**Pop Culture Anthropology- Slang, Sayings, and Linguistics**

**Finding Meaning in “Cloud Chasing”: Emerging Terms from the Vape Culture**

* [Cloud Chasing 101](http://vaping360.com/cloud-chasing-101/)
* [Ripping Fat Clouds: Cyber Monday Vape Pen Gift Guide](https://www.forbes.com/sites/curtissilver/2016/11/28/cyber-monday-vape-gift-guide/#3d587d952293)
* [Take a Deep Breath if You Want to Try Competitive Vaping: Using e-cigarettes, contestants vie to create biggest ‘clouds’; sponsors, cash prizes](https://www.wsj.com/articles/take-a-deep-breath-if-you-want-to-try-competitive-vaping-1429646394)

**Definitions**

* **Anthropology:** the study of various aspects of humans within past and present societies.
* **Linguistics:** the scientific study of language, and involves an analysis of language form, language meaning, and language in context.
* **Popular culture** or **pop culture:** the entirety of attitudes, ideas, images, perspectives, and other phenomena within the mainstream of a given culture. Heavily influenced by mass media, this collection of ideas permeates the everyday lives of the society.
* **Lexicographer:** a person who compiles dictionaries.
* **Lexicon:** the vocabulary of a person, language, or branch of knowledge (word-hoard, or word stock).

[**Noam Chomsky**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noam_Chomsky)

Noam Chomsky is an American linguist, cognitive scientist, historian, social critic, and political activist. Sometimes described as "the father of modern linguistics," Chomsky is also one of the founders of the field of cognitive science.

* “Language is a process of free creation; its laws and principles are fixed, but the manner in which the principles of generation are used is free and infinitely varied. Even the interpretation and use of words involves a process of free creation.” [- *Language and Freedom*, in *For Reasons of State*, Noam Chomsky](https://chomsky.info/language-and-freedom/)

**Resource Links**

Every generation has its slang- new words and phrases that allow kids to communicate without their parents understanding.

* [10 slang phrases that perfectly sum up their era](http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-27405988)
* [53 Slang Terms by Decade](https://people.howstuffworks.com/53-slang-terms-by-decade10.htm)

Have you ever wondered where sayings come from?

* [25 Common Sayings And Where They Came From](https://list25.com/25-common-sayings-and-where-they-came-from/)
* [How Shakespeare influences the way we speak now](http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20140527-say-what-shakespeares-words) “Shakespeare used 15,000 words in his plays, a portion of which he invented himself by merging existing words and anglicising vocabulary from foreign languages.”

**Key Questions**

* Have you ever looked at language as a social and cultural phenomenon?
* What is the difference between culture and society?
* Stop and think about how particular sayings or slang terms emerge at a certain point in history and fall out of favour and give rise to new ones. Then ask yourself, is this language evolution part of a cultural zeitgeist or the climate of an era that produces something unique?
* Does our language shape the way we think?
* How do words and phrases illustrate the social structures and innovation of a time period?
* Does society and culture influence the words that we speak, or do the words that we speak influence society and culture?

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**Guidelines- Getting Started**

* View language through the lens of placing it in a **social and historical context.**
* A historical context does not need to be years ago, it could have occured yesterday or last week.
* **Research** words and sayings that were defined by a period of time.
* **Ask your parents** about popular words or sayings they used growing up.
* Consider yourself a **pop culture researcher**. Look for trends and meaning in words or sayings.
* Build on the concepts presented in the **key questions** as you research and formulate your own ideas and opinions. **Develop new questions** the further you think about the **origin and influences** of cultural phrases (language evolution).
* **Have fun** hunting for sayings that defined a decade. **Amuse yourself** when attempting to answer how these phrases came to be.

**Instructions**

* Write an informative article related to slang and sayings.
* Include a catchy headline that will hook people into reading your article.
* The content needs to touch on the key questions listed above.
* The length is your choice.
* The format is your choice. Consider interviewing people for the article.
* The tone is your choice. Do you want to be serious or funny?
* Develop a sense of style and voice to your writing.
* Make it informative, interesting, relevant, and entertaining.
* Always practice proper spelling and grammar.