

Introduction

This support pack accompanies the audio file 'New words'. To listen to the audio file, go to: <http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/uk-culture/new-words>

This support pack contains the following materials:

- a pre-listening vocabulary activity
- the transcript of the audio file
- a comprehension activity

**Before you listen**

**Exercise 01**

Use the words and phrases in the table to complete the sentences below.

a. be inept	b. bother	c. bring to the fore
d. come across	e. general currency	f. impose a policy
g. in a state of evolution	h. influx	i. issue
j. lexicographer	k. military conflict	l. Pick up new words
m. playground	n. reviewing	o. spotter
p. Weight	q. Willingness	

1. A [.....] is a compiler or writer of a dictionary.
2. A [.....] is a hostile meeting of opposing military forces in the course of a war.
3. An [.....] of something is a rapid flowing in of something, perhaps too much.
4. An [.....] is a subject or problem people are thinking about.
5. If something is [.....], it is used or accepted in many places.
6. If you are a [.....], it is your job to notice a particular type of thing.
7. If you don't [.....] about something, you don't worry or make an effort about it.
8. If you [.....] something, you are considering it to make changes.
9. [.....] means to learn or get to know words, usually accidentally.
10. The [.....] is an area where children can play outside, often at school.
11. To be [.....] means to be in a state of change over time.
12. To [.....] at something means to be generally incompetent or not very good at something.
13. To [.....] means to highlight something or make it noticeable.
14. To [.....] on something means to force a plan of action on something.
15. [.....] is the quantity of something that may be too much.
16. When you [.....] something you discover it by chance.
17. [.....] means you are happy to do something if it is necessary.

## Transcript

Hello and welcome to Trend UK, your shortcut to popular culture from the British Council. In the next few minutes we're going to be talking about new words and phrases.

New words enter the English language all the time, in fact English has always been in a state of evolution and in recent years more and more words and phrases have entered the language, partly due to the increased willingness of lexicographers to include them in the dictionaries. But where do all these words come from? Our reporter Mark has been finding out.

If you want to know what words like screenager and splod mean the man to ask is John Simpson, chief editor of the Oxford English Dictionary. John what's your favourite new word at the moment?

Really I don't have favourite words, but let's say that one of my favourite new words is screenager, which is a young person or a teenager who spends a lot of time in front of the computer.

Any other favourites John?

Some of those rather unpleasant words like splod, somebody who is mostly inept, a splody person, but as I said I don't really have favourite words because all words as far as I'm concerned are objects of scientific study.

And where do these new words and phrases come from?

Well, words come out of the culture they represent and they describe so if you've got a new development in medicine for example, bird flu, then you'll get the new word coming out of that. If there's a military conflict that may well bring all sorts of new words to the fore. Going back in time the First and Second World Wars were times of great creativity of language because people from different countries met each other and exchanged their words and words developed from there. So really words come from, they come from the playground, they come from politics, they come from any area of

life because every area of life is changing from day to day.

How do you keep up with the huge weight of new words you have to evaluate?

Well, it's not just me, we've got something like 60 editors working on the Oxford dictionary and we also have readers and word spotters throughout the world who are sending us information in. In the old days they used to write them out on index cards when they came across some in books, but nowadays they tend to type them onto their computers and send them into the central computer here. It's an enormous issue, but one which we just about manage to keep under control. We don't include words just because we've seen one example of them we have to wait for evidence of general currency to build up in our computer files before we start putting the word in the dictionary. So a lot of the time it's collecting data, letting it build up and then reviewing it and then seeing what you've got and so that's how we manage the work.

And why is it John that English has more words than any other language?

It certainly has more words than other European languages and probably of any other language in the world. English is put together from so many different bits. Originally it was a Germanic language and then after the Norman Conquest there was an enormous influx of French words. It comes from a country, the United Kingdom, which has been quite an expansive, trading, colonial power in the past and that's brought all sorts of other new words into the language because words come in through contact often and so yes, it's a very receptive language and this contrasts really with many of the other European languages who because they are smaller than English are concerned that they may well suffer what they call loss of domain, in other words, there may be areas where their language may not be used, in university teaching for example, or in business or whatever, in preference for English say and they tend to be much more concerned about maintaining and defending their language. English is really so large that it doesn't really

bother about that. It also doesn't have a central academy that imposes a policy on the language – we don't really have any language policies here, we really allow the language to be self-regulating.

John Simpson of the Oxford English dictionary – thank you!

## After listening

### Exercise 02

Complete the gaps with a word from the box to make a *summary* of the text.

dictionaries	mix	phrases	send
size	spotters	use	wars

Lexicographers have lately become more open to including new words into English language [.....(1).....]. New words and [.....(2).....] are generated from the fields in which they occur, but are also created when populations and cultures [.....(3).....], as was the case during the two world [.....(4).....]. Dictionary publishers employ teams of editors, readers and [.....(5).....] to keep track of the hundreds of new words that enter the language every year. They [.....(6).....] in examples of new usage from all over the world using the latest technology, but words only get included once it is clear they are in general [.....(7).....]. English is particularly challenging as it has more words than most European languages, being the mixture of various other languages and having been used widely in colonial times. Due to its [.....(8).....] and reach there is no central body to determine what is and what is not acceptable.

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## Answers

### Exercise 01

1. j; 2. k; 3. h; 4. i; 5. e; 6. o; 7. b; 8. n; 9. l; 10. m; 11. g; 12. a; 13. c; 14. f; 15. p; 16. d; 17. q

### Exercise 02

1. dictionaries; 2. phrases; 3. mix; 4. wars; 5. spotters; 6. send; 7. use; 8. size