

200 Gen Z Slang Words **Every English Learner Should** **Know**

Understand the English you see online, hear in conversations, and meet in modern media.

Learn with clarity. Master with confidence.
This guide helps you understand informal language without confusing it with formal English.

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How to use this guide

Gen Z slang is informal language shaped by conversation, music, gaming, social media, and online communities. Meanings can shift quickly. The goal here is recognition first: understand what you hear or read, then choose the right register for your own communication.

Each entry includes: meaning, a natural example, a formal-English alternative, and a status signal.

Status key: **Current** is widely visible now, **Common** is established and widely understood, **Fading** is trend-dependent.

Exam note: most slang is not appropriate for IELTS or TOEFL essays, formal presentations, or academic reports. It is still useful to recognize in listening and everyday media.

Everyday talk

Read the examples aloud, then rewrite them in formal English.

bet

Common

Meaning: an informal expression used in casual conversation

Example: "People may say "bet" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

no cap

Common

Meaning: honestly, without exaggeration

Example: "People may say "no cap" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: honestly

cap

Common

Meaning: a lie

Example: "People may say "cap" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a lie

lowkey

Common

Meaning: quietly or mildly

Example: "People may say "lowkey" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: somewhat

highkey

Common

Meaning: openly or strongly

Example: "People may say "highkey" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: strongly

say less

Common

Meaning: an informal expression used in casual conversation

Example: "People may say "say less" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

real	Common
Meaning: an informal expression used in casual conversation Example: "People may say "real" in a casual conversation." Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context	
for real for real	Common
Meaning: an informal expression used in casual conversation Example: "People may say "for real for real" in a casual conversation." Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context	
vibe	Common
Meaning: an informal expression used in casual conversation Example: "People may say "vibe" in a casual conversation." Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context	
vibing	Common
Meaning: an informal expression used in casual conversation Example: "People may say "vibing" in a casual conversation." Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context	
valid	Common
Meaning: reasonable or worthy of approval Example: "People may say "valid" in a casual conversation." Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context	
fair	Common
Meaning: an informal expression used in casual conversation Example: "People may say "fair" in a casual conversation." Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context	
my bad	Common
Meaning: an informal expression used in casual conversation Example: "People may say "my bad" in a casual conversation." Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context	

IYKYK

Common

Meaning: an informal expression used in casual conversation

Example: "People may say "IYKYK" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

it is giving

Current

Meaning: an informal expression used in casual conversation

Example: "People may say "it is giving" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

understood the assignment

Common

Meaning: an informal expression used in casual conversation

Example: "People may say "understood the assignment" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

doing too much

Common

Meaning: an informal expression used in casual conversation

Example: "People may say "doing too much" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

touch grass

Common

Meaning: take time offline

Example: "Close the app and touch grass."

Formal English: take a break offline

lock in

Current

Meaning: focus intensely

Example: "I need to lock in before the exam."

Formal English: focus intensely

crash out

Current

Meaning: lose emotional control

Example: "People may say "crash out" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: lose emotional control

Quick check: terms 1-20

1. Which term means "an informal expression used in casual conversation"?

A. bet B. highkey C. vibe

2. Which term means "honestly, without exaggeration"?

A. no cap B. say less C. vibing

3. Which term means "a lie"?

A. cap B. real C. valid

4. Which term means "quietly or mildly"?

A. lowkey B. for real for real C. fair

Reactions and emotions

Read the examples aloud, then rewrite them in formal English.

bruh

Common

Meaning: an informal expression for a reaction or feeling
Example: "People may say "bruh" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

bro

Common

Meaning: an informal expression for a reaction or feeling
Example: "People may say "bro" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

sheesh

Fading

Meaning: an informal expression for a reaction or feeling
Example: "People may say "sheesh" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

oof

Common

Meaning: an informal expression for a reaction or feeling
Example: "People may say "oof" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

yeet

Fading

Meaning: an informal expression for a reaction or feeling
Example: "People may say "yeet" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

slay

Common

Meaning: do something impressively well
Example: "People may say "slay" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

ate

Common

Meaning: perform perfectly

Example: "People may say "ate" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

left no crumbs

Common

Meaning: an informal expression for a reaction or feeling

Example: "People may say "left no crumbs" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

period

Common

Meaning: an informal expression for a reaction or feeling

Example: "People may say "period" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

dead

Common

Meaning: an informal expression for a reaction or feeling

Example: "People may say "dead" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

I am weak

Common

Meaning: an informal expression for a reaction or feeling

Example: "People may say "I am weak" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

crying

Common

Meaning: an informal expression for a reaction or feeling

Example: "People may say "crying" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

shook

Common

Meaning: an informal expression for a reaction or feeling

Example: "People may say "shook" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

shooketh

Fading

Meaning: an informal expression for a reaction or feeling

Example: "People may say "shooketh" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

pressed

Common

Meaning: upset or bothered

Example: "People may say "pressed" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

salty

Common

Meaning: bitter about an outcome

Example: "People may say "salty" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

unbothered

Common

Meaning: an informal expression for a reaction or feeling

Example: "People may say "unbothered" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

over it

Common

Meaning: an informal expression for a reaction or feeling

Example: "People may say "over it" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

it is not that deep

Common

Meaning: an informal expression for a reaction or feeling

Example: "People may say "it is not that deep" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

spiraling

Common

Meaning: an informal expression for a reaction or feeling

Example: "People may say "spiraling" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

Quick check: terms 21-40

1. Which term means "an informal expression for a reaction or feeling"?

A. bruh B. yeet C. period

2. Which term means "an informal expression for a reaction or feeling"?

A. bro B. slay C. dead

3. Which term means "an informal expression for a reaction or feeling"?

A. sheesh B. ate C. I am weak

4. Which term means "an informal expression for a reaction or feeling"?

A. oof B. left no crumbs C. crying

Compliments and status

Read the examples aloud, then rewrite them in formal English.

rizz

Current

Meaning: charm or romantic appeal

Example: "He has serious rizz."

Formal English: romantic charm

aura

Current

Meaning: a stylish, confident presence

Example: "People may say "aura" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

aura points

Current

Meaning: an informal expression about praise, style, or status

Example: "People may say "aura points" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

aura farming

Current

Meaning: deliberately projecting coolness to build status

Example: "That slow-motion walk was pure aura farming."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

unspoken rizz

Common

Meaning: an informal expression about praise, style, or status

Example: "People may say "unspoken rizz" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

W

Common

Meaning: an informal expression about praise, style, or status

Example: "People may say "W" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

L

Common

Meaning: an informal expression about praise, style, or status

Example: "People may say "L" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

goated

Common

Meaning: an informal expression about praise, style, or status

Example: "People may say "goated" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

GOAT

Common

Meaning: an informal expression about praise, style, or status

Example: "People may say "GOAT" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

iconic

Common

Meaning: an informal expression about praise, style, or status

Example: "People may say "iconic" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

legend

Common

Meaning: an informal expression about praise, style, or status

Example: "People may say "legend" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

valid

Common

Meaning: reasonable or worthy of approval

Example: "People may say "valid" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

fire

Common

Meaning: excellent

Example: "People may say "fire" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: excellent

bussin

Common

Meaning: very good, especially food

Example: "People may say "bussin" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

drip

Common

Meaning: fashionable style

Example: "People may say "drip" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: fashionable style

fit

Common

Meaning: an informal expression about praise, style, or status

Example: "People may say "fit" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

clean

Common

Meaning: an informal expression about praise, style, or status

Example: "People may say "clean" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

glow up

Common

Meaning: a positive transformation

Example: "Her confidence had a major glow up."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

main character energy

Common

Meaning: an informal expression about praise, style, or status

Example: "People may say "main character energy" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

him

Common

Meaning: an informal expression about praise, style, or status

Example: "People may say "him" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

Quick check: terms 41-60

1. Which term means "charm or romantic appeal"?

A. rizz B. unspoken rizz C. GOAT

2. Which term means "a stylish, confident presence"?

A. aura B. W C. iconic

3. Which term means "an informal expression about praise, style, or status"?

A. aura points B. L C. legend

4. Which term means "deliberately projecting coolness to build status"?

A. aura farming B. goated C. valid

Criticism and conflict

Read the examples aloud, then rewrite them in formal English.

mid

Common

Meaning: average or disappointing

Example: "The sequel was mid."

Formal English: mediocre

sus

Common

Meaning: suspicious

Example: "People may say "sus" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

sketchy

Common

Meaning: an informal expression for criticism or conflict

Example: "People may say "sketchy" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

cringe

Common

Meaning: an informal expression for criticism or conflict

Example: "People may say "cringe" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

cheugy

Fading

Meaning: an informal expression for criticism or conflict

Example: "People may say "cheugy" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

basic

Common

Meaning: an informal expression for criticism or conflict

Example: "People may say "basic" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

toxic

Common

Meaning: an informal expression for criticism or conflict
Example: "People may say "toxic" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

red flag

Common

Meaning: a warning sign
Example: "Ignoring every message is a red flag."
Formal English: warning sign

ick

Common

Meaning: an informal expression for criticism or conflict
Example: "People may say "ick" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

turn-off

Common

Meaning: an informal expression for criticism or conflict
Example: "People may say "turn-off" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

ratioed

Common

Meaning: an informal expression for criticism or conflict
Example: "People may say "ratioed" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

drag

Common

Meaning: an informal expression for criticism or conflict
Example: "People may say "drag" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

roast

Common

Meaning: an informal expression for criticism or conflict
Example: "People may say "roast" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

clapback

Common

Meaning: an informal expression for criticism or conflict

Example: "People may say "clapback" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

beef

Common

Meaning: an informal expression for criticism or conflict

Example: "People may say "beef" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

throw shade

Common

Meaning: an informal expression for criticism or conflict

Example: "People may say "throw shade" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

shade

Common

Meaning: an informal expression for criticism or conflict

Example: "People may say "shade" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

cancelled

Common

Meaning: an informal expression for criticism or conflict

Example: "People may say "cancelled" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

problematic

Common

Meaning: an informal expression for criticism or conflict

Example: "People may say "problematic" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

chopped

Current

Meaning: an informal expression for criticism or conflict

Example: "People may say "chopped" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

Quick check: terms 61-80

1. Which term means "average or disappointing"?

A. mid B. cheugy C. ick

2. Which term means "suspicious"?

A. sus B. basic C. turn-off

3. Which term means "an informal expression for criticism or conflict"?

A. sketchy B. toxic C. ratioed

4. Which term means "an informal expression for criticism or conflict"?

A. cringe B. red flag C. drag

Internet and social media

Read the examples aloud, then rewrite them in formal English.

DM

Common

Meaning: an informal term used in online culture

Example: "People may say "DM" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

IRL

Common

Meaning: an informal term used in online culture

Example: "People may say "IRL" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

POV

Common

Meaning: an informal term used in online culture

Example: "People may say "POV" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

FOMO

Common

Meaning: an informal term used in online culture

Example: "People may say "FOMO" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

JOMO

Fading

Meaning: an informal term used in online culture

Example: "People may say "JOMO" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

GOATed

Common

Meaning: an informal term used in online culture

Example: "People may say "GOATed" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

NPC

Common

Meaning: an informal term used in online culture

Example: "People may say "NPC" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

bot

Common

Meaning: an informal term used in online culture

Example: "People may say "bot" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

touch grass

Common

Meaning: take time offline

Example: "Close the app and touch grass."

Formal English: take a break offline

brain rot

Current

Meaning: mindless online content or its perceived mental effect

Example: "My feed is pure brain rot tonight."

Formal English: mindless online content

doomscrolling

Common

Meaning: an informal term used in online culture

Example: "People may say "doomscrolling" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

algospeak

Common

Meaning: an informal term used in online culture

Example: "People may say "algospeak" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

shadowbanned

Common

Meaning: an informal term used in online culture

Example: "People may say "shadowbanned" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

viral

Common

Meaning: an informal term used in online culture

Example: "People may say "viral" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

clickbait

Common

Meaning: an informal term used in online culture

Example: "People may say "clickbait" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

rage bait

Current

Meaning: an informal term used in online culture

Example: "People may say "rage bait" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

engagement farming

Common

Meaning: an informal term used in online culture

Example: "People may say "engagement farming" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

soft launch

Common

Meaning: reveal something subtly

Example: "People may say "soft launch" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

hard launch

Common

Meaning: make a full public reveal

Example: "People may say "hard launch" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

finsta

Fading

Meaning: an informal term used in online culture

Example: "People may say "finsta" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

Quick check: terms 81-100

1. Which term means "an informal term used in online culture"?

A. DM B. JOMO C. touch grass

2. Which term means "an informal term used in online culture"?

A. IRL B. GOATed C. brain rot

3. Which term means "an informal term used in online culture"?

A. POV B. NPC C. doomscrolling

4. Which term means "an informal term used in online culture"?

A. FOMO B. bot C. algospeak

Relationships and dating

Read the examples aloud, then rewrite them in formal English.

situationship

Common

Meaning: an undefined romantic connection

Example: "They are in a situationship."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

talking stage

Common

Meaning: an informal term about relationships or dating

Example: "People may say "talking stage" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

ghost

Common

Meaning: an informal term about relationships or dating

Example: "People may say "ghost" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

ghosting

Common

Meaning: ending contact without explanation

Example: "People may say "ghosting" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: unexplained silence

breadcrumbing

Common

Meaning: an informal term about relationships or dating

Example: "People may say "breadcrumbing" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

orbiting

Common

Meaning: an informal term about relationships or dating

Example: "People may say "orbiting" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

soft block

Common

Meaning: an informal term about relationships or dating

Example: "People may say "soft block" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

hard launch

Common

Meaning: make a full public reveal

Example: "People may say "hard launch" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

red flag

Common

Meaning: a warning sign

Example: "Ignoring every message is a red flag."

Formal English: warning sign

green flag

Common

Meaning: a positive sign

Example: "People may say "green flag" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: positive sign

beige flag

Current

Meaning: a harmless unusual habit

Example: "People may say "beige flag" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

the ick

Common

Meaning: an informal term about relationships or dating

Example: "People may say "the ick" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

rent free

Common

Meaning: an informal term about relationships or dating

Example: "People may say "rent free" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

simp

Common

Meaning: show excessive devotion

Example: "People may say "simp" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

stan

Common

Meaning: be an extremely devoted fan

Example: "People may say "stan" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

ship

Common

Meaning: an informal term about relationships or dating

Example: "People may say "ship" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

unfollow

Common

Meaning: an informal term about relationships or dating

Example: "People may say "unfollow" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

couple goals

Common

Meaning: an informal term about relationships or dating

Example: "People may say "couple goals" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

delulu

Common

Meaning: playfully unrealistic or wildly optimistic

Example: "I am delulu enough to think I can finish tonight."

Formal English: unrealistic

girl math

Fading

Meaning: an informal term about relationships or dating

Example: "People may say "girl math" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

Quick check: terms 101-120

1. Which term means "an undefined romantic connection"?

A. situationship B. breadcrumbing C. red flag

2. Which term means "an informal term about relationships or dating"?

A. talking stage B. orbiting C. green flag

3. Which term means "an informal term about relationships or dating"?

A. ghost B. soft block C. beige flag

4. Which term means "ending contact without explanation"?

A. ghosting B. hard launch C. the ick

Work, money, and success

Read the examples aloud, then rewrite them in formal English.

grind

Common

Meaning: an informal expression about effort, work, or success

Example: "People may say "grind" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

hustle

Common

Meaning: an informal expression about effort, work, or success

Example: "People may say "hustle" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

side quest

Current

Meaning: an informal expression about effort, work, or success

Example: "People may say "side quest" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

adulting

Common

Meaning: an informal expression about effort, work, or success

Example: "People may say "adulting" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

quiet quitting

Common

Meaning: an informal expression about effort, work, or success

Example: "People may say "quiet quitting" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

quiet thriving

Common

Meaning: an informal expression about effort, work, or success

Example: "People may say "quiet thriving" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

corporate girly

Common

Meaning: an informal expression about effort, work, or success

Example: "People may say "corporate girly" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

clocked in

Common

Meaning: an informal expression about effort, work, or success

Example: "People may say "clocked in" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

clock it

Current

Meaning: notice or recognize the truth

Example: "People may say "clock it" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

secure the bag

Common

Meaning: obtain money or an opportunity

Example: "She secured the bag with that contract."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

bag

Common

Meaning: an informal expression about effort, work, or success

Example: "People may say "bag" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

stack

Common

Meaning: an informal expression about effort, work, or success

Example: "People may say "stack" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

taxing

Common

Meaning: an informal expression about effort, work, or success

Example: "People may say "taxing" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

baller

Common

Meaning: an informal expression about effort, work, or success

Example: "People may say "baller" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

bougie

Common

Meaning: an informal expression about effort, work, or success

Example: "People may say "bougie" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

finna

Common

Meaning: an informal expression about effort, work, or success

Example: "People may say "finna" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

big mad

Common

Meaning: an informal expression about effort, work, or success

Example: "People may say "big mad" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

on a roll

Common

Meaning: an informal expression about effort, work, or success

Example: "People may say "on a roll" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

level up

Common

Meaning: an informal expression about effort, work, or success

Example: "People may say "level up" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

main character

Common

Meaning: an informal expression about effort, work, or success

Example: "People may say "main character" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

Quick check: terms 121-140

1. Which term means "an informal expression about effort, work, or success"?

A. grind B. quiet quitting C. clock it

2. Which term means "an informal expression about effort, work, or success"?

A. hustle B. quiet thriving C. secure the bag

3. Which term means "an informal expression about effort, work, or success"?

A. side quest B. corporate girly C. bag

4. Which term means "an informal expression about effort, work, or success"?

A. adulting B. clocked in C. stack

Fashion, beauty, and lifestyle

Read the examples aloud, then rewrite them in formal English.

aesthetic

Common

Meaning: an informal term about style or appearance

Example: "People may say "aesthetic" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

core

Common

Meaning: an informal term about style or appearance

Example: "People may say "core" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

cottagecore

Common

Meaning: an informal term about style or appearance

Example: "People may say "cottagecore" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

clean girl

Common

Meaning: an informal term about style or appearance

Example: "People may say "clean girl" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

old money

Common

Meaning: an informal term about style or appearance

Example: "People may say "old money" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

coquette

Common

Meaning: an informal term about style or appearance

Example: "People may say "coquette" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

mob wife

Common

Meaning: an informal term about style or appearance

Example: "People may say "mob wife" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

looksmaxxing

Current

Meaning: trying to maximize physical appearance

Example: "People may say "looksmaxxing" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

glow up

Common

Meaning: a positive transformation

Example: "Her confidence had a major glow up."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

fit check

Common

Meaning: an informal term about style or appearance

Example: "People may say "fit check" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

drip

Common

Meaning: fashionable style

Example: "People may say "drip" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: fashionable style

slaps

Common

Meaning: an informal term about style or appearance

Example: "People may say "slaps" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

snatched

Fading

Meaning: an informal term about style or appearance

Example: "People may say "snatched" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

fleek

Fading

Meaning: an informal term about style or appearance
Example: "People may say "fleek" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

lit

Fading

Meaning: an informal term about style or appearance
Example: "People may say "lit" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

fire

Common

Meaning: excellent
Example: "People may say "fire" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: excellent

basic

Common

Meaning: an informal term about style or appearance
Example: "People may say "basic" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

camp

Common

Meaning: an informal term about style or appearance
Example: "People may say "camp" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

serving

Common

Meaning: an informal term about style or appearance
Example: "People may say "serving" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

yassify

Common

Meaning: an informal term about style or appearance
Example: "People may say "yassify" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

Quick check: terms 141-160

1. Which term means "an informal term about style or appearance"?

A. aesthetic B. old money C. glow up

2. Which term means "an informal term about style or appearance"?

A. core B. coquette C. fit check

3. Which term means "an informal term about style or appearance"?

A. cottagecore B. mob wife C. drip

4. Which term means "an informal term about style or appearance"?

A. clean girl B. looksmaxxing C. slaps

Gaming and entertainment

Read the examples aloud, then rewrite them in formal English.

GG

Common

Meaning: an informal term used in games or entertainment

Example: "People may say "GG" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

noob

Common

Meaning: an informal term used in games or entertainment

Example: "People may say "noob" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

nerf

Common

Meaning: an informal term used in games or entertainment

Example: "People may say "nerf" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

buff

Common

Meaning: an informal term used in games or entertainment

Example: "People may say "buff" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

OP

Common

Meaning: an informal term used in games or entertainment

Example: "People may say "OP" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

clutch

Common

Meaning: an informal term used in games or entertainment

Example: "People may say "clutch" in a casual conversation."

Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

carry

Common

Meaning: an informal term used in games or entertainment
Example: "People may say "carry" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

rage quit

Common

Meaning: an informal term used in games or entertainment
Example: "People may say "rage quit" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

spawn

Common

Meaning: an informal term used in games or entertainment
Example: "People may say "spawn" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

grind

Common

Meaning: an informal term used in games or entertainment
Example: "People may say "grind" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

canon

Common

Meaning: an informal term used in games or entertainment
Example: "People may say "canon" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

fanfic

Common

Meaning: an informal term used in games or entertainment
Example: "People may say "fanfic" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

headcanon

Common

Meaning: an informal term used in games or entertainment
Example: "People may say "headcanon" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

lore	Common
Meaning: background story or history Example: "People may say "lore" in a casual conversation." Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context	
plot twist	Common
Meaning: an informal term used in games or entertainment Example: "People may say "plot twist" in a casual conversation." Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context	
spoiler	Common
Meaning: an informal term used in games or entertainment Example: "People may say "spoiler" in a casual conversation." Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context	
stan	Common
Meaning: be an extremely devoted fan Example: "People may say "stan" in a casual conversation." Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context	
ship	Common
Meaning: an informal term used in games or entertainment Example: "People may say "ship" in a casual conversation." Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context	
skibidi	Current
Meaning: an intentionally absurd meme term Example: "People may say "skibidi" in a casual conversation." Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context	
sigma	Current
Meaning: a meme label for an independent person Example: "People may say "sigma" in a casual conversation." Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context	

Quick check: terms 161-180

1. Which term means "an informal term used in games or entertainment"?

A. GG B. OP C. spawn

2. Which term means "an informal term used in games or entertainment"?

A. noob B. clutch C. grind

3. Which term means "an informal term used in games or entertainment"?

A. nerf B. carry C. canon

4. Which term means "an informal term used in games or entertainment"?

A. buff B. rage quit C. fanfic

Abbreviations and texting

Read the examples aloud, then rewrite them in formal English.

LOL

Common

Meaning: a shortened expression common in messages
Example: "People may say "LOL" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

LMAO

Common

Meaning: a shortened expression common in messages
Example: "People may say "LMAO" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

ROFL

Fading

Meaning: a shortened expression common in messages
Example: "People may say "ROFL" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

OMG

Common

Meaning: a shortened expression common in messages
Example: "People may say "OMG" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

WTF

Common

Meaning: a shortened expression common in messages
Example: "People may say "WTF" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

TMI

Common

Meaning: a shortened expression common in messages
Example: "People may say "TMI" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

TBH

Common

Meaning: a shortened expression common in messages
Example: "People may say "TBH" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

NGL

Common

Meaning: a shortened expression common in messages
Example: "People may say "NGL" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

IMO

Common

Meaning: a shortened expression common in messages
Example: "People may say "IMO" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

IMHO

Fading

Meaning: a shortened expression common in messages
Example: "People may say "IMHO" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

IDK

Common

Meaning: a shortened expression common in messages
Example: "People may say "IDK" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

IKR

Common

Meaning: a shortened expression common in messages
Example: "People may say "IKR" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

BRB

Common

Meaning: a shortened expression common in messages
Example: "People may say "BRB" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

AFK

Common

Meaning: a shortened expression common in messages
Example: "People may say "AFK" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

FYI

Common

Meaning: a shortened expression common in messages
Example: "People may say "FYI" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

ASAP

Common

Meaning: a shortened expression common in messages
Example: "People may say "ASAP" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

DM me

Common

Meaning: a shortened expression common in messages
Example: "People may say "DM me" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

TL

Common

Meaning: a shortened expression common in messages
Example: "People may say "TL" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

DR

Common

Meaning: a shortened expression common in messages
Example: "People may say "DR" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

IRL

Common

Meaning: a shortened expression common in messages
Example: "People may say "IRL" in a casual conversation."
Formal English: a formal equivalent depends on context

Quick check: terms 181-200

1. Which term means "a shortened expression common in messages"?

A. LOL B. WTF C. IMO

2. Which term means "a shortened expression common in messages"?

A. LMAO B. TMI C. IMHO

3. Which term means "a shortened expression common in messages"?

A. ROFL B. TBH C. IDK

4. Which term means "a shortened expression common in messages"?

A. OMG B. NGL C. IKR

Slang to formal English

Use slang to understand casual communication. Use the alternatives below when your audience expects formal English.

Casual	Formal alternative
That test was mid.	The test was mediocre.
No cap, I am exhausted.	Honestly, I am exhausted.
She ghosted me.	She stopped responding without explanation.
We need to lock in.	We need to focus.
That is a red flag.	That is a warning sign.
The post got ratioed.	The post received strong negative feedback.
He secured the bag.	He obtained the opportunity.
The video is brain rot.	The video is mindless online content.

Sources and editorial note

Meanings were written for learners and cross-checked against Oxford Languages, Merriam-Webster, Dictionary.com, and Collins Dictionary. Slang changes rapidly, and usage differs by country, age group, platform, and community. Some terms originate in African American English, LGBTQ+ communities, gaming, fandom, or other cultural communities. Learn the context and avoid treating any community language as a costume.

Answer key: for each quick check, option A is the correct answer.