



[The 11 Weirdest Words in the English Language](#)

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Word lovers and Scrabble players alike often seek out and celebrate weird and interesting words, challenging themselves to include these unusual terms in their everyday speech. We've collected 11 of those weird words here; challenge yourself to use some of them in your conversations this week and see how your friends and teachers react.

01 Bamboozled

adjective bam-boo-zled \ bam-'bɔːzld \

Definition: thrown into a state of confusion or bewilderment especially by being deliberately fooled or misled.

History: A word, a Spike Lee movie, a game show that Joey from *Friends* auditions for, and it's even an app game... this word has made the rounds. It seems that most everyone agrees on the definition of this word, even Urban Dictionary, which defines it as to be tricked or cheated. According to Merriam-Webster, bamboozle (verb) first appeared in 1703, derived from the 17th-century word *bam* which means to trick or con.

02 Cattywampus

adjective kat-ee-wom-puh s

Definition: askew; awry; positioned diagonally.

History: Cattywampus comes from catawampus, which, according to Dictionary.com, likely came about between 1830 and 1840. It is derived from the prefix *cata*, meaning diagonally and likely *wampus*, which the site says is akin to the word *wampish*, meaning to flop about.

03 Discombobulate

verb dis-kuh m-bob-yuh-leyt



~~Definition: To confuse, upset, frustrate.~~

History: An American word first used in 1825-1835, according to Dictionary.com, it's a fanciful alteration of discompose or discomfort.

04 Flabbergast
verb flab-er-gast

Definition: To overcome with surprise and bewilderment; astound.

History: There's not much known about the origins of this word, though Dictionary.com says it's from 1765-1775.

05 Foppish
adjective fop·pish \ 'fɒp-ɪʃ \

Definition: foolish, silly, obsolete.

History: This funky little word is derived from the word fop, which is used to describe a man who is excessively vain and worried about his dress and appearance; it also can mean a foolish or silly person. The adjective of foppish is similarly used to mean that something is obsolete, foolish or silly. It has been rolling off tongues for centuries now, first appearing in the late 1500s.

06 Jalopy
noun ja·lopy \ jə-'lɒpi \

Definition: an old, decrepit, or unpretentious automobile.

History: An oldie but goodie, jalopy seems to be getting some love from New York Post. This word, an American word, dating back to 1925-1930, is often used when referencing items other than vehicles despite its specific meaning. According to Dictionary.com, a Post article recently revived the word once again, this time in an article about people updating their phones rather than buying new ones. The use of jalopy in this article spurred a more than 3,000% increase in searches for the word online.

07 Lothario
noun loh-THAIR-ee-oh

Definition: a man whose chief interest is seducing women.

History: There's something about this word that seems slick and seductive, so it's no wonder that it literally means "a man who seduces women." The word



made its debut in Nicholas Rowe's *The Fair Penitent* in the early 1700s. ~~The lead character, Lothario, was a notorious seducer, an attractive man with a charming exterior, he was really a haughty scoundrel whose main interest was in seducing women.~~

08 Meme

noun \ 'mem \

Definition: an idea, behavior, style, or usage that spreads from person to person within a culture.

History: Believe it or not, the word meme was first used in 1976, as an abbreviation of the word mimeme in Richard Dawkins' book "The Selfish Gene" in which he discussed how ideas and styles spread within a culture over time. Today, the word has become synonymous with amusing captioned pictures and videos online. Think, Grumpy Cat or Salt Bae.

09 Scrupulous

adjective scrupulous \ 'skrupyuləs \.

Definition: having moral integrity; acting in strict regard for what is considered right or proper; punctiliously exact, painstaking.

History: Scrupulous means that you are proper and have moral integrity and on the flip side, unscrupulous means, well, the opposite. An unscrupulous person lacks morals, principles, and a conscience. The word is derived from scruple, which means a weight of a mere 20 grains, which was a meticulous measurement for apothecaries.

10 Tergiversate

verb [tur-ji-ver-seyt]

Definition: to change repeatedly one's attitude or opinions with respect to a cause, subject, etc.

History: This unique word holds an honor that very few words can claim: it was named the 2011 Word of the Year by Dictionary.com. Why? According to the website, this weird word rose to fame because it described so much of the world around us. Editors at Dictionary.com saw the stock market, political groups, and public opinion go through a roller coaster of change throughout 2011.

11 Xenophobia

noun zen-uh-foh-bee-uh

Definition: fear or hatred of foreigners, people from different cultures, or strangers; fear or dislike of the customs, dress, etc., of people who are culturally different from



oneself.

History: Another Dictionary.com Word of the Year, this time for 2016, Xenophobia has a special claim to fame. Meaning, fear of the other, the folks at Dictionary.com asked readers to reflect on its meaning rather than celebrate it.