origins | pochodzenie

WARTO ZAPAMIĘTAĆ!

to gain momentum
nabierać rozpędu

council-housed | mieszkający w mieszkaniu komunalnym

violent | gwałtowny

debunked | obalony (o teorii)

regarded as | postrzegany, uważany za

plausible | wiarygodny

although | chociaż

current | obecny

to gain momentum | nabierać rozpędu

inducted into sth |

wprowadzony do czegoś

explicitly | wyraźnie

derogatory | obraźliwy

3 either... or... | albo... albo...

the jobless | bezrobotni

headwear | nakrycie głowy

upper class | klasa wyższa

pitifully | żałośnie

distastefulness | tu: bycie

nieprzyjemnymi w obęjściu

average | przeciętny

male | mężczyzna; męski

to swear | przeklinać

female | kobieta; kobiecy

coat | tu: warstwa

gargantuan | gigantyczny, ogromny

leech | pot. pijawka (o osobie)

to live off welfare | żyć z zasiłku

to contribute to sth | wносить

swój wkład w coś, przyczyniać

się do czegoś

scary | przerażający

annoying | denerwujący,

irytujący

amusement | rozrywka

to pigeonhole sb |

zaszufladkować kogoś

without a second thought | bez

wahania

slur | obraża, afront

commonly | powszechnie

by choice | z wyboru

by force | siłą