

axis



A PARENT'S GUIDE TO
TEEN SLANG



It's too late to be studying Hebrew; it's more important to understand...the slang of today.

— Henry David Thoreau

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Welcome to the world of teen slang!

Lost? Confused? Unable to understand your teens? Don't worry; you're in good company. Keeping up with teen slang is nearly impossible. New words are constantly being introduced, thanks to the influence of music, the Internet, apps, and celebrities (not to mention regional vernacular!). You may feel overwhelmed and lost when listening to your children/grandchildren speaking, and it'll only get worse when reading social media posts and hashtags. Use this guide as a reference for what's widely popular right now in order to translate what teens are saying.

Fun, Harmless, Silly

Adulting = To do things a bona fide adult would do. "Adulting is no fun. Why do I have to give all my money to the government?!"

Aesthetic = Another word for "vibe." "I don't like this artist because I don't get her aesthetic." "I love the aesthetic of this Instagram account I just found."

Ate/ate that/ate and left no crumbs = Used when someone does an exceptional job at something. "Tamara just performed all of Bohemian Rhapsody by herself. Ate and left no crumbs."

Basic = A way to describe someone who lacks originality and enjoys the most mainstream and predictable things.

BB = Synonym for "babe" or "baby," but usually used for friends. Pronounced "bee bee."

Bet = A response word synonymous with "Ok, for sure." "Do you want to go out tonight?" "Bet."

Big = A word that adds emphasis in multiple contexts. (Big mad: Being extremely mad about something; big sad: really sad; big brain: someone/something really smart.)

Blueprint = Used when someone did something so well that they became the standard by which everyone else does it. "Every boy band these days is trying to be OneDirection. They really are the blueprint."

Boo = One's significant other.

Boo'd (or booed) up = To be in a romantic relationship.

Boi = Another way of spelling "boy" through text or on social media.

Bop = A really good song. More modern synonym for jam. "The new Ariana Grande song is a bop."

Bougie/boujee = High class, rich, fancy (from "bourgeois").

Boutta = About to.

Bruh = More modern version of "bro."

Bussin' = Really, really good, usually used for food. Used twice in a row if the food is really spectacular. "Those fries look bussin'!" "Oh they are BUSSIN' bussin'!"

Canon/Headcanon = The actual plot of a book, movie, or show (canon) vs ideas people have that they want to be canon (headcanon). "My headcanon is that Thor really likes cats." "You can't tell me Percy Jackson doesn't have ADHD; it's literally canon!"

Catch feels = To develop romantic feelings for someone. Popularized by "Feels" by Calvin Harris ft. Katy Perry, Pharrell Williams, & Big Sean.

Catch these hands = Means "to fight" (e.g. "My girlfriend is way prettier than yours," "You boutta catch these hands").

Cheugy = Cringey or awkward, specifically used by Gen Z in reference to trends from the early/mid 2000s.

Chill = It can either describe a person who's really laid back, or the act of hanging out. "She's really chill," or "Let's chill tonight."

Clout = Having a great social influence or following, and being popular due to your social media or general social presence.

Dead/dying = When something is so funny, you can't handle it. "Oh my gosh that TikTok, I'm dead."

Doing the most = Being over the top.

Done = To be completely over a task, person, emotion, or situation.

Drip = Refers to a really cool outfit or item of clothing.

Extra = Over the top, excessive, dramatic. "I aspire to be this level of extra at my graduation."

F = A way to show the utmost respect for someone after something bad has happened (e.g. "My girlfriend just dumped me," "F").

Facts = Being in agreement with something.

Fam = Family, to denote one's actual family or one's closest friends.

Fire = Cool, awesome. "This party is fire!" Also denoted by the fire emoji.

Fit = In America, "fit" is short for outfit. ("Girl I love your fit!") In England, this word means someone who's really attractive ("That guy is fit").

Flex = To show off. Also denoted by the flexed bicep emoji.

FR = For real.

G = A term of endearment for friends. "Hey G what's up?"

Gassing = To hype someone up. "I'm always gassing up my girlfriend so she knows she looks cute."

GOAT = Greatest Of All Time.

Gucci = Good, cool, "it's all good bruh."

Highkey = Obvious or definite. "I highkey want that shirt." The antonym is lowkey, or something that is less obvious or definite.

IGL = In Game Life. This term is used by gamers to talk about their gaming lives.

IYKWIM = If you know what I mean.

IYKYK = If you know you know.

IRL = In Real Life.

Keep it 100 = Be true to yourself and stick to your values (short for "Keep it 100% real"). Made mainstream by The Bachelorette's Rachel Lindsay.

Left on read = When you text someone and they read it without responding.

Let's get this bread = A play on "dough" being slang for money, it means to work hard and succeed. It went viral in October 2018 and has somewhat morphed into a battlecry or a motivation to succeed. There are also many variants and subsequent memes.

Lewk = Another way of describing someone's "look." It's their signature physical trait, something that adds character to someone and makes them unique.

Live/living = When something is so incredible, it's finally making you "live." (E.g. "this is the best vacation ever, I'm living.")

Like my recent = Using one social media platform to tell one's followers to like his/her most recent post on another social media platform. Often seen as desperate. Synonyms: LB (like back), FB (follow back).

Mood = Describes something relatable. *Friend lays down on floor* "Mood."

Narrative = Something you would not like to take part in. "I would v much like to be excluded from this narrative." Popularized by Taylor Swift in response to Kanye West and Kim Kardashian.

No cap = You're telling the truth; basically "no lie."

Oof = What you say when you don't really know what to say in response to someone.

OTP = One True Pairing. Used to describe a relationship you are very invested in, or believe should happen. "I don't care that they're from different TV shows, they're my OTP!"

Rent free = When something occupies space in your thoughts. "I don't even like that song but it lives rent free in my head."

RIP/RIP me = Used to express sadness or to say something sucks. Comes from "Rest in Peace" but is pronounced as it's spelled. "I got an F on my paper, rip me."

RN = Right now.

Say less = A way of saying "I understand"; you're so on board with what's being said that you don't need more information. "Girls' night with ice cream and rom coms? Say less."

Sending me = Making you laugh, as in, sending you right over the edge of hilarity.

Ship = Short for "relationship." Used to endorse/support a romantic coupling, even one that's not reality. "I ship Ron and Hermione." "I see a ship developing!"

Shook = To be so completely surprised, scared, or caught off guard that your body is shaking.

Sis = It's literally an abbreviation for "sister," but can also be used as a term of familiarity or as a filler word.

Slaps = Something that's really great. "That new song slaps."

SMH = Shaking my head.

Smol = The online variation of the word "small."

Snack = An attractive person. "Girl lookin' like a snack!"

Snatched = Another slang term for looking good. "Your outfit is snatched." Older, less-used synonyms: On fleek, on point.

Stan = A hardcore fan of someone. The term comes from the song Stan by Eminem. For example, instead of saying "I love Billie Eilish," you'd say "I stan Billie Eilish."

Take the L = Take the loss. Can be used in any situation where one comes out behind. Antonym: W (pronounced "dub"); "That's a W!"

TBH = To Be Honest.

TFW = That Feeling When. "TFW you accidentally spill your Venti Frap all over your car."

This/that ain't it chief = Refers to when someone says something that they think is widely accepted or cool, but it's really not. "This pineapple pizza is so good." "This ain't it chief."

Understood the assignment = Used when someone is doing really well at something, exceeding expectations or making a statement. "Look at Natalie on the dance floor! Sis understood the assignment."

V = Very. "I'm v excited to binge my fav Netflix show."

Vibe check = A standard of “vibes” someone has to “pass”. Often used as a joke to justify why you don't like someone using nitpicky critiques. “He thinks frogs are gross. Immediately fails the vibe check.”

Vibing/straight vibing = Updated slang for “chilling” or “chilling out”. It means just hanging out and having fun.

Weird flex but ok = A sassy or sarcastic response to someone showing off or bragging online. Also used humorously.

Whip = Car.

Wig = Basically a shorter version of “wig snatched,” mostly used in appraisal of something or someone, especially of celebrities. It's as if you're so blown away by something that your wig literally falls off.

Wig snatched = To be amazed, blown away, caught off guard, or shook by something. Originates from drag queen culture. Often used in reference to an attractive person.

Wild/Wylin'/ Wildin' = A synonym for “shocking.” If used to describe a person, it can mean “hilarious” or “weird” as well. “YOU JUST MET DRAKE THAT'S SO WILD.” “She wylin'.”

Woke = To be fully aware of current events; living in a state of awareness that is above expectations. “Stay woke, son!”

Be Aware Of

AF = As f***. Used to emphasize something: “It's hot af in here.”

ASMR = Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response. An Internet trend of making videos with different sounds to elicit a physical response (e.g. goosebumps) from viewers.

BDE = Big D*** Energy. A compliment because it's a metaphor to signify that someone has the confidence of a well-endowed man. It's the opposite of being cocky or having toxic masculinity. It is often applied to both men and women.

Bomboclatt = This is a curse word of Jamaican origin, equivalent to the f-bomb. However, culturally in the U.S. it's used as a way to say “add caption”

or “explain this picture.” For example, someone might tweet a video and caption it “bomboclatt,” inviting others to add their own funny explanation of the video.

Cancel = To delete someone or something out of your life. “I canceled that guy from Tinder. It wasn't working out.”

Caught in 4k = To catch someone in the act, usually online, with proof. Similar to having “receipts”.

Clapback = Responding to an insult with an equal or greater comeback. The new word for “comeback.”

Clapped = Can either mean being obliterated in a physical match, or ugly.

Cringey = Cringe-worthy, awkward.

Curve = To reject someone romantically or sexually.

Deada** = Straight up, for real, no joke.

Finsta = Fake Instagram. Usually it's someone's second, less-public Instagram account, often used to be more real and raw than on one's primary account. Can also be used to lurk on someone in a more low-key way.

FOMO = Fear Of Missing Out. Many teens feel this because of social media's ability to highlight everyone else's activities. Antonym: JOMO (Joy Of Missing Out, i.e. finding joy in one's ability to commit to and enjoy one thing at a time.)

GD = God D***. “It's so gd annoying when...”

Ghost = To stop responding to one's texts, messages, posts, etc., effectively disappearing from their digital world.

Go off = Giving someone permission to rant about something or someone they're mad about. “She was so rude. Go off!”

Hop off = Mind your own business.

Hunty = Combination of “honey” and “c***.” It originated in the drag queen community as a slight insult, but it's starting to be used amongst groups of girls as a term of endearment.

Lowkey = A warning that someone doesn't want everyone to know what they're saying. "Keep this low key." Could also be used to mean "kind of," as in "I lowkey love this song." Antonym: High key (i.e. not trying to hide it; straight up proclaiming it to the world).

Main character/main character syndrome/main character energy = When someone either is, thinks they are, or behaves as though they are the most interesting or central person in a situation due to how they dress, speak, or behave. "I'm wearing these cow-print pants to the grocery store. Main character energy."

Receipts = Proof of something (like text screenshots).

Salty = Jealous or upset.

Sip tea = Mind one's own business. Usually means you don't want to get involved in the drama, but you have no problem watching it from the sidelines while comfortably sipping tea.

Slim thick/thicc = This is the "ideal" body type in today's culture. It's a girl with an hourglass figure: tiny waist and flat tummy, but bigger boobs, butt, and thighs.

Subtweet = To passive-aggressively call someone out on Twitter without actually tagging them.

Sus = Short for suspicious. "My credit card got declined. That's sus."

Tea = Gossip. "Spilling the tea" is telling someone the gossip.

Thicc = Used to describe a woman who is attractive, typically because she has curves in all the "right" places. Can be used jokingly about other things, like food or pets.

Thirsty = When someone is desperate for another person. Often refers to one's sexual appetite or desire to gain attention on social media.

Thirst trap = A sexy photograph or flirty message posted on social media that incites others to comment/DM with their interest/attraction.

Tweakin = Saying or doing something off/doesn't make sense, thus causing an overreaction. "My mom was tweakin on me when I missed curfew last night." Comes from the behavior exhibited by someone under the influence of drugs.

Red Flags

Addy = Short for "Adderall," a medication for treating ADHD that's also used recreationally.

Catfish = Someone who pretends to be someone they're not on social media, either for dating or sexual purposes.

D = Short for d***. "She just wants the D."

DTF = Down To F***.

FWB = Friends with benefits. This is undefined sexual relationship that's generally considered to be more serious than just hooking up, but less serious than an actual committed relationship. This usually happens because one person doesn't want to commit, while the other hopes he/she will.

Hooking up = Has various levels of meaning. Could refer to anything from making out to having sex.

Juul/Juuling = Vaping. Juul is a brand of e-cigarette that's very popular with teenagers, despite their claims that they aren't trying to market to teens.

KMS = Kill myself.

KYS = Kill yourself.

NSFW = Not Safe For Work. Used to mark something as sexually inappropriate or explicit.

Simp = A man who prides himself with "chivalry" in hopes of getting sexual gratification from women. He's over the top without the girl giving much in return.

Smash = To have casual sex.

Stealthing = Secretly removing one's condom during sex.

Xan/Xans = Short for Xanax, a sedative used to treat anxiety that's often used recreationally. Other terms are Xanny, bars, and footballs.

A Final Thought

As you can see, there's a lot to keep track of! We hope knowing these terms helps you discern when your teens are just engaged in harmless fun and when they're in need of intervention. One caveat: Teenagers are all about authenticity. They can smell inauthenticity a mile away. So carefully consider the choice to add these words to your vocabulary. Your teens may think it's cool or funny that you're using them . . . or they may find it totally uncool and therefore be embarrassed by your use of them.

Related Axis Resources

- [The Culture Translator](#), a free weekly email that offers biblical insight on all things teen-related