



2024 Words of the year



Levels: B2-C2

Skills: Speaking, reading, vocabulary

Time: 1 hour

Warm-up (10 minutes)

Slide 1 - Discussion in pairs, followed up by an open class discussion/brainstorm on one half of the board. This will help set a general context for the lesson, and allow students to transport themselves back to 2024.

Slide 2 - In pairs, students discuss what they think the words will be, based on the quote and images. Open class (OC) - What words did you come up with? Why? Write suggestions on the other half of the board - briefly discuss meanings (elicit).

Skim reading and discussion (5 minutes)

Skim read the article, looking at the bolded words. Were your predictions correct? Have you seen these words before? Discuss with a partner.

Students get the chance to confirm predictions and an opportunity to show knowledge.

Reading and gap-fill task - Activity 1 (15 minutes)

Now read the article and answer the questions individually. (7 min) Then compare your answers with a partner. (3 min). OC - go over answers (elicit from different students) - 5 min.

Closed practise, ensuring the meanings of the words are understood.

Discussion task - Activity 2 (10 minutes)

Discussion. Swap partners if needed (pair knowledgeable/confident students with weaker students). Discussion questions (Task 2) - 5 min.

In OC - ask different students what they talked about for each question (3 min).

Putting TL into context, pairing it with their own real-world experience.



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Evolution of words: discussion - Activity 3 (10 minutes)

Discussion in pairs - 3 min. Discussion in OC - write down words that have changed over time on the board (error correct where needed, note emergent language) - 2 min

Digging deeper into the word origins. Chance to demonstrate knowledge/share other words.

Freer production discussion - Activity 4 (10 minutes)

First, board the bolded terms and elicit synonyms for each of them (e.g. 'represent', 'showcased', 'self-indulgent', 'capitalistic', 'greedy', 'dramatic increase', 'spike'; 'famous/well-known for a bad deed/quality'). This will ensure students fully understand the terms. - 2 min

Discussion in pairs - 5 min. Go over in Open class - 3 min

Exploring the text further and using vocabulary to resonate with their personal experiences.

Follow-up task / for homework

Students write a short article about 'the spirit of the time' in the current year. They can choose 5 English words they would nominate as 'words of the year' and they need to justify their choices in the text. This task will require some research on their part (which, of course, should be done in English).

Has 2024 been brat? Maybe it was more demure, or did your brain rot? Here are all the 'words of the year'.

Adapted from the [ABC News article](#) by Lewis Wiseman

From **'demure'** to **'manifest'** and plenty of **'enshittification'**, 2024 had it all, it seems. Perhaps above all else, it was a **'brat'** year. These words have helped to define the feelings of so many people across the world in 2024.

'Brat'

Let's start with **"brat"** — the Collins Dictionary Word of the Year for 2024. It means different things to different people. Typically, though, it meant a badly behaved child. In 2024, it meant so much more. Starting out as the title of an album by pop singer Charli XCX, it has **captured the spirit of the age**. The Collins Dictionary redefined the word as "characterised by a confident, independent and **hedonistic** attitude".

'Enshittification'

Moving away from brat and straight over to **"enshittification"**, which was Macquarie Dictionary's 2024 Word of the Year. This might be a new word for many, and rightly so: it only came into existence in 2022. The word is a noun and means the deterioration of a service brought about by a reduction in the quality of service provided, especially of an online platform, and as **a consequence of profit-seeking**. "All the streaming channels making you pay extra to not have ads is the perfect example," Macquarie Dictionary managing editor Victoria Morgan said.

'Manifest'

"Manifest" was crowned the Cambridge Dictionary's Word of the Year. Initially, the word meant to appear or become clear but as it has evolved. It is now seen as an action of visualisation to help you achieve something that you want. People online use "to manifest" in the sense of: "To imagine achieving something you want, in the belief that doing so will make it more likely to happen."

'Demure'

Finished manifesting? Now you could try to act **"demure"**, if you like. The term demure has traditionally been used to describe those who are reserved, quiet, or modest. But in 2024 a new usage spread through social media — one used to describe refined and sophisticated appearance or behaviour in various contexts.

The word itself experienced a **meteoric rise** in usage in 2024: Dictionary.com said it saw a nearly 1,200 per cent increase in usage in digital web media alone from January to August.

'Brain rot'

Oxford Dictionary selected "**brain rot**" as its Word of the Year after it received 37,000 public votes. The dictionary said the word gained new prominence this year as a term used to capture concerns about the impact of consuming excessive amounts of low-quality online content, especially on social media. The term increased in usage frequency by 230 per cent over the year and Casper Grathwohl, president of Oxford Languages, said it spoke to the "perceived dangers of virtual life".

"It demonstrates a somewhat cheeky self-awareness in the younger generations about the harmful impact of social media that they've inherited," he said.

All of that sounds a bit "**weird**" right? Dictionary.com put that on its shortlist of top words for 2024. "**Weird**" *picked up notoriety* this year after the Democrats used the word to describe Republicans throughout the US presidential elections.

Does '**weird**' sum up the list of word of the year winners for 2024? Maybe.

Task 1: Gap-fill

Read the sentences below and fill in the gap with the correct word.

Brat (adj)	Brain rot (n)	Demure (adj)	Manifest (v)	Enshittification (n)
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1. If you're a pop icon like Dua Lipa, you might a headline performance at Glastonbury. At the iconic music festival, she told fans "I've written this moment down, visualised it, and wished for it so much".
2. In a year that saw record numbers of users flee X (formerly Twitter), the most discussed instance of is that of social media platforms.
3. Gen Z is bringing a mindset to the workforce: they remain unapologetically true to their values in both their career and learning journeys, and embrace their faults wholeheartedly.
4. The trend exploded on TikTok this month after a video from creator Jools Lebron went viral. In the clip, Lebron demonstrates the modest and sophisticated style of her hair and makeup for work. "Very" she dubs the look.
5. As an abstract concept, is something we're all vaguely aware of. However, few people are aware of how literally technology and compulsive internet use is negatively impacting our brains.

Task 2: Discussion

- Do you know someone who has a 'brat' attitude? Why would you describe them in this way? What are some actions they take or opinions they have that can be described as 'brat'?
- Read statement 5 from Task 1 again. Do you agree with it? What can be done to limit harmful internet usage?
- Had you heard of the term 'demure' before reading this article? Do you think dressing or behaving demurely is important?
- Have you ever tried to manifest something in your life? Were you successful? Do you believe in the power of manifestation?
- Can you think of some examples of enshittification? Why do you think it happens?

Task 3: Discussion

Read the quotes and discuss the following questions with a partner.

"Let's start with "brat" — the Collins Dictionary Word of the Year for 2024. It means different things to different people. Typically, though, it meant a badly behaved child. In 2024, it meant so much more."

"Now you could try to act "demure", if you like. The term demure has traditionally been used to describe those who are reserved, quiet, or modest. But in 2024 a new usage spread through social media — one used to describe refined and sophisticated appearance or behaviour in various contexts."

"Manifest" was crowned the Cambridge Dictionary's Word of the Year. Initially, the word meant to appear or become clear but as it has evolved, it is now seen as an action of visualisation to help you achieve something that you want."

- Think about the evolution of the meanings of the words 'brat', 'demure', and 'manifest'. Why and how do you think these evolutions happened? Are there societal trends which influenced the change?
- Can you think of any other words which have evolved over time? What caused the change?

Task 4: Discussion

Complete the sentences with your own ideas, then compare and discuss with your partner. Try to think of ideas not mentioned in this article.

1. In my opinion, the word ‘.....’ has really **captured the spirit of** (current year), because.....
2. Having a **hedonistic attitude** can lead to
3. In addition to the deterioration of some online services and platforms, another **consequence of profit-seeking** is
4. This year, there has been a **meteoric rise** in
5. In (current year), has/have **picked up notoriety for**

Task 1: Gap-fill answers

Read the sentences below and fill in the gap with the correct word.

Brat (adj)	Brain rot (n)	Demure (adj)	Manifest (v)	Enshittification (n)
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1. If you're a pop icon like Dua Lipa, you might **manifest** a headline performance at Glastonbury. At the iconic music festival, she told fans "I've written this moment down, visualised it, and wished for it so much".
2. In a year that saw record numbers of users flee X (formerly Twitter), the most discussed instance of **enshittification** is that of social media platforms.
3. Gen Z is bringing a **brat** mindset to the workforce: they remain unapologetically true to their values in both their career and learning journeys, and embrace their faults wholeheartedly.
4. The trend exploded on TikTok this month after a video from creator Jools Lebron went viral. In the clip, Lebron demonstrates the modest and sophisticated style of her hair and makeup for work. "Very **demure**" she dubs the look.
5. As an abstract concept, **brain rot** is something we're all vaguely aware of. However, few people are aware of how literally technology and compulsive internet use is negatively impacting our brains.