

## 922. Words of the Year 📖 (with Amber)

---

- This PDF is not a complete transcript for the episode
  - These are the notes which we used when making the episode
  - You can read the episode aims, criteria for analysing the words of the year, screenshots from the OUP website explaining their approach to The Words of the Year, definitions and examples of the words, and discussion questions for Amber and me.
  - You could use the discussion questions yourself to spark some conversation or speaking practice in response to this episode.
  - The notes on this PDF might be useful to help you find words, phrases and other information which came up during the episode.
  - There are some notes here which I cut from the final published audio and video versions of this episode, but I've left them on the PDF because they might be useful for you.
- 

### Introduction

Hello listeners, welcome back **Luke's English Podcast**. In this episode the topic is the Words of the Year, as chosen by Oxford University Press.

We are going to talk about some words which have really captured the mood of the moment over the past year or so.

I am joined by Amber, who is going to be my co-host for this one.

- ❖ How are you doing Amber?
- ❖ Ready for this episode?

**The aims of this episode are** 🙌

- To look at some trending words  
talk about their meanings & how they are used  
to give some examples  
to help my listeners to develop their vocabulary and cultural knowledge
- To take these words as the starting point for some general  
chit chat and discussion about current cultural trends

- ❖ **Amber, what do you know about the Oxford Words of the Year?**

## **OUP Oxford Words of the Year**

<https://corp.oup.com/word-of-the-year/>

Every year, Oxford (and lots of other dictionaries) select a shortlist of words (or phrases) which have reflected our world over the last 12 months.

### OUP

“We analyse data and trends to identify new and emerging words and expressions, which our lexicographers think of as a ‘single unit’, and examine the shifts in how more established language is being used.

The team also consider suggestions from our colleagues and the public, and look back at the world’s most influential moments of

the year to inform their shortlist—culminating in a word or expression of cultural significance.”

### So that means they choose... 🙌

- Words which have been used a lot during the year, often with a large spike in their use  
(based on quantitative data - just the number of times the word has been used, or a clear increase)
- Words which represent influential cultural moments  
(based on qualitative data - suggestions from colleagues and the public - what people think has been culturally significant).

They're not necessarily brand new words, but often portmanteau words (podcast, omnishambles, youthquake), or just old words which have been repurposed or suddenly used again with a more specific meaning.

These are words that catch the cultural zeitgeist, or capture cultural movements of the moment. They tell us something about the world today.

### Criteria for analysis / Things to consider & discuss 🙌

As we look at these words, here are questions we should consider.

- What do the words mean? Their definitions.
- Are they brand new words which have been created to express a new idea?

## 922. Words of the Year 📖 (with Amber)

4

- Are they old words which have been re-purposed somehow? Has the meaning or useage changed?
- How are they used, grammatically? Can we put them into sentences, to show my audience how they can actually use them?

### Also

- Where are these words used? Online or in the real world?
- Who uses them? Any specific cultural groups?
- In which situations are these words used? Informal ones, formal ones?
- What “world” do these words belong to? The world of media, finance, politics, publishing, the environment, public health, or just life in general.
- Why have the words been used so much recently?
- What cultural movements or moments are they connected to?
- What do these trends tell us about our society today?

Some of the words in these lists each year *don't last* and are definitely more “flash in the pan” - they're hot for a moment and then not. A passing trend.

❖ **Remember “the floss” , “cuffing season”, “fidget spinner”, “plogging” etc?**

but some of them definitely stand the test of time (post-truth, gaslighting, selfie, toxic).

## Previous episodes

We have done episodes like this before.

We did it for the 2015 words, the 2017 words and the 2018 (episodes 310-312 and 561-564, 565-566).

We used the Collins Dictionary lists for those.

### ❖ What do you remember about those episodes?

## Previous words we talked about (Collins)

### 2015 (with A&P)

Binge-watch  
Clean eating  
Contactless  
Corbynomics  
Dad-bod  
Ghosting  
Manspreading  
Shaming  
Swipe  
Transgender

### 2017 (just Luke)

Fake news  
Antifa  
Corbyn mania  
Cuffing season  
Echo chamber  
Fidget spinner  
Gender fluid  
Gig economy  
Insta  
Unicorn

### 2018 (with A)

single-use  
backstop  
floss  
gammon  
gaslighting  
MeToo  
plogging  
VAR  
vegan  
whitewash

### Some previous winners

2005 - Podcast  
2007 - carbon footprint  
2008 - credit crunch  
2013 - selfie  
2014 - vape  
2016 - post-truth  
2019 - climate emergency  
2021 - vax

To hear us talking about all that, go back to episodes 310-312 and 561-566.

[312. The Words of the Year \(Part 3\) with Amber & Paul](#)

[311. The Words of the Year \(Part 2\) with Amber & Paul](#)

[310. The Words of the Year \(Part 1\) with Amber & Paul](#)

[566. The Collins Words of the Year \(Part 6\) 2018 with Amber Minogue](#)

[565. The Collins Words of the Year \(Part 5\) 2018 with Amber Minogue](#)

[564. The Collins Words of the Year \(Part 4\)](#)

[563. The Collins Words of the Year \(Part 3\)](#)

[562. The Collins Words of the Year \(Part 2\)](#)

[561. The Collins Words of the Year \(Part 1\)](#)

**These words reflect the cultural zeitgeist**

- ❖ To what extent are you in touch with the cultural zeitgeist? Do you have your finger on the pulse? Are you down with the kids?
- ❖ Do you keep up with online trends, memes, cultural moments? How?
- ❖ What words do you expect to be in the list? Any idea?

## Words of the Year 2024

The shortlist of words with more details →

<https://corp.oup.com/word-of-the-year/#shortlist-2024>

- Brain rot
- Demure
- Dynamic pricing
- Lore
- Romantasy
- Slop

## Brain rot (the word of the year!?)

### brain rot

(n.) Supposed deterioration of a person's mental or intellectual state, especially viewed as a result of overconsumption of material (now particularly online content) considered to be trivial or unchallenging. Also: something characterized as likely to lead to such deterioration.

### Why is it in our shortlist?

Although it is not a new or recent concept, 'brain rot' has been widely used on social media this year, particularly on TikTok, and the term has become more prominent, increasing by 250% in frequency per million words between 2023 and 2024 in our corpus.

The term "**brain rot**" is often used informally and colloquially to describe the feeling or perception of intellectual decline, mental fatigue, or an unhealthy obsession with low-quality or

unproductive content. Its usage can vary depending on the context.

The term is usually used in casual, often hyperbolic conversations to express concern, humor, or criticism about how certain activities or habits affect the mind.

It's rarely used in formal settings.

### 1. Excessive Consumption of Media

- Refers to the negative effects of binge-watching TV shows, endlessly scrolling on social media, or consuming trivial or repetitive content.
- **Example:** "I've been on TikTok for hours, and I can feel the brain rot setting in."

### 2. Deterioration of Critical Thinking

- Used to describe a perceived loss of intellectual sharpness or the inability to think critically, often due to a lack of engaging or challenging mental activities.
- **Example:** "If I don't start reading books again, this brain rot from watching reality TV will be irreversible."

### 3. Playful Self-Deprecation

- Used humorously or hyperbolically to describe indulging in guilty pleasures or enjoying something "silly" or "low-brow."
- **Example:** "This cheesy rom-com is pure brain rot, but I love it."



#### 4. Exposure to Harmful Ideas or Misinformation

- Can also describe the effect of repeatedly being exposed to propaganda, conspiracy theories, or other damaging content that distorts one's thinking.
- **Example:** "Spending too much time on those forums will give you brain rot."

❖ **What do you think this tells us about our society today?**

#### **What this might tell us about society**

- **Digital overload.** There is growing awareness of the impact of technology on mental health and cognitive sharpness, alongside a struggle to balance productivity with entertainment.
- **Shift towards informal language.** The blending of humor, self-awareness, and exaggeration in language shows how people cope with the pressures of modern life through relatable expressions.
- **We are aware that a lot of modern content is rubbish.** There's a growing divide between meaningful, enriching experiences and the lure of instant gratification. People are becoming more reflective (or at least sarcastic) about their consumption habits.
- **Mental health awareness.** Society is grappling with the tension between the fast pace of modern life and the human need for rest, mindfulness, and depth.

- ❖ Do you ever feel that you have brain rot?
- ❖ Do you *over consume* online content?
- ❖ What junk do you watch?
- ❖ Do you ever make a conscious effort to do healthier or more productive things in the evenings?

## Demure



# demure

(adj.) Of a person: reserved or restrained in appearance or behaviour. Of clothing: not showy, ostentatious, or overly revealing.

‘Very demure, very mindful’ - Jools Lebron (someone on TikTok I didn’t know existed)

## Origin

The earliest use of 'demure' in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is from 1377, referring to the sea being calm.

The OED sense—'Of persons (and their bearing, speech, etc.): Sober, grave, serious; reserved or composed in demeanour'—is attested from the late 1400s and has been in continuous use since then. We've seen use referring to unostentatious clothing since at least the seventeenth century.

We saw a big increase in usage of 'demure' in August 2024, after **Jools Lebron** used the word in a short viral video on TikTok. Lebron's use of the phrase 'very demure, very mindful' to refer to her clothing and makeup choices was picked up and widely repeated by users on the platform and in the media.

Some commentators saw the trend as a reaction to the idea of a 'brat summer' (popularized in the wake of Charli XCX's album *Brat*); while 'brat' was widely associated with impulsive, hedonistic, and self-confident behaviour and outlook, 'demure' is linked to an idea of personal reserve and careful self-presentation.

The term "**demure**" traditionally describes someone who is reserved, modest, and shy. In 2024, its usage surged in popularity due to a viral TikTok video by influencer Jools Lebron. In the video, Lebron emphasized presenting oneself in a "very demure, very mindful" manner at work, highlighting understated elegance and professionalism.

This catchphrase quickly became a cultural phenomenon, leading to widespread adoption across social media platforms. Celebrities, including Jennifer Lopez and Khloé Kardashian, created their own "demure" videos, further amplifying the trend.

The impact was so significant that Dictionary.com selected "demure" as its Word of the Year for 2024, noting a nearly 1,200% increase in online usage. The term's meaning also evolved, now encompassing "refined and sophisticated appearance or behavior in various contexts."

This shift reflects a broader cultural movement towards embracing modesty and mindfulness in personal presentation, resonating with many as a form of empowerment and intentionality.

❖ **What do you think this trend tells us about society today?**

**Amber says: this is just a fun “catchphrase” and probably doesn’t mean very much, and you can’t say it any more - the trend has already passed!**

**What it might tell us (if we take this seriously)**

- **Reaction Against Hypervisibility.** There's a rising countertrend valuing privacy, introspection, and the power of understatement, particularly in how individuals present themselves online and offline.
- **Changing Norms in Feminism and Gender Identity.** Modern conversations around gender roles are allowing for a broader spectrum of self-expression, where traditionally "feminine" qualities like modesty or subtlety can coexist with strength and autonomy.
- **Evolving fashion trends.** Society may be shifting away from fast fashion and bold, transient trends toward more thoughtful and sustainable approaches to self-presentation.

❖ **What style do you lean towards? Demure or something more *ostentatious*?**

❖ **Do you practise mindfulness in your life in any way?**

## Dynamic Pricing



## dynamic pricing

(n.) The practice of varying the price for a product or service to reflect changing market conditions; in particular, the charging of a higher price at a time of greater demand.

### Why is it in our shortlist?

Whilst dynamic pricing is not a new phenomenon, this year has seen a heightened awareness of—and controversy over—its use. In some high-profile cases, dynamic pricing was used in setting prices for concert tickets, resulting in fans (often reluctantly) paying very high prices to see their favourite artists. In some cases, fans were in a virtual queue for hours before realizing how much they would be asked to pay, leading to questions about the transparency of dynamic pricing practices, as well as value for money.

- ❖ **Have you witnessed any cases of this?**
- ❖ **What did you think of the Oasis concert ticket fiasco?**

The **Oasis dynamic pricing controversy** centers on the band's 2025 reunion tour, where Ticketmaster employed a dynamic pricing model, leading to significant ticket price surges based on demand.

## 922. Words of the Year 📖 (with Amber)

15

Fans reported initial prices of £135 escalating to over £350, with some resale tickets reaching exorbitant amounts.

### The Guardian

This pricing strategy prompted widespread criticism and led to investigations by the UK's Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) and the European Union. The CMA is examining whether Ticketmaster's practices violated consumer protection laws, focusing on the transparency of dynamic pricing and potential pressure tactics on consumers.

### Pitchfork

In response to the backlash, Oasis added more shows, implementing an invitation-only ballot system to offer fans another chance at purchasing tickets. Additionally, the UK government is considering capping resale ticket prices to combat inflated costs in secondary markets.

### Financial Times

This situation has intensified the debate over dynamic pricing in the live music industry, highlighting the tension between maximizing revenue and ensuring fair access for fans. It underscores the need for greater transparency and consumer protection in ticket sales.

- ❖ **What do you remember about Oasis?**
- ❖ **Are you interested in their comeback?**

## Lore

👉 note the spelling - not *law* (although the pronunciation is the same)



# lore

(n.) A body of (supposed) facts, background information, and anecdotes relating to someone or something, regarded as knowledge required for full understanding or informed discussion of the subject in question.

## Origins (traditional meaning)

Another sense refers to 'the body of traditional facts, anecdotes, or beliefs relating to some particular subject; as in *animal lore, bird lore, fairy lore, plant lore, etc.*'.

**Current usage refers to pop culture stuff, or personal stuff, mainly.**



### Why is it in our shortlist?

In recent years, people have been using 'lore' in different ways and in new contexts. For example, they might now talk about the lore surrounding a particular celebrity, or a character in a book or film, or even refer to their own personal history as their lore. Online cultures and social media have seen the emergence of new kinds of celebrities and highly-engaged fandoms, and the word has been applied much more widely.

It is often a sign of 'gatekeeping' behaviour, in which some fans lay claim to a superior knowledge as a means of asserting themselves over other fans who they claim 'do not know the lore' as well as them.

### Plenty of examples

#### 1. Pop Culture and Media

- *"The MCU has built an intricate lore around its superheroes, connecting movies, TV shows, and comics into one expansive universe."*
- *"Fans of Harry Potter love diving into the wizarding world's lore, from the origins of Hogwarts to the history of magical creatures."*

#### 2. Gaming

- *"The game's lore explains why the kingdom is cursed and provides backstories for all the major characters."*

- *"Players can discover hidden lore by reading books and notes scattered throughout the game's world."*

### 3. Internet and Memes

- *"The internet lore surrounding this meme includes its origin on a niche forum and how it became a viral sensation."*
- *"Twitter has its own lore—if you've been around long enough, you'll remember the infamous 'bean dad' saga."*

### 4. History and Folklore

- *"TikTok creators are preserving local lore by sharing legends and ghost stories from their hometowns."*
- *"The festival celebrates the town's ancient lore, including tales of heroic warriors and mythical beasts."*

### 5. Branding and Marketing

- *"The brand's lore is rooted in its founder's journey, blending innovation with tradition."*
- *"Craft beer companies often create unique lore around their brews, tying them to local history or fictional narratives."*

### 6. Fashion and Subculture

- *"The punk scene has its own lore, from the origins of the mohawk to the stories behind iconic bands."*
- *"Vintage collectors love exploring the lore behind iconic fashion pieces, like the origins of the Hermès Birkin bag."*

### 7. Technology and AI

- . *"The lore of artificial intelligence includes tales of early breakthroughs, setbacks, and ethical debates."*
- . *"OpenAI's lore includes how it transitioned from a non-profit to a leading AI company."*

- ❖ **Why do I find this a bit annoying?**
- ❖ **What is the “lore” surrounding Paul Taylor or Luke’s English Podcast? (Do we have lore?) What about Paname Podcast? Amber & Paul lore?**
- ❖ **What subject (pop culture stuff probably) do you know the lore of?**

### A moment of self-indulgence (If I may)

### **The Lore of LEP (some bits of LEP lore)**

Here are some things ChatGPT\* thought of (lazy), and some things I thought of (my brain still works).

The things ChatGPT identified correctly are marked with an asterisk \*

- **Amber & Paul episodes\*** (they have their own lore in fact)
- **The Lying Game\***
- **Rambling\***
- **Long episodes\***
- **Skeletons with headphones on**
- **My French wife\*** (unnamed) **and the castle**
- **The Pink Gorilla Story\***
- **The Russian Joke\***
- **Explaining a joke is like dissecting a frog**

- Impressions & accents\* (Liam Neeson, Arnold)
- Learn English with a Short Story\*
- Family members\* (RT reports, Gill's Book club, music & films stuff with James, "bakewell tart!" with my daughter)
- I used to live in Japan (sick in Japan)
- LEP Ninjas\*
- LEP Meetups\*
- Singing a song\* (I like doing it, then I think it's cringe, then nobody ever mentions it, then loads of people say they love it, then one person leaves a very spiteful one star iTunes review because of it)
- Have a good morning, evening, afternoon, night
- Global audience (Wherever you are in the world)\*
- Bye bye bye bye bye

### Things that ChatGPT got wrong about the lore of LEP.

**WTF (What the Folk?):** A series about British culture, traditions, and quirks.

(I have never done a series called What the Folk? But it is a good idea!)

**"Break a leg, not your nose":** Luke's humorous advice, often delivered with a wink.

(Have I ever said this? I don't think so.)

Actually, that's it.

---

## Romantasy



# romantasy

(n.) A genre of fiction combining elements of romantic fiction and fantasy, typically featuring themes of magic, the supernatural, or adventure alongside a central romantic storyline.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romantic\\_fantasy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romantic_fantasy)

**Romantic fantasy** has been published by both fantasy lines and romance lines.

As a result of the financial success of authors such as Sarah J. Maas and Rebecca Yarros in the 2000s, publishers created imprints to focus on this subgenre.

Game historian Stu Horvath noted, "the heroes and heroines of romantic fantasy seek social connection and emotional wealth. Instead of carrying on by themselves, they find belonging in a community and a purpose larger than themselves. Magic and psychic abilities are often in-born talents; intelligent animals speak; and societies are egalitarian." [4]

## 2023–2024 romantasy trend

In 2023 and 2024, romantic fantasy novels termed "romantasy" became a social media trend. Sales of the books have been widely driven by promotion on social media, particularly the part of TikTok known as BookTok. [5]

The Economist notes that the genre has particular appeal to those who grew up reading young-adult fantasy, such as Harry Potter, and are now interested in similar themes, but with adult themes of sex and romance.[6]

Popular authors in the genre include Sarah J. Maas and Rebecca Yarros, whose *Fourth Wing* and *Iron Flame* have both broken sales records and are due to be made into a TV series.[5]

Authors of novels labeled as romantasy are largely women, as is the market, and the novels are known for representing minorities.[6][7]

### What it tells us

- A blurring of genres
- A desire for escapism (yearning, uplifting and totally distracting from real-world concerns)
- Empowerment and representation (characters are strong, successfully navigate the world and are diverse women)
- Social media influence on fandoms, publishing and book reading
- A desire for romance (in the face of ‘transactional’ modern dating culture)
- Immersive & aesthetic appeal (a growing appreciation for immersive, aesthetic-driven experiences in books, film, and digital content. Highly marketable content)

❖ **Have you ever read any of this kind of thing?**

❖ **What about Harry Potter?**

**Have you read it, and what do you think of it?**

- ❖ What kind of traditionally romantic literature have you enjoyed? What about fantasy?

## Slop



(n.) Art, writing, or other content generated using artificial intelligence, shared and distributed online in an indiscriminate or intrusive way, and characterized as being of low quality, inauthentic, or inaccurate.

### Origin

'Slop' has been used to refer to cultural material since at least the mid-nineteenth century, originally being applied to overly sentimental literature, and later more generally to nonsense or rubbish.

### Why is it in our shortlist?

In 2024, we have seen a 332% increase in the use of 'slop' to refer specifically to material produced using a large language model (LLM), which is often viewed as being low-quality or inaccurate. This type of low-quality, AI-generated material is becoming increasingly visible to people using internet search engines or social media, who often view it as unwanted or inferior.

#### ❖ Have you noticed any AI generated slop online?

#### ❖ I have noticed:

A slew of AI generated podcasts for learners of English - all slop created using Google Notebook LM or Google Gemini.

The same generic hosts with the same voices

The same expressions like "deep dive" and "delve into" constantly used

Soulless, even if quite impressive and linguistically accurate.

Accompanied by shiny AI imagery of people who don't actually exist - all slightly too attractive and with no particularly distinctive or interesting features.

But it is SOOOO much better than anything that has come before, and just imagine what it will be like in 2, 5, 10 years' time.



- ❖ **Where do you stand on AI?**
  - Do you use it?
  - What do you use it for?
  - How has it improved or worsened your life?
  - How do you see it affecting the world?
- ❖ **In terms of *not-slop*? What is your favourite, wholesome, human-generated online content?**
- ❖ **Can you recommend a nice podcast, series, YouTube account or something else which makes you feel good about the world?**

## **Feelgood online content that we enjoy (as an antidote to AI slop)**

### **What Amber listens to:**

- **Legacy (podcast)** Profiles of famous people and their legacies, including historical figures, writers, celebrities, politicians, etc.
- **History podcasts: Gone Medieval, Not Only The Tudors, History Hit**
- **Shag, Married, Annoyed** - A couple from Newcastle (Geordie accent) having funny conversations.

### **Luke's recommendations:**

#### **The Adam Buxton Podcast**

**Geowizard** (Brummie bloke who plays Geoguessr, finds locations of old family photos, and crosses countries in straight lines - getting into all sorts of scrapes in the process, and he has a way with words)

**Colin Furze** (relentless energy, a work ethic, mad inventor vibe, local English eccentricity, and a bloke making a series of ridiculous underground bunkers under his house)

**Elle & Toni** (Full Moon Tunes, song covers done really well, always good songs, some comedy, wholesome friendship, musical talent, good vibes)

**EmanRTM** (just a guy who completely stumps people in the street with incredibly easy questions, which they simply cannot answer - and his reactions are laugh-out-loud funny. It's a bit sad, but also strangely sweet and amusing)

---

**This is the end of the episode! But below 🙏 you can find more notes that we didn't use in the recording.**

---

### **Previous winners & Other Talking points**

#### **2023 - rizz**

What does it mean?

#### **From Today.com**

Rizz is short for “charisma,” and it simply means an ability to charm and woo a person. It's pronounced, well, rizz, just like it's spelled. The term found its way into teen slang through TikTok and other

social media. Rizz isn't being hot — though that can be part of it. And it isn't being cool — although, again, that's a factor.

Rizz, to borrow from slang of generations past, is *game*.

Spider-Man actor Tom Holland put the term in the mainstream spotlight when he claimed, in a BuzzFeed interview, to be sorely lacking in rizz.

"I have no rizz whatsoever, I have limited rizz," he said — although his legions of fans may disagree.

Holland pointed out that he is happily in a relationship, so has no need for rizz at the moment.

"It's short for charisma. And it's used to describe somebody who is seductive".

From the "Star Wars" universe, Han Solo and Lando Calrissian (Calrizzian?) have it. And, I would argue, both the Mandalorian and the actor who portrays him, Pedro Pascal, belong in that category, but here's where we get into personal opinion: Rizz is in the eye of the beholder.

- ❖ **Guys, do you have rizz?**
- ❖ **Amber, do Paul and I have rizz?**
- ❖ **Paul, does Amber have rizz?**

## 2022 - goblin mode (the first public vote)

'Goblin mode' – a slang term, often used in the expressions 'in goblin mode' or 'to go goblin mode' – is 'a type of behaviour which

is unapologetically self-indulgent, lazy, slovenly, or greedy, typically in a way that rejects social norms or expectations.'

- It's the way we all behaved during the Covid lockdown.

Seemingly, it captured the prevailing mood of individuals who rejected the idea of returning to 'normal life' after COVID, or rebelled against the increasingly unattainable aesthetic standards and unsustainable lifestyles exhibited on social media.

- ❖ **What does being in goblin mode mean to you?**
- ❖ **Are you often in goblin mode?**
- ❖ **Did you let things slip during and after COVID?**

### **2021 - vax**

- ❖ **Did you get any bad reactions from your vaccinations?**
- ❖ **Do you think they were necessary?**
- ❖ **Let's not talk about it too much**

### **2020 - 'words of an unprecedented year'**

basically, no word because everyone went mental and nobody in England was at work

- ❖ **What do you remember about 2020?**

### **2019 - climate emergency**

- ❖ **What evidence have you seen of the escalating climate emergency?**

2024 was a particularly challenging year for the climate. Here are some of the worst effects:

Record-Breaking Heat: 2024 was the hottest year on record, with temperatures exceeding 50°C in multiple locations. This extreme

heat led to severe health impacts, including over 1,300 deaths during the Muslim hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia<sup>2</sup>.

**Wildfires:** Intense heatwaves and droughts fueled devastating wildfires around the world, causing significant damage to ecosystems and human settlements.

**Extreme Weather Events:** There were numerous extreme weather events, including hurricanes, floods, and cyclones, which caused widespread destruction and loss of life. For example, Hurricane Milton in the United States caused over \$60 billion in damages<sup>1</sup>.

**Flooding:** Record-breaking rainfall and flooding events occurred in various regions, leading to loss of life and displacement of millions of people.

**Economic Impact:** The economic toll of these disasters was staggering, with damages estimated at \$229 billion globally. The United States alone accounted for three-quarters of the financial destruction<sup>1</sup>.

### 2018 - toxic

- ❖ **Why do you think the word toxic saw a big rise in its usage in 2018?**

The top collocations with toxic in 2018

- Toxic Chemical

*toxic chemical* has had particular significance as the nerve agent poisoning of a former Russian intelligence officer and his daughter in Britain sent shockwaves around the globe. Ongoing international attention to the case, including rising

## 922. Words of the Year 📖 (with Amber)

30

concern over who has access to the world's toxic chemical stockpiles, ensured that 'chemical' topped the list of words most frequently seen alongside toxic in 2018.

- Toxic Masculinity → the #metoo movement highlighted many examples of toxic masculinity
- toxic relationship, toxic environment, toxic culture  
All of these relate to situations which are bad for your mental health in some way
- toxic substance, gas, waste, air, algae ← all relate to pollution or the outcomes of environmental disasters

[https://languages.oup.com/word-of-the-year/2018/#:~:text=The%20adjective%20toxic%20is%20undefined,or%20imbued%20with%20poison'](https://languages.oup.com/word-of-the-year/2018/#:~:text=The%20adjective%20toxic%20is%20undefined,or%20imbued%20with%20poison).

- ❖ **Have you ever worked in a toxic environment?**
- ❖ **What do you remember about #metoo? Has it made a difference to anything?**

## 2016 - post-truth

- ❖ **Do we still live in the post-truth era?**
- ❖ **What do you think of the social media/tech bros who possibly run the world? These are the 'guardians' of truth today.**

## 2015 - 😂

This marked the moment when emojis were no longer just used by teens.

- ❖ **Do you use emojis in your texts or emails?**
- ❖ **What do you think when you see emojis in a message?**

## 2014 - vape

E-cigarettes are a multi million dollar industry.

- ❖ **Have you tried it?**
- ❖ **Do you think they are safe?**

(safer than smoking but still not safe - different chemicals, “thickening agents” etc which mean that vaping is linked with some lung problems)

## 2013 - selfie

- ❖ **What is the best selfie you have taken?**
- ❖ **What is the best situation in which you have taken a selfie?**

## 2012 - omnishambles (UK) gif (US)

Omnishambles = a shambles in all aspects (first used in TV series The Thick of It) but the people of 2012 had no idea what was ahead of them - the omnishambles that was to be the next, well, all years

GIF = Graphic Interchange Format (an image that contains a number of frames and therefore can be animated)

- ❖ **How do you pronounce “gif”?**

2011 - squeezed middle

2010 - big society

2009 - simples (UK) unfriend (US)

2008 - credit crunch (UK)

2007 - carbon footprint (UK)

2006 - bovered (UK) carbon neutral (US)

2005 - podcast (UK) sudoku (US)

2004 - chav

**Also from various other years (Collins)**

Deepfake

Cancel

Influencer

Social distancing

Key worker

Lockdown

NFT

Permacrisis

Climate anxiety

Sportswashing

AI

Nepo baby