

MEMES



A) Introduction.

Do you use memes in your everyday life? In what situations?

Do you think there are certain situations in which a meme would be inappropriate?

Do you think memes have an important role in communication?

What do these memes mean? In what situations can you use each of them?



B) Reading.

Memes are becoming a growing part of our everyday life and popular culture, especially online. Many of us know memes as the pictures and photographs that go viral on social media sites. People use them to make jokes or social and political observations. However, biologist and author Richard Dawkins, the originator of the word 'meme', is unhappy with how the Internet has defined a meme as a "picture with words". Mr Dawkins **coined** the term 'meme' in his 1976 book 'The Selfish Gene'. He said memes are ideas that spread from brain to brain and are **replicated** many times, much like genes. He told the BBC: "I'm not going to use the term Internet meme to refer to a picture with writing on it."

So what makes a good meme, isn't it just a **hilarious** picture with a great **caption**?

Newsbeat has spent the past weeks meeting the people who use memes to **launch** careers, **digest** politics and explain things that normally make them feel uncomfortable. For them, memes have created a new language both on, and offline.

"Memes explain things you can't explain," says Mercy - a 20-year-old from London. Michael Boateng agrees. The 22-year-old says memes help him understand politics.

"There's a lot that will be **turned into** a meme during this election period," he says.

"Everything will be turned into a meme, but I'm kind of glad, because it makes things a lot easier to take and to process."

Memes have infused our culture to the extent that universities now offer degree courses on them. America's Northwestern University **unveiled** its Meme Studies course back in 2011. What is more, the University of California, Santa Cruz announced it would offer a class called *Linguistics 135: Memes: When Language and Culture Go Viral* as part of its 2016 winter courses, while individual graduate and PhD students have been focusing on the topic for nearly a decade.

1. Answer the questions:
 - a. Where and when did the word “meme” appear for the first time?
 - b. How are memes similar to genes according to Richard Dawkins?
 - c. What is the connection established between memes and politics according to the text?
 - d. Why are universities offering courses on the study and analysis of memes nowadays?
 - e. What do you think of these new degree courses on memes?
2. Match the highlighted words in the text to their synonyms:
 - a. Reproduce:
 - b. Assimilate:
 - c. Invent:
 - d. Transformed:
 - e. Extremely amusing:
 - f. Start/create:
 - g. Announce:
 - h. Description/inscription:

C) Grammar

a/an (indefinite article)	Example
the first time something is mentioned.	I saw a really funny meme yesterday
Before singular nouns.	There's a degree in meme studies.
Before job titles in general.	I'm a linguistics teacher

No article	Example
To talk about things or people in general.	Memes are just funny pictures
Before plural nouns.	I have four hundred likes on my last picture
Before most cities, countries and continents	America is a beautiful country to live in
In some phrases with prepositions	On Tuesday, at sea, in hospital, at work

The (definite article)	Example
To talk about something that has already been mentioned or information that the speaker and the listener already know.	I saw a meme yesterday. The meme was a political joke.
To talk about something when there is only one	Look at the moon! It's beautiful
Before some plural places names	the United States
Before seas / oceans / rivers	The Atlantic
Before the names of some areas	The north western part of the USA
In some phrases with prepositions	In the evening, at the beginning

1. Read the following paragraph and complete with **a, an, the** or **no article (-)**.

___ Memes have infused our culture to ___ extent that universities now offer degree courses on them. ___ America's Northwestern University unveiled its Meme Studies course back in 2011. Britain's Sky News says memes have helped to make politics to ___ young people. One Twitter user told ___ Sky journalist that: "memes helped people understand complex ideas, and that framing politics in ___ different way makes it more digestible". It's obvious how memes became ___ key part of how people expressed their views during ___ 2016 presidential election. ___ important USA website said: "Memes now have as much power, influence and reach as ___ propaganda posters of yesterday."

2. Choose the correct option to complete the following sentences.

1. Many people are frightened of a / an / the / - spiders.
2. I had a pet cat which I loved, but a / an / the / - cat didn't like me.
3. a / an / the / - vegetarians are people who don't eat meat.
4. The blue whale is a / an / the / - heaviest animal in the world.
5. We heard that there is a / an / the / - new political party in this election.
6. a / an / the / - politicians are good at persuading people.
7. She graduated from a / an / the / - Boston University in 2006.

D) Categories:

Look at the memes below. Can you think of a category for each one to fit in? Explain.

Trump: Hey Siri how many miles did i ran today?

Siri: Ok, Sending missiles to iran today



"first of all biiiiitch, you don't even wanna know what your man said in confessionals last week, have a seat"



1. Choose one of the following well-known memes and write a funny and smart caption for it.

