

English For Immigrants

... faded and forgotten words uncovered like an archaeological dig through layers of buried ruins of a long lost civilization.

English is a difficult language to master. So much progress is made in each generation that terms from a previous generation are routinely co-opted and used by the new generation, terms like “horseless carriage,” until they are eventually replaced.

Many other terms are just swept into the dustbin of history.

I pity the poor immigrant trying to watch an old movie, who encounters terms from a previous decade that are no longer in use or who is confronted with ever-changing colloquial slang terms, some of which have no real meaning but are used just for emphasis.

This book is designed as a compendium of terms enabling an immigrant to enjoy the full benefits of U.S. citizenship.

abra-cadabra

the word used by magicians to
invoke the very moment that an
illusion is created or appears.

absotively

a term used in a humorous context, formed by the melding of two words, “positively” and “absolutely,” implying a greater certainty than either single word conveys.

ahem

ahem is a form of onomatopoeia (words that express sounds, spelled the way they sound such as splash or swish) expressing a pause in speech marked by the clearing of one's throat.

ameliorate

means to smooth over conflicts, hard feelings and differences, continuing problems, not as a compromise or a capitulation, but to improve or restore a relationship, particularly in a win/lose situation.

arm-breaker

This is a term used to refer to a gangster, a thug “enforcer,” who uses violence to reek revenge on behalf of a mob boss upon his enemies or traitorous allies. More often, the “arm-breaker” is sent on a collection mission by his boss, a loan shark, usually to collect a gambling debt, or funds loaned for an illegal operation that is unpaid.

back door man

... a vulgar term used often in music, particularly in Blues, to express a sexual term otherwise forbidden for on-air radio or TV by censorship regulations, meaning a heterosexual male who prefers rear entry sex, or anal sex.

balderdash

... is an word that is used most often in conversation reflecting an older generation or time, to express disbelief in a statement or concept, an idea, or a fact said to be true that is otherwise false. A more modern synonym that often substitutes in less formal speech is “baloney.”

ballyhoo

a fuss

bama jama

This word can be used either of two ways.

It can mean the wholeness or completeness of an event, that is to say all-inclusiveness. but it can also mean to throw everything at a problem in a chaotic but overwhelming fashion to guarantee success. In short, it means “everything.”

bamboozled

fooled

bazombas

... a slang term to mean a woman's
breasts of notable size.

beaver

... a slang term meaning a woman's vaginal area, her "pussy." However it is also the word used by interstate truckers communicating on their CB radios to mean "a woman," more often someone in a passing car or on the side of the road worthy of a second look.

blaggard

This is an antiquated word most often seen in books or heard in the dialog of movie pirates. It expresses an extreme dislike of someone who is thought to be of no good, inevitably someone they oppose.

blip

... a small aberration or abnormality in a wealth of data or something that is part of a sequence, that is itself of a short duration, insignificant in the flow of the longer event.

blowhard

... someone whose utterances are nothing but “hot air,” of no consequence. Generally speaking, someone who just likes to hear themselves talk to inflate their ego but really have nothing to say.

blue balls

a physical condition producing a noxious state resulting from overstimulation of the male genitalia without an ejaculation.

blunderbuss

... a firearm no longer manufactured or in use, most often only seen in costume movies portraying naval battles on tall ships in the 15th and 16th centuries. The weapon had a flared, trumpet-shaped barrel was used to scatter shot, the predecessor of the shotgun.

Also, used to mean an insensitive or blundering person.

blurt

... uttering suddenly or inadvertently, divulging unintentionally and impulsively that which is ill-advised to speak aloud.

bluster

... a way of communicating that is full of swagger, usually accompanied by uttering loud, empty, or menacing threats or protests by way of inflated, often exaggerated speech, indicating that one is full of oneself, overconfident and overbearing.

bogus

... something that is not genuine,
is false, counterfeit or a sham.

bonkers

... crazy, mentally unbalanced.

boogie woogie

... a form of music (Jazz derived from Blues) that has a varied or improvised melody played over a repetitive bass line, often a solo piano, but in a group as well, that later came to define a dance associated with the form.

bowlegged

... an outward curvature of the legs describing a person where the space between the legs is wider at the knees when the ankles are placed together, and when viewed, form an elliptical shape as if they were formed around riding a horse.

bozo

... someone who is stupid or clownish.

brain teaser

... a problem that is difficult to solve.

brown noser

... a shallow person who seeks advantage through close association and flattery of a superior such as their boss, a teacher or a manager. Origins of the term infer the relation of an “ass-kisser” to the imagined result, the color of their nose, should it be thrust too deep in the process.

bruhaha

a rather large commotion of opposing views aired publicly.

bucktoothed

someone whose upper teeth project outward

bugaboo

something that causes fear or worry.

bum's rush

... to force someone to hurry
without good cause.

bumper thumper

a man who prefers to engage in anal sex.

bungle

... to fail in a task, most often an easy one, in a clownish way, awkwardly and clumsy, to botch the execution of that task.

bupkis

nothing, empty, or of no consequence.