Open **slide 2** on the board of the presentation. Students try to predict what the Word of the Year 2026 will be based on the images in pairs.

If you like, you can board some advanced chunks of language before class which will be useful for students to express their opinions (upper B2 or C1/C2).

e.g. for C1/C2
- Based on the pictures, it's conceivable that ….
- In my opinion, a common denominator of these pictures is …
- For me, the primary factor which connects these pictures is…

For B2
- Considering the pictures, I believe the word of the year could be…
- The thing that connects these pictures is …
- Something that all the pictures have in common is ….

Open discussion in class. Board ideas and emergent language.

Purpose: Introducing the theme, getting students to think about associated words, global trends and their own experiences of 2026.

Time: 10 minutes

Slide 3
Distribute the article. Look at the title of the article. Discuss with your partner: Have you heard of this term before? Where?

Open class discussion (monitor discussion and then select one or two students to share).

Purpose: Opportunity for knowledgeable students to showcase their knowledge. Chance to confirm predictions. Students get the gist of the text before reading it.

Time: 2 minutes

Read the article aloud in class, paragraph by paragraph. Call on stronger students to do this (if you have an articulate, confident class), with all other students reading along. Alternatively, students can read quietly by themselves (if they are shyer/more prone to pronunciation errors) - decide what you think is best.

Time: 7 minutes

'Maxxing' selected as Dictionary.com word of the year

Adapted from the BBC article by Ana Faguy and Nardine Saad

Americans have gone all in on "maxxing", making it the 2026 Word of the Year for Dictionary.com. Short for maximising, the term "can be used on its own or added to the end of any word to convey you're doing something to the fullest or optimizing it as much as possible". It's a major departure from two years ago, when the site chose ‘demure’ as word of the year.

"Maxxing is the linguistic manifestation of a culture increasingly preoccupied with getting the most out of everything," said Steve Johnson, director of lexicography for the Dictionary Media Group. Digital media used "maxxing" nearly 19 times more in August 2026 compared to the 2025 monthly average, Dictionary.com found. The site also considered affordability, data centre, and odyssey as potential words of the year.

On social media, many people in Generation Z and younger - those under 30 - post extensively about their maxxing efforts to achieve all sorts of perfection. Influencers focused on fitness and wellness post about "proteinmaxxing" and "fibermaxxing". Those giving their full attention to improving sleep habits say they are "sleepmaxxing". The influencer Clavicular has gained thousands of followers as he chronicles his extreme "looksmaxxing" - working to meet a set of prescribed criteria for attractiveness, with importance given to jawlines, eyes and physique.

"Whatever we're doing, we want to push it further," Johnson said. "But its expanding uses also reveal how people are responding to that impulse. Some embrace it. Some exaggerate it for laughs. Others subvert it entirely by deliberately failing or being consciously mediocre at the activity they are ‘maxxing’.”

Linguist Vanessa Croft, who teaches English, says the internet and digital media make language move at "warp speed", even faster than radio, film or television ever did. As swiftly as new terms are added to the lexicon, they can just as quickly fall out of favour. "By the time millennials and older generations start using the terms, Gen Z and Gen Alpha aren't using those terms anymore," she says.

After reading: Students discuss in pairs the post-text discussion question below. Monitor students closely during discussion for interesting answers. This is also a moment when students can clarify any words/concepts they're not sure about (elicit from other students and board synonyms if necessary). - 2 minutes. During the following open class discussion (1 minute), always ask the students what their partner answered (encourages listening).

Purpose: Opportunity to show knowledge and highlight emergent language. Understanding the word of the year more deeply. Understand the text more deeply and discuss it in its wider context (students have the opportunity to disagree by connecting with their own real-world experiences).

Time: 3 minutes

Discussion question:

- Do you think it's an appropriate choice for the Word of the Year 2026? If so, why? If not, why not and which word may be a better choice in your opinion?

Now students do exercise one: Match the phrases from the text with their definitions. (3 min). Then they compare their answers with a partner.(1 min)
Open class discussion - go over the answers (elicit from different students) - 2 min

Time: 5 minutes

Purpose: Closed practice of specific vocabulary.

Exercise 1: Match the phrases from the text with their definitions

Phrase	**Definition (answer key)**
Go all in (verb)	To try achieve something by doing everything possible to make it happen (often involving risk taking)
A major departure from (noun phrase)	A sudden, often unexpected, and significant change of direction in thought, norms, or action
Push it further (verb)	To exert more effort than the significant effort already being exerted

For laughs (prepositional phrase functioning as an adverb)	Unseriously; for fun
Fall out of favour (verb)	To stop being popular
Get the most out of (something) (verb)	To take full advantage of something; to get the most possible benefits from something

Definitions

- Unseriously; for fun
- To exert more effort than the significant effort already being exerted
- To try achieve something by doing everything possible to make it happen (often involving risk taking)
- To take full advantage of something; to get the most possible benefits from something
- A sudden, often unexpected, and significant change of direction in thought, norms, or action
- To stop being popular

Discussion using vocabulary in context. Swap partners if needed (pair knowledgeable or confident students with weaker students). - 6 minutes

In the open class discussion, ask different students what they talked about for each question (4 min)

Time: 10 minutes

Purpose: Vocabulary in context - connecting it with their personal opinions and experiences.

Discussion: Vocabulary in context

1. The article states that some people engage in ‘maxxing’ for laughs, meaning they don’t take it seriously. Have you ever done something ‘for laughs’? What are some activities you can do ‘for laughs’?
2. Have you ever ‘gone all in’ when playing poker, or when doing another activity? What was the result?
3. Give an example of a time when something in your life took a major departure from what was normal for you at the time.
4. You are working hard to improve your English, which is amazing! How can you push it even further?

5. Give me an example of something which was once very popular, but has now fallen out of favour?
6. How do you get the most out of your free time?

Task 3: discussion - questions about the text / reading comprehension and application to real world settings.
If time and if needed: spend a minute or two focussing on the suffixes of ‘harm’ (slide 14). Emphasise that ‘less’ means ‘without’ and ‘ful’ means ‘with a lot’. Elicit and board some other examples: e.g. hopeless, hopeful, tasteless, tasteful, etc.

Discussion in pairs - 3 min
Discussion in open class - 2 min
Monitor closely for interesting answers.

Time: 5 minutes

Purpose: To generate interesting discussions and engage the students in a topic which is highly relevant to everyone. Production.

Discussion questions: The text

1. Give an example of harmless maxxing and one example of harmful maxxing, in your opinion.
2. "Maxxing is the linguistic manifestation of a culture increasingly preoccupied with getting the most out of everything” - Do you agree that our culture is ‘increasingly occupied with getting the most out of everything”? Why or why not?
3. “The site also considered affordability, data centre, and odyssey as potential words of the year.” - Why were these words also options? In your opinion, would one of these have been a better choice?
4. The article states that people under 30 “post extensively about their maxxing efforts to achieve all sorts of perfection.” - In your opinion, is this trend negative or positive? Why? What do you think contributes to this trend?
5. An expert in the text states: "By the time millennials and older generations start using the terms, Gen Z and Gen Alpha aren't using those terms anymore," - Have you ever experienced this? Give some examples of the different ways the different generations communicate.

In pairs, students come up with one or two ideas for maxxing and add them to their table. You may have to pre-teach/go over some words from the example, such as ‘aroma’ and ‘sip’. Board one or two ideas elicited from the students so that the concept is understood. Possible CCQ: “In this table, should the ‘maxxing’ words already exist, or are you inventing them?”. Monitor each pair during their discussions to ensure they understand the concept. - 3 minutes.

Then, students must get up and walk around the class sharing their ‘maxxing’ ideas. They should write down the ideas from their classmates (short notes suffice). (7 min)

Open class discussion: boarding the ideas of ‘maxxing’ (no need to include the details of how it’s done). - 3 min

Final question in pairs: Which ‘maxxing’ idea would you like to try? Why? (2 min)

Time: 15 minutes

Purpose: Production. The opportunity for students to get creative and invent their own English words, purely by adding a suffix. To be inspired and amused by the ideas of their fellow students.

Exercise 2: Englishmaxxing

Type of maxxing	**Example of how it can be done**
Example: “Coffeemaxxing”	Buying the best organic coffee on the market, grinding your own beans, and drinking it black and without sugar. Using a special coffee mug or flask which maintains the temperature for a long time. Breathing in the aroma of the coffee before sipping it slowly and deliberately on an empty stomach (so the caffeine effects are stronger).

Extra tasks

For extended lessons (e.g. 1.5 hours), or for if you'd like to replace any of the previous activities (such as 'Englishmaxxing', which is more difficult to do in an online setting). The "Do some research" setting is a great option for small adult group classes online, particularly if students can share their screen during the presentation process.

For the "Making the most of maxxing" task, make sure the students clearly understand the concept through elicited examples from stronger students and concept checking questions. For example, write "Weekend Maxxing" on the board. Ask the students to discuss possible serious, exaggerated, or mundane approaches. Monitor closely for interesting/demonstrative examples and then call on those students for their examples in the open class discussion. This task is more suited to advanced students (C1-C2).

Purpose: Production. To showcase their knowledge of what they've learned and get creative.

Exercise 3: Do some research

In this lesson, we've discussed looksmaxxing, proteinmaxxing, fibermaxxing, sleepmaxxing and other types of 'maxxing'. Find another example online of a 'maxxing' trend to share with the class (search for 'maxxing trends' or search for the hashtag on a social media channel).

Exercise 4: Making the most of maxxing, or doing it for laughs?

Consider the three 'maxxing' approaches mentioned in the article: its original purpose (getting the most out of something), exaggerated (as a means of critique), and deliberately failing or doing it mundanely (a means of critique).

Consider the three Instagram posts below* and decide which person is 'sleepmaxxing':

a) Seriously
b) Exaggeratedly
c) Mundanely

**Posts have been generated using AI (artificial intelligence).*







Choose any topic and then say how you would ‘max’ this activity in a serious way, an exaggerated way, and an ironic/mundane way.