

Internet Slang and Acronyms



Warm up:

- How much time would you say you spend online per day?
- How often do you communicate in English online?
- Are there any terms from English that have become common when texting or writing in your native language?
- Do you think the internet is changing language? How so?
- What are some acronyms that are common in your job or life, and what do they mean?



Acronyms and the Internet

An acronym is when we take the first letters of a set of words. For example, "LOL" is an acronym for Laugh Out Loud. Digital communication and the internet have made many acronyms more and more popular, as they are very efficient ways of communicating. However, they can be confusing if you don't know what they mean.



1. With a partner read the messages below and describe what you think the acronym means and what it stands for.

- "I've been talking to him online for months, but I'm finally going to meet him tomorrow IRL. I'm so excited!" *In Real Life (Not online)*
- "IMO it's the best Batman movie ever made, but Joan didn't like it as much." *In My Opinion*
- "Sorry, BRB, someone just rang my doorbell, give me a second." *(I'll) Be Right Back*
- "Ok I'm QMW now, I'll be there in 15 mins." *On My Way*
- "She always tells me really private stuff about her and her husband, honestly it makes me uncomfortable because it's just TMI." *Too Much Information (used if someone tells you something that is too personal, more than you wanted to know)*
- "My internet company turned off my modem without telling me! WTF!" *What The Fuck*
- "I don't think Sarah sent you the tickets, so just FYI the concert is at 6:30 tomorrow evening at the arena." *For Your Information*
- "Thanks for the party last night! BTW do you have Becky's number? We really got along and I'd like to send her a message." *By The Way*
- "I'm sorry, I feel really bad about this but TBH I don't remember your name, did we meet at the party?" *To Be Honest*
- "Hey I'm sorry I can't come tonight, I have a date with my BE for Valentine's Day." *BoyFriend (GF for girlfriend)*

 2. Read the text conversation below and use the acronyms from exercise 1 to complete the gaps.

Ryan: Hey man, I'm **OMW** to the shops now, do we need anything for the party tonight?

Greg: **TBH** I'm not sure, let me ask Sarah quickly, **BRB**

Greg: Ok. I asked, she said we need a few bottles of wine and some snacks, could you pick those up? Oh also just **FYI**, your ex is coming, and I think she's bringing her new **BF**, I hope that's ok.

Ryan: Umm, what? **WTF**? No that's not ok. Whose idea was that?? I do not want to see Becky again.

Greg: Oh wow. Sorry, Sarah invited them. She said that you would be fine with it. She said she's only ever talked to Becky online and wants to meet her **IRL**

Ryan: I don't really care if she wants to meet her, she's my ex and I don't want to hang out with her, or her new boyfriend! Sorry if this is **TMI**, but our breakup was very messy.

Greg: That's completely understandable, I was a bit surprised when Sarah said they were coming. Ok, I'll ask her if we can uninvite them.

Ryan: Ok thanks. It would just be super awkward to have them there.

Greg: No problem. Oh **BTW**, what type of music do you want to play at the party?

Ryan: If Becky comes then I want sad breakup music. If not, hip-hop or 80's pop is fine.

Slang on the Internet

"Slang" means words or phrases that are very informal. For example, the word "chill" is a slang word for "relax."

E.g. *"Can you please just chill? You don't have to get stressed over every little thing."*

The internet has been the origin of a lot of slang in the past few decades, and has also taken some existing words and changed their meaning.



3. Read the sentences and match the underlined phrases to their definitions below.

- a) "Don't answer him please, he wants to get you angry, he's just trolling you." **4**
- b) "We need to find something to eat soon, I get pretty hangry and I'm sure you don't want to be around for that." **8**
- c) "Halfway through his speech he tried to tell a joke, but nobody really laughed, and the whole audience just cringed." **3**
- d) "I hate these clickbait news websites, the headlines are always misleading and the articles never tell you anything new." **2**
- e) "We had three dates and then he ghosted me, I really thought we had a good connection but apparently not!" **7**
- f) "It's a nice nightclub, but it's not really my vibe. Too crowded, too noisy, and way too expensive." **1**
- g) "The video of the eagle picking up a baby went viral, more than 30 million views in a week! But in the end it turned out to be fake." **6**
- h) "I'm lowkey happy that my brother didn't win the tournament. He was getting kind of arrogant before he lost." **5**



1. A word that describes the overall atmosphere or feeling that a place (or a person) has.
2. Online content that is designed to attract as much internet traffic as possible, usually by having a shocking title or image attached to it.
3. Embarrassment or second-hand embarrassment in response to something that is socially awkward.
4. The act of deliberately provoking or upsetting someone in the hopes of getting them to respond.
5. An adjective to describe something that is being kept quiet, subtle, or hidden.
6. Used to describe something that spreads and is shared rapidly through the internet, often something that people find amazing, funny, or shocking.
7. The act of suddenly cutting contact with someone, often in a romantic context.
8. Being angry or grumpy because you have not eaten recently.



4. Ask and answer the questions with a partner.

- a) Can you think of anything you or someone else did when you were younger that makes you cringe now?
- b) Are you somebody who gets hangry? Do you know anyone who does?
- c) What kind of vibe do you like in a bar, nightclub, restaurant, or café?
- d) Have you ever been lowkey happy that something bad happened to somebody else?
- e) Have you ever been ghosted? Why do you think people do this?
- f) When was the last time you saw a video or picture on the internet that was viral?



5. Optional task / homework: Go to [this website](https://www.webfx.com/digital-marketing/learn/internet-abbreviations/)¹ and find 3 acronyms that you find interesting, funny, or useful. Write them down and explain them to your classmates.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

¹ <https://www.webfx.com/digital-marketing/learn/internet-abbreviations/>