

Some (decent!) slang

Description: We take a look at common British slang words. There are 1000's of slang words but, be warned, many of them might be very insulting if used incorrectly. Some are derogatory and potentially hate-filled against groups within society. Several are quite vulgar. This list doesn't include any like that!

Anorak – a socially inept person with an obsessive hobby

Antsy – nervous, agitated, restless

Bodge – to mend, but in an incorrect and unreliable manner

Bog-standard – used of a version that is the most basic, without any extra features

Brolly – an umbrella

Cocky – to be arrogant or too full of self-confidence – e.g. "She's a cocky girl. Now that she's got her grade 1 exam in flute she thinks she should have a solo in the school concert!"

Codswallop – an explanation that is false

Cops – the police

Cuppa – a cup of tea (or sometimes a cup of tea or coffee)

Dab Hand – a person who has notable ability at a particular activity (usually, using their hands) – e.g. "He's a dab hand at anything electrical"

Do – (noun) a party or celebration – e.g. "The wedding's at church, but where's the do afterwards?"

Doddle – very easy to complete

Dog's dinner – a messy or very confused result of an activity – "I made a dog's dinner of my first speech to the council"

Earbashing – receiving a critical, and often lengthy, verbal criticism

Faff – (noun) a lot of effort – e.g. "I fixed the squeaking door, but it was a real faff"

Faff – (verb) to expend a lot of effort but achieve little – e.g. "She was still faffing around choosing a hat an hour later"

Fiver – a £5 note

Fluff – (verb) to make a mistake, especially to miss, or to say incorrectly, something I should have said (like a speech in a play)

Fudge – (verb) to deal with something in a vague or approximately-correct way so as to get a result that is satisfactory, usually concealing or avoiding the truth – e.g. “the Ukraine peace deal with the Russians fudges the real issues that go back 80 years”

Gobsmacked – very surprised (so much that I can’t say anything in response – ‘my mouth [=“gob”] has been smacked’)

Gutted – very disappointed

Hairy – used to describe something that causes a lot of anxiety or fright

Iffy – improbable, suspicious, maybe illegal

Item – used to describe two people in a romantic relationship

Jam – a meeting where people play popular music without planning or practising

Jammy – lucky, often when not deserved – e.g. “Manchester United are really jammy – they always seem to score just before the final whistle.

Jolly – (adjective) can be used to mean ‘very’ or having a happy character – e.g. “That’s jolly nice of you, how kind” or “He’s lived alone for 30 years, but he’s a jolly old man nevertheless”.

Jolly – (noun) when a business arranges a visit or event described as ‘work’ but which is mostly entertainment

Knock – to criticize, to find fault with

Kooky – crazy, eccentric

Kosher – correct, legitimate

Lippy – used to describe someone who makes many small insults

Loo – toilet

Mate – a close (non-romantic) friend

Nick – to steal OR to be caught by the police/security

Oddball – a person who is eccentric or unconventional. E.g. “He’s a bit of an oddball – he won’t eat fish unless it’s a Friday”.

Pear-shaped – describes something that went wrong or not to plan

Pickle – a bad situation from which it is difficult to escape – e.g. “he took his dad’s car without permission and scratched it on the gate post, so now he’s in a bit of a pickle!”

Queue-jump – to get attention from someone without waiting for other people who asked for attention before you

Quid - £1

Reckon – think or estimate

Ropey – of doubtful quality – or – feeling unwell

Shattered – exhausted

Skew-whiff – not straight, e.g. “that picture is hung skew-whiff”

Skive – to miss work or school for no good reason, e.g. “He’s not ill, he’s skiving”

Strop – a bad mood (particularly in children)

Tenner – a £10 note

Uni – University

Up for – willing to participate

Veg – vegetable

Wally – a more polite way of describing someone as stupid! E.g. “You’ve put the lipstick on your nose – you wally!” or “He’s a total wally. He’s gone to school and left his lunch box behind. Again!”

Whip Round – money collected rapidly from a group of people to meet a need, e.g. “John’s car broke down and, as he hasn’t got a job at the moment, we had a whip round and raised £500 to get it mended”.

Wonky – not working properly

Yob – a person who behaves aggressively and in an anti-social way

Zany - strange, surprising or uncontrolled, but in a humorous way