Part 2: What is a word?

What makes a word a word? Well, that all depends on who you ask. We asked these people to write the words they don't like in black and the words they do like in red. Do you think, for example, that 'chav' is a word?

Some people said that it is not because it's [redacted]. But what makes a word a word then? Are slang words words? Should they be in the dictionary?

Some people think they should be because they are used in everyday [redacted]. And they are part of our culture now.

Anything that you use in a conversation that somebody else gets the meaning of is a word.

Is 'innit' a real, proper word?

It means something so, in that [redacted], it would be a proper word.

How about 'LOL' – laugh out loud – and other textspeak?

Everyone uses 'LOL' because it's fun and it [redacted] funniness! But should they be in the dictionary though?

The American company The Global Language Monitor has a system that tracks words across the media. It says we have more than a [redacted] words in the English language now. This is controversial though, and some critics question their calculation methods. By the way, if you want to [redacted], the *Oxford English Dictionary* has around 300,000 entries, including *chav* and *blog*.

Expert: A word becomes a word when it's used by one person and understood by another. But really, a word needs to be used in enough different resources. We need to see evidence of its use in a wide [redacted] of resources; monitor it electronically. It could be in print, it could be in speech but we need to find hard evidence of its usage for it to be [redacted] in the dictionary.

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