

Help Fill the Word Gap!

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Our language suffers from a word shortage. There are literally thousands of new phenomena that make modern life increasingly frustrating because we lack the words to aid us in dealing with them. This is because our surroundings change faster than our wordsmiths can provide us with the verbal handles needed to manipulate them.

For instance, there is the irresistible urge to answer a ringing telephone, no matter how inconvenient the hour or the circumstances. There is no word for this phenomenon—yet. I offer the word PHONERCION, ANSURGE, and PHONEED as candidates to perform the duty. Can you think of others?

There was a time when everybody from the TEENY-BOPPER to the ORGANIZATION MAN was manufacturing new words as soon as they were needed. But times didn't change then at the pace of today. Father Divine, for instance, created words as soon as the need for them arose. He became disgusted with the theoretical musings and impractical suggestions of his peers, and realized instantly that the language didn't contain the word he needed to characterize them. So he made one up. Said he: "The trouble with the world today is that there are too many metaphysicians who don't know how to tangibilate." TANGIBILATE! How marvelous that word is; Father Divine has bequeathed us a word that, in paraphrase, would require many words.

To get an idea of just how new much of our day-to-day vocabulary is, consider the new uses to which are put the words DOVE, HAWK, and IN; consider further the fact that two years have not yet passed since the inception of VIETNIK, FLASHCUBE, FOLK ROCK, HELIPAD, HIPPY, LSD, and MINISKIRT. Some new words exist by virtue of their being telescoped versions of two old words: FLOATEL (float + hotel); GIGAHERTZ (giga = one billion + hertz = a unit of radio-telegraphically produced electromagnetic waves); JACKALOPE (jackrabbit + antelope); ROOFSCAPING (roof + landscaping); and PETNAPPING (pet + kidnapping). All of these words owe their existence to brand-new needs. But there are other needs, also new, for which there are as yet no words. We turn to you, the readership of WORD WAYS, for help in conquering the sinister Word Gap.

Listed below are the definitions of six modern situations lacking the proper words to express them. Can you come to our rescue?

- (1) The peculiar quality of courage involved in traveling hundreds of miles to demonstrate against an injustice that is tolerated in silence at home.
- (2) The taste of undercooked, frozen hamburger patties.
- (3) To wear sunglasses throughout a tour of an art gallery.
- (4) The act of sitting in the most conspicuous spot in a library and pretending to understand the original Sanskrit of a book by criticizing the translation aloud as inadequate.
- (5) An overweight woman who insists upon appearing in public wearing stretch pants.
- (6) The act of condemning as "Communist" any act which doesn't conform to one's personal idea of what is "American."

The most meritorious suggestions submitted by readers will be published in a subsequent issue of WORD WAYS.

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DOUBLE ENTENTE

A British book published in 1961, *The Prof in Two Worlds*, relates an interesting incident.

During the Second World War, Britain's atomic bomb project was called MAUD in gratitude to the Danish physicist Niels Bohr. During the Nazi invasion of Denmark, Bohr had sent a telegram to England referring to MAUD RAY, KENT. This phrase had been interpreted as an anagram of RADYUM TAKEN, meaning that the Germans had taken the scientist's radium and were working to produce an atomic bomb of their own.

Years later, now in England, Bohr explained that he had only referred to his former governess, MAUD RAY, of KENT!

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STANZAS TO A SOTADIC

Mother runs a parlor here—
Ale and beer are sipped in jugs.
Brother "R" and I appear,
Bouncing tipsy louts and thugs.

Mother wants still more of us,
Wants our help in tasting beer;
But we must not make a fuss
'Cause we're not to do it here!

RAFAEL, ARE WE TO HELP MA SAMPLE HOT EWER ALE AFAR?