

### Competition 5: What even are words anymore?

The [American Dialect Society](#), an organisation studying varieties of American English, chooses an annual 'word of the year'. Here are a few recent examples of the ADS's words of the year:

Year	Word of the year	Notes
2013	because	introducing a noun, adjective, or other part of speech: 'because reasons' or 'because awesome'
2014	#blacklivesmatter	in response to the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement
2015	they (singular)	'they' used as a singular third-person pronoun ( <a href="#">'They' also became the ADS's word of the decade earlier this year</a> )
2017	fake news	in response to the 2016 US presidential election
2019	pronouns	referring to personal pronouns; for example: 'my personal pronouns are she/her/hers'

You can see that these are quite different to what we might usually think of as 'words'. What can you conclude about the American Dialect Society's approach to choosing a 'word of the year', especially in terms of what it means for something to be defined as a word? Using the resources on this page, write a maximum 500-word essay in which you consider this topic.

### How to enter

1. Complete your competition entry and make sure it follows the guidelines listed below
2. Fill out the [Competition Cover Sheet](#)
3. Email your entry and your cover sheet to us at [inspire@sjc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:inspire@sjc.ox.ac.uk)

### Terms & Conditions

1. You must complete the [Competition Cover Sheet](#) and submit it along with your entry to [inspire@sjc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:inspire@sjc.ox.ac.uk) before the closing date. If we do not receive a completed cover sheet with your entry, we will NOT be able to consider the entry.
2. The competition closes at **5pm on 1 March 2021**.
3. The work you submit must be entirely your own, and should be 500 words or less.
4. Competition entries from pupils in Year 10 will be evaluated separately from pupils in Year 11.
5. Competition winners will be contacted via email about two weeks after the competition's closing date. Two sets of the following prizes will be awarded:
  - a. 1st place: £20 Amazon gift voucher, entry listed on Inspire Digital
  - b. 2nd place: £10 Amazon gift voucher, entry listed on Inspire Digital
  - c. Up to 5 top entries: entry listed on Inspire Digital