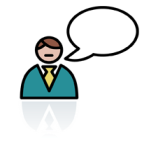
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**1920s Slang Activity**

*Why do you think groups of people, particularly young people, create slang? What can slang teach us about a particular time period?*

**

*What do you think the following words mean?*

*Banana oil:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

*Bee’s Knees:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

*Flat tire:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

*The slang of the 1920s mirrored the social climate of the decade- loud, boisterous, and rebellious. The 1920s were an especially rich era for slang. Baseball stars were given nicknames such as “The Sultan of Sweat,” the “Big Train,” and the “Georgia Peach.” Calvin Coolidge was nicknamed “Cool Cal.” For a time, Americans, especially young Americans, seemed intent upon amending the dictionary to make the language of the decade more adequately reflect the rapid social changes of the times. Look at how slang has changed over the decades.*

**Hello**

1900s: What’s up?

1910s: How’s tricks?

1920s: Hiya kiddo!

1930s: Hello Joe, what-a-ya-know?

1940s: What’s cooking?

1950s: Been a while, crocodile.

1960s: What’s happenin’ man?

1970s: Hey man, peace.

1980s: Dude.

1990s: Whazzup:

2000s:

**Money**

1900s: greens

1910s: scratch

1920s: lettuce

1930s: potatoes

1940s: dough, moola

1950s: clams

1960s: bread

1970s: big bucks

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1990s: bank

2000s:

First, underline all of the slang words in the paragraph.

Next, using the glossary, write the translation over the underlined words.

Finally, write a paragraph of your own, using at least 7 words. You may write a letter describing any of the following topics:

* Scopes Monkey Trial, changes in youth culture, Prohibition and crime, flappers, expatriates complaining about the new style, Harding, race relations, etc.

Choices in words:

1. **All wet**- wrong, mistaken
2. **Ab-so-lutel-ly**- affirmative
3. **And how!-** I strongly agree
4. **Attaboy**- well done
5. **Balone**y- nonsense
6. **Beat it**- scram or get lost
7. **Beat one’s gums**- idle chatter
8. **Beef**- a complaint or to complain
9. **Banana oil**- nonsense, insincere flattery
10. **Bee’s knees**- an excellent person or thing
11. **Belly laugh**- a loud, deep laugh
12. **Big cheese-** an important person
13. **Blind Date-** going out with someone that you do not know.
14. **Blue nose-** a excessively puritanical and religious person.
15. **Bull session**- an informal group discussion
16. **Bump off**- to murder, to kill
17. **Caper-** a criminal act or robbery
18. **Carry a torch-** to have a crush on someone
19. **Cat’s meow**- something admirable or wonderful
20. **Cat’s pajamas**- same as cat’s meow.
21. **Cheaters**- eyeglasses
22. **Clam**- a dollar
23. **Copacetic**- first-rate excellent
24. **Darb**- an excellent person or thing
25. **dogs-** human feet
26. **Don’t take any wooden nickels-** Don’t do anything stupid
27. **Double-cross-** to cheat, stab in the back.
28. **Dough-** money
29. **Dumb dora-** a stupid female.
30. **Egg-** A person who lives the big life.
31. **Fall guy**- someone who takes the blame for the crimes of others, a scapegoat.
32. **Fish-** a college freshman; a first timer in prison
33. **Flappe**r- a fashionable young woman of the 1920s, typically with short, bobbed hair, and a short skirt.
34. **Flat tire**- a boring person
35. **Flivver**-a Model-T; could mean a broken down car.
36. **Fram**e- to make someone appear guilty of a crime by giving false evidence or testimony.
37. **Gatecrasher**- an uninvited guest, a person who attends an event without paying for admission.
38. **Get a wiggle on**- get a move on, get going.
39. **Gold digger**- a woman who marries a man with money.
40. **Goofy**- silly; in love
41. **Hard-boiled-** tough, unfeeling.
42. **Handcuff-** an engagement ring
43. **Hayburner-** a gas guzzling car
44. **Heebie-jeebies**- nervous jitters
45. **High-hat**- to coldly ignore, to snub
46. **Hit on all sixes**- to perform 100%
47. **Hotsy totsy-** pleasing
48. **Horsefeathers**- nonsense
49. **Jack-** money
50. **Jake**- okay, as in “everything’s jake!”
51. **Jalopy**- old, run-down car
52. **Keen**- appealing, attractive
53. **Kiddo-** familiar for of address, meaning, “pal.”
54. **Kisser-** the mouth
55. **Left holding the bag-** to be cheated out of one’s fair share; to be blamed for something.
56. **Level with me-** to be honest
57. **Line-** insincere talk or flattery.
58. **Lousy-** terrible
59. **Main drag**- a city or town’s main street
60. **Middle Aisle-** to marry
61. **Mrs.** **Grundy-** a extremely uptight person
62. **Nifty-** great, excellent
63. **Nobody home-** describes someone who is dumb.
64. **On the lam-** fleeing from the police.
65. **On the level-** legitimate, honest
66. **Owl-** a person’s who’s out late.
67. **Pill-** an unlikable person.
68. **Pipe down-** stop talking
69. **Pinch**- to arrest
70. **Pushover**- someone easy to overcome or take advantage of, something easily done.
71. **Putting on the ritz**- doing something in high style.
72. **Raspberry**- a loud noise to indicate contempt
73. **Real McCoy-** the genuine article
74. **Ritzy**- elegant
75. **Sap-** a fool
76. **Says you-** a reaction of disbelief
77. **Scram**- leave in a hurry
78. **Sheik**- a loud, deep laugh
79. S**meller**- the nose
80. **Spiffy**- elegant, fashionable
81. **Stuck on**- infatuated with, have a crush on
82. **Swanky**- elegant
83. **Swell-** excellent, great
84. **Take for a ride-** to drive off with someone in order to bump them off.
85. **Tin-pan alley-** the music industry in NYC, located between 48th and 52nd street.
86. **Torpedo**- a hired gunman
87. **Upchuck**- to vomit
88. **What’s Eating You**- What’s wrong
89. **Whoopee**- noisy, unrestrained fun
90. **You slay me**- that’s funny

Texas, May 13th, 1932

Dear Mother,

I know that you must be balled up about how I left you and Daddy. I hope that you are swell; personally, I am copacetic. I met a hard-boiled man, a Real McCoy, and now I carry a torch for him. He likes me for me, and not just because I’m a doll or a flapper. You may think me a fool or a dumb dora since we are currently on the lam because of our recent capers. But you have to believe me, we didn’t bump off anyone for dough. Horsefeathers! In fact, we were framed! Clyde was the fall guy, and was left holding the bag for some rag-a-muffins that were total saps. Now, you may have had an earful of this and think that nobody’s home, but I want to be on the level with you, even though I know you have a beef with me. Clyde may not be any bluenose, nor is he a flat tire, but he definitely is not a torpedo. This is love! I am hoping that he will give me a handcuff, and that we will take a trip down the middle aisle. Please don’t be a Mrs. Grundy or a wet blanket. I won’t take any wooden nickels. It’s not like I’m hanging out a juice joints or am an owl. However, I do have to get my wiggle on; we have a flivver that could be considered a jalopy, and Clyde is waiting for me. Maybe we’ll end up on Tin Pan Alley in some swanky area and I’ll have an excuse to get dolled up.

Everything is nifty and jake. Love you, miss you,

-Bonnie