

The Untranslatable

Associated Press “Words/Phrases of 2023”:¹

Australia:

- “**cozzie livs**” (slang for cost of living)
- “**murder noodle**” (slang for snake)
- “**password child**” (Refers to a child seen as favoured over siblings because their name is used in parents’ passwords.)

France:

- “**C’est la hess**” (“It’s a bummer” – comes to from Arabic and used by under-25-year-olds across the country)
- “**Quoicoubeh!**” (Doesn’t have a real meaning. A teen says something inaudible, hoping that parents or teachers will answer “Quoi?” or “What?” The response: “Quoicoubeh!”)

Taiwan:

- (Mandarin) “**Mountain roadmonkey**” (The “roadmonkey” is a motorcyclist who tries to become an Instagram influencer. He lends his girlfriend money to upgrade her bike, but she cheats on him and leaves him. In debt, he works overtime to rebuild his savings, becoming isolated from friends. Ultimately, he dies in a crash.)

India:

- “**Bharat**” (The country’s name in Sanskrit)

The Oxford Dictionary declared “**rizz**” (meaning: A whole lot of charisma) its word of the year.

Merriam-Webster declared “**authentic**” its word of the year – a word with a difficult definition (learn more [here](#)).



¹ 1. Cara Anna, “Words of the Year from around the World,” Time, December 13, 2023, <https://time.com/6411526/world-words-of-the-year-2023-associated-press/>.

Activity:

1. In your groups, list as many slang words (spoken & written) as you can think of (with their meanings) that are used by Waterdown students in their day-to-day lives:

2. In your groups, list as many words that you can think of that means something completely different from its traditional definition. (example: “sick” meaning “outstandingly or amazingly good or impressive” to people in the 2010s).

Discussion: What does slang tell us about the importance of language to a community? What ideas can be ***embedded*** (you may need to learn the definition for ***embedded***) in language?