

### Competition 8: 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 300-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 Wednesday 2 December 2020**.
3. The work you submit must be entirely your own, and should be 300 words or less.
4. Competition winners will be contacted via email about a week after the competition's closing date. The following prizes will be awarded:
  - a. 1<sup>st</sup> place: £20 Amazon gift voucher, entry listed on Inspire Digital
  - b. 2<sup>nd</sup> place: £10 Amazon gift voucher, entry listed on Inspire Digital
  - c. Up to 5 top entries: entry listed on Inspire Digital