

## Competition 8 - What even are words anymore?

The words of the year the ADS have chosen are not necessarily new words, but words that have been adapted to have important meanings in modern day society. For example, the 2015 word of the year was 'they' as a singular third-person pronoun. The singular pronoun 'they' was adopted to refer to person whose gender identity is non-binary. As an important step towards inclusivity, using the correct pronouns for others shows that you respect their identity, even if their gender is not obvious. People now commonly put their preferred pronouns (e.g. they/them or she/her) in their social media bio's to avoid confusions and many use the pronoun 'they' if they are unsure about someone's gender (e.g. 'they' are late). This led to 'pronouns' becoming the 2019 word of the year.

Furthermore, the words of the year are not words you would typically find in a dictionary, but words and phrases that have risen in popularity through social media. Social media has become a new way of expressing world issues and awareness such as the #blacklivesmatter movement, where many shared first-hand accounts of police brutality. Most of these stories were not shown in the news and social media showed the truth of these issues, gathering supporters from all over the world.

Finally, words have been created as a response to the rise in technology such as websites and text messages. In fact a 2010 word of the year was 'app' and a 2013 word of the year was 'selfie'. There has been a rise in popularity of using these words because they have become normal in every-day life, even though they were never used before technology was developed.