BECOME A WORD DETECTIVE AND ENRICH YOUR VOCABULARY

Ene Peterson, lecturer
TUT School of Engineering
Virumaa College
23-24 March, Narva
THE AIM OF THE WORKSHOP IS:

to spark curiosity to find out as much we can about words so we can exploit to our advantage:

- the origin and evolution of words
- the irregularity of English spelling and pronunciation
- wordchanges
- wordfutures
Fascinated by words

David Crystal, a world renowned linguist, prolific author, editor, lecturer, broadcaster.

- At any one time language is a kaleidoscope of styles, genres and dialects.
- Vocabulary is a matter of word-building as well as word-using.
- Texting has added a new dimension to language use, but its long-term impact is negligible. It is not a disaster.
- The internet is an amazing medium for languages...
- The story of words cannot be told in one book.

David Crystal quotes and website

D. Crystal. 2007. Words. Words. Words. OUP
OUTLINE

➤ The power of words
➤ Preparation for the investigation of words
➤ Puzzle-solving
➤ Final tips: how to become „masters of words“
A Word is Dead

A word is dead
When it is said,
Some say.
I say it just
Begins to live
That day.

(Emily Dickinson, Complete Poems)
“We cannot control the way people interpret our ideas or thoughts, but we can control the words and tones we choose to convey them.

Peace is built on understanding, and wars are built on misunderstandings. Never underestimate the power of a single word, and never recklessly throw around words.

One wrong word, or misinterpreted word, can change the meaning of an entire sentence - and even start a war.

And one right word, or one kind word, can grant you the heavens and open doors.”

Suzy Kassem (American writer “Rise Up and Salute the Sun”)
How many words are there in English?
Varying estimations (from half a million to over 2 million)

a) what counts as a word

in writing: one word or two words or hyphenated; all items as new words, e.g. with foster or treat as combinations of old words (foster + brother); a single meaning or not (get at, get by, get off, get over…)

b) what counts as "English"

words restricted to a particular country or to a particular part of a country? regional dialect words? the names of people, places and things in the world (knowing that these words are different in other languages? the proper names which have taken on special meaning? medical and scientific terms? new technical terms? teenage slang? abbreviations?

On Wednesday, a Texas-based media consulting firm announced the birth of the millionth English word, which arrived on June 10, 2009, at 10:22 a.m., Stratford-on-Avon time. Paul JJ Payack, president and chief word analyst of the Global Language Monitor.

The English Language WordClock: 1,005,366 (as of November 26, 2016)

The Millionth Word was the controversial ‘……………..‘

Web 2.0 The second stage of development of the Internet

Top Trending Words for 2016

1. bigly  Video  2. Brexit  10. memory care
12. texticate  14. Trumpism  15. Tennessine
The OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY (OED)

- started life more than 150 years ago
- the accepted authority on the English language
- an unsurpassed guide to the meaning, history, and pronunciation of 600,000 words—past and present—from across the English-speaking world.

The OED Today

- thoroughgoing revision and update.
- New Word lists—every three months (about 500 words)

OED Word of the year 2009

unfriend—to remove someone as a ‘friend’ on a social networking site, such as Facebook

New entries 2016 December

Brexit, Grexit (blend of Greek and Greece and exit), verklempt (North American, Yiddish, German origin), wobbleboard (Australian)

Word origins

bug, flea market, UFO, pros and cons, brass monkey, etc.

Video: How do new words are added to the dictionary?
LET'S START OUR INVESTIGATION INTO THE WORLD OF WORDS
The story goes that one of the early electromechanical computers suffered a failure because an insect had crawled into the machine and been squashed between the moving parts of a relay switch, thereby jamming it. The incident was written up in the logbook and spread from there throughout the whole of the infant computer industry. However, although the account seems to be genuine, the word is older: the event was recorded as an amusement for posterity precisely because the term ‘bug’ was already in use. (OED)

Meaning "defect in a machine" (1889) may have been coined c. 1878 by Thomas Edison (perhaps with the notion of an insect getting into the works) (Dictionary of etymology)

Was the first computer ‘bug’ a real insect?

bug - an error in a computer program or system.

YES / NO

Watch the OED video
PUZZLE 2: FOREIGN WORDS IN ENGLISH

SOME FACTS:

- English has borrowed words from over 350 languages around the world.
- Of 80,000 English words, roughly 28% originate from Latin, 28% from French, and 25% from Germanic languages

Task 2.1. Listen to a sound poem

Names make music

**ARABIC** all, like

camphor, candy, coffee, kebab,
caravan, crimson, chemistry, haram,

gazelle, giraffe, guitar, salaam,

lemon, lime, tangerine, mimbar,

Names make music

**ARABIC** all.

YOUR TURN: CREATE YOUR OWN SOUND POEM

Words of Chinese origin: bok choy, chop chop, chow, feng-shui, hanfu, kung fu, taipan, tofu, tong, tycoon, yang, yin, wushu, wuxia, wok

Words of Russian origin: balalaika, dacha, intelligentsia, karakul, kasha, pirog, samovar, taiga, troika, vodka, zakuska, babushka, kazachoc, kisel, kolkhoz, perestroika, pogrom, samizdat, smetana, sputnik, taiga, talik, tokamak, vobla

Words of Spanish origin: chilli, chinchilla, adobe, flotilla, mantilla, amigo, bajada, cabana, canyon, corrida, copita, fiesta, estufa, monte, muleta, patio, pelota, ramada, rodeo, salsa, santerio, santero, tapas, tostadita

Words of Italian origin: (19th century) calando, cassano, contessa, fermata, granita, meno, mezzani, molto, mosso, pizza, pasta, salami, spaghetti, zucchetto; (20th century) capo, cappuccino, cibatta, dolce vita, espresso, frittata, graffiti, ma non troppo, marinara, penne, pepperoni, pesto, ristorante, terra rossa, tiramisu, vino ta tavola, viva, vita nuova.
**TASKS**

**Task 2.2.** Match the words with the country or language of origin (A) and the meaning (B)

*disaster, hazard, nice, muscle, galactico, addict, jeans, mortgage, denim, taboo*

**A. Country or language of origin:**

French, France, Greek, Italy, Latin, Spanish, Tongan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>“death pledge”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>“death pledge”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>a slave to anyone or anything</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>a person from another galaxy; in sport (especially in sport)- one of a team`s start players, especially an expensive signing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>prohibited or restricted, especially by social custom</td>
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<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>Late 17th century (as serge denim): from French serge de Nîmes, denoting a kind of serge from the town of Nîmes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>“little mouse”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>means “ bad start”. The sense is astrological, of a calamity blamed on an unfavorable position of a planet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>related to the place of origin, Genoa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>game of chance played with dice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j</td>
<td>&quot;careless, clumsy; weak; poor, needy; simple, stupid, silly, foolish.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PUZZLE 3: The irregularity of English spelling and pronunciation

Why is English spelling exceptionally irregular? The English Spelling Society

Have you ever wondered why the letters “ough” can be pronounced in so many different ways (/oʊ/) as in “though”, (/uː/) as in “through”, (/ʌf/) as in “rough”, (/ɒf/) as in “cough”, (/ɔː/) as in “thought”, (/aʊ/) as in “bough”, (/ɵ/) as in “thorough”?

Or why there are so many silent letters like the k in knee and knock, the c in science or the h in ghost?

Or why the letters “bow” can mean two different things depending on how they are pronounced?

Or why Brits and Americans spell some words differently?

NB! Basic spelling system has 91 patterns

69 English spellings have more than one pronunciation.
Before 1066 English spelling was quite simple, but during the next few centuries French, Latin and Greek words entered the language - and major pronunciation changes. Over time, as pronunciation changed and new words entered the language, the match between letters and sounds broke down. As a result the spelling became incoherent. If the match between letters and sounds breaks down, then learning to read and write becomes harder and all education can suffer. Read more

Learning to read and write English is exceptionally difficult because it has 185 spellings for 44 sounds. 69 English spellings have more than one pronunciation.

There are 3,500 words in English that contain exceptions to the spelling 'rules'. And some of the rules have hundreds of exceptions.

What's the cost of having such a difficult spelling system? The lack of literacy in Britain is estimated to cost the nation £10 billion a year. Read more

Source: Improving English Spelling. The English Spelling Society website.
Dearest creature in creation
Studying English pronunciation,
I will teach you in my verse
Sounds like corpse, corps, horse and worse.

Finally, which rhymes enough,
Though, through, bough, cough, hough, soug, tough??
Hicccough has the sound of cup …
My advice is: GIVE IT UP!

The Chaos (full version video)
Will Snellen (pdf version with the transcription)
English is a language spoken by millions but there are some words contained therein that are quite simply unpronounceable. These are the top 10 hardest words to pronounce.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 brobdingnagian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Orthinolaryngologist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Floccinaucinilipilification</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Worcestershire</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6 sesquipedalian</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5 absquatulate</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4 bruschetta</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3 pulchritudinous adj.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2 hipopotomonstrosquippedaliophobia</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Woolfardisworthy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Watch a video: **Top 10 difficult words to pronounce.**
PUZZLE 4: Misleading meanings of English words

1. **Disinterested vs uninterested**

   We need a *disinterested* party to settle the argument. Emil said he likes music but that he is *uninterested* in doing any art work.

2. **Inflammable vs flammable**

   ‘It burst into flames after its highly *inflammable* gas ignited.’ Avoid wearing loose *flammable* clothing when using the blowtorch.

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1. **Disinterested**: free of bias and self-interest; impartial.

   **Uninterested**: bored, indifferent, lacking interest; not wanting to learn more about something nor to become involved in certain things

   Source: 1. [Disinterested vs uninterested (video)]

2. **Inflammable**

   Easily ignited and capable of burning rapidly; *flammable*.

   **nonflammable** - descriptive of something that is not readily ignited and so it does not burn easily

   Source: Get the Words [Dictionary]
Task 5.1
How *geek* has changed over time?

*Geek, nerd, dork, freak, techie, weirdo?*

**OED:** Words that are older than we think
Sources: Online *Etymology Dictionary*

Task 5.2.

cyber

**LOL**

text (v)

**unfriend** (originally noun, now verb)

Oxford Word of the year 2009
### Task 5.1: geek, nerd, dork, freak, techie, weirdo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Which word(s) refer(s) to...</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>a person regarded as strange because of their unusual appearance and behaviour (even eccentric)?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>a person who is enthusiastic about technology (especially computers)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>a foolish or contemptible person who lacks social skills or is boringly studious.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>a socially inept person.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A single-minded person who is an expert in particular field</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>a person who is obsessed with a particular activity or interest, e.g. a fitness ..............</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>a knowledgeable and obsessive enthusiast (e.g. a computer ............)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>US slang term for a technical college student in 1960s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Task 5.2. Fill in the table from the words from the box. Some words have two meanings.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Original meaning</th>
<th>Meaning now, the area of use since when</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>LOL</td>
<td>1564, 1960, 1989, 1993, 1948, 13th century, 2007</td>
<td>Little Old Lady, Laughing Out Loud, Lots of Love; to cite texts, one who is not a friend or on friendly terms; an enemy'; remove (someone) from a list of friends or contacts on a social networking website’.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>text (v)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>unfriend (v) unfriend (n)</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Word</td>
<td>Origin</td>
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<td>------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>LOL</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>little old lady lots of love</td>
<td>1993 Laughing Out Loud computer chat abbreviation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1989</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>text (v)</td>
<td>1564</td>
<td>to cite texts</td>
<td>2005, to send a text message by mobile system,&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>unfriend (n)</td>
<td>13th century</td>
<td>enemy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>unfriend (v)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2007, Facebook remove (someone) from a list of friends or contacts on a social networking website’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Open Dictionary is Macmillan's *crowdsourced dictionary*, where you can suggest new words and expressions to add. The Open Dictionary started in 2009, and since then more than 4000 new words and phrases have been added. About half of these new words have been "promoted" to become full entries in the Macmillan Dictionary.

- Use infographic to find the meaning of new words.
- Begin the Open Dictionary Quiz [here](#).
- Use [Open Dictionary](#).
New forms of 'English' are swiftly evolving, i.e. other languages are pushing their way into English.

Around 60-70 new 'Englishes' have emerged since the 1960s in countries across the globe, British English is now a minority amongst the many 'Englishes' that are spoken around the world.

Examples:

- Users of Facebook already socialise in a number of different „Englishes“, including Indian English or Hinglish, Spanglish (Spanish English) and Konglish (Korean English).

- In Hinglish: stadium (a bald man with a fringe of hair); pre-pone (opposite of post-pone, to bring something forward)

This trend of 'Englishes' in the plural shows no sign of slowing down anytime soon.

But nothing lasts forever.

Video: History of English (Part 10): Global English

Video: World Englishes?
A language's development reflects the power of those who speak it

Crystal suggests that a language’s development is a direct reflection of the power of those who speak it.

Video: David Crystal - Will English be always the Global language?

How the Internet is changing the language

“Every time a new technology comes along, people think it’s the end of the road for the English language, and indeed sometimes for languages in general,” linguist and author David Crystal says in the film. But, he says, “the evidence is, for language, that every time a new technology arrives, it expands the expressive richness of the language in a way that wasn’t there before.”

Video: Documentary „English 3.0“
All living languages change. They have to. Languages have no existence apart from the people who use them. Vocabulary is the area where we most often notice the way language changes.

The journey in the world of words is exciting, full of surprises, discoveries, but endless...

The story of words cannot be finished during one workshop.

Use your toolbox to continue the investigation into the world of words.
Used sources

Convert Text to Speech. Available at: http://www.fromtexttospeech.com/


Online resources

Get the words. http://getwords.com/


Videos
Inflammable means flammable
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q8mD2hsxhrQ&feature=youtu.be
The Chaos Of English Pronunciation by Gerard Nolst Trenité
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1edPxFqiptw&t=32s
Top 10 hardest words to pronounce.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=52napSzzul8
OED Word Origins https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/explore/word-origins
Toolbox for further research: dictionaries

Macmillan Online Dictionary
  http://www.macmillandictionary.com/
Rhyming dictionary http://rhyme.poetry.com/
Visual Thesaurus http://www.visualthesaurus.com/
Wordnik http://wordnik.com/
Wordcount http://www.wordcount.org/index2.html
WordSpy http://www.wordspy.com/
Your dictionary http://www.yourdictionary.com/
Toolbox for further investigation: videos

**English 3.0** https://vimeo.com/111108854

English 3.0 explores how the internet has influenced the way we communicate in the digital age and whether the changes witnessed have had a positive effect on the language. The film features interviews with renowned authors and linguistics: Tom Chatfield, David Crystal, Robert McCrum, Fiona McPherson and Simon Horobin

**Will English Always be Global Language**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Kvs8SxN8mc&t=34s

**6 minute English Episode 160804 / 04 Aug 2016** Is English changing?

**The History of English in Ten Minutes** (part 1-10)

**Video News Stories**  [Words in the News]  [Lingohack]

[6 minute News] Series of topical discussion and new vocabulary.
Quizlet https://quizlet.com/latest
My Vocabulary.com https://myvocabulary.com/
Vocaboy http://www.vocaboly.com/
Merriam Webster Vocabulary Quiz.
https://www.merriam-webster.com/word-games/vocabulary-quiz
10-question quiz to find out — and maybe learn some new words along the way.

Vocabulary Size Test http://www.insightin.com/test/test.phtml
This 50 multiple-choice question Vocabulary Test is designed to test vocabulary size between 1,000 and 10,000. 50 multiple-choice questions
THANK YOU FOR ATTENTION!