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The app is also simple to use; even kids can use it. An internet of dictionariesThe internet comes with a lot of unique features, including worldwide searches and word searches. So, what makes apps like Advanced English Dictionary, Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, and the Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary different? Well, as old school as it may sound, they have all the words in one place. You can search for individual words: the dictionary and the translator supports typing and voice searches, and many more other features. The Advanced English Dictionary can also serve as a text scan and hard copy translator. But you need a premium subscription to access these features. It also has speech-to-text and word pronunciation as a feature. As well as themes, you can select a theme color and customize the app's look and feel. However, it comes with one downside, the free version has in-app advertisements, but you can remove this if you upgrade to the paid version. With this dictionary in your pocket, you no longer have to find your physical dictionary to look up a word. You can search on your PC and make use of all the extra features. Should you download it?Yes. It doesn't matter why you need the dictionary; this is an excellent app for school, work, or personal reasons. HighsWord search and meaning include grammar and pronunciationUser-friendly and free to useOver 400,000 words and meaningsImage illustration for assistanceSupports multiple platformsThe app is very versatile and helpfulLowsYou have to upgrade to the paid version to get rid of the adsNot all of the words have image illustrationsYou need to know the spelling of the word you're searching forTraditionally speaking, the team that publishes the Oxford English Dictionary picks a "word of the year"—a word or expression that has attracted significant interest over the course of the past 12 months. It's a way to capture the mood or lasting impact that a particular year has had on us all; for example, 2019's word was "climate emergency," 2014 was "vape," 2009 was "unfriend," and 2005 was "podcast." But this year—one in which all semblance of normalcy has abandoned us—the OED could not pick one word. One word was not going to cut it, so this year, we needed a full 16 of them. The OED explains:The English language, like all of us, has had to adapt rapidly and repeatedly this year. Our team of expert lexicographers have captured and analyzed this lexical data every step of the way. As our Word of the Year process started and this data was opened up, it quickly became apparent that 2020 is not a year that could neatly be accommodated in one single "word of the year," so we have decided to report more expansively on the phenomenal breadth of language change and development over the year in our Words of an Unprecedented Year report. We have gotten accustomed to living with both inaccurate and all-out fake. . . . Read moreThe words it chose, below in chronological order, is the most tumultuous of walks through memory lane. Here they are, along with Oxford Language's descriptions for why they were chosen.G/O Media may get a commissionBushfire: "One of the defining climatic events of the end of 2019 and beginning of 2020 was the Australian bushfire season, the worst on record."Impeachment: "A hot topic in January when the trial to impeach Donald Trump began." (Was that really this year?)Acquittal: "Peaked in February at the conclusion of Donald Trump's impeachment trial." (Ah, that was fast.) Coronavirus: "One of the more dramatic examples of increased usage, by March this year it was one of the most frequently used nouns in the English language, after being used to designate the SARS-CoV-2 virus."COVID-19: "A completely new word this year, first recorded in a report by the World Health Organization as an abbreviation of coronavirus disease 2019. It quickly overtook coronavirus in frequency."Lockdown: "The preferred term in most Anglophone countries, including the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia, for government-enforced quarantine measures in response to the spread of Covid-19."Social distancing: "Surged in frequency as governments across the world introduced measures to reduce the spread of Covid-19."Reopening: "Towards the Northern Hemisphere summer more hopeful words increased in frequency, including reopening of shops, businesses, etc.)"Black Lives Matter: "Exploded in usage beginning in June of this year, remaining at elevated levels for the rest of the year as protests against law enforcement agencies over the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and other black Americans took root in communities across the United States and across the world."Cancel Culture: "Many societal tensions that characterized the year saw a significant rise in usage, such as cancel culture, the culture of boycotting and withdrawing support from public figures whose words and actions are considered socially unacceptable."BIPOC: "Usage surged for BIPOC, an abbreviation of black, indigenous, and other people of color."Mail-In: "A big political focus as far as word use increase is concerned has been the U.S. postal service as a means of casting votes in these troubled times, with mail-in seeing an increase in use of 3,000% compared to last year."Belarusian: "The August re-election of Alexander Lukashenko in Belarus saw the adjective Belarusian rise up the corpus charts rapidly as the story made the news around the world."Moonshot: "Had a rocket-powered ascent to significance in September as the name of a UK government program for mass Covid testing.Superspreader: "Dates to the 1970s, but became significantly more frequent this year. There was a particular spike in usage in October, mainly with reference to the well-publicized spread of cases in the White House."Net Zero: On the rise as the year draws to an end: the recent increase partly relates to the historic pledge made by President Xi Jinping in September, that China will be carbon neutral by 2060."The Oxford English Dictionary team says the words are chosen by a group of expert lexicographers who identify new and emerging English words and track their usage. Here's to hoping 2021's "word" is something like "thank god that's fucking over with."The Oxford English Dictionary has been documenting the language for more than a century and is the largest of its kind. Yet slang in a social media world always seems one step ahead.As a historical dictionary, the OED is interested in the meaning of words and also the changes in usage over time. To help produce its comprehensive record, OED has launched an appeal to teenagers to tweet or write in about the latest words that they've been using.On its website, the OED explained: "Young people's language today can be particularly elusive—because the terms that are in vogue change so rapidly and newer ephemeral modes of communication (texting, WhatsApp, Snapchat, etc.) make it difficult to monitor and record this kind of vocabulary." Through its appeal, which extends to anyone who interacts with, or is, a young person, the dictionary hopes to get a better sense of "the language used by children and teenagers today." "Bare" is one example of slang that the OED has been following in order to add a new entry, a draft of which explains that this particular use of the word means: "many or much; a lot of." Users on Twitter have already responded using the hash-tag, #YouthSlangAppeal, although some also point out that the OED is lagging behind on a few long-loved terms.Apart from being a clever way to crowdsourcing linguistic intel, the OED's mass appeal is also a step toward democratizing how we understand language. The OED is a venerable source, and as Coco Khan points out in The Guardian, this outreach tells young people their language is "established, bona fide, and must be accepted," writing:That such an institution is reaching out to the public to help is a reminder that language is made by us all, and not dictated from ivory towers. It is a bottom-up phenomenon. In a society wrought by intergenerational inequality, it is a wonderful message to the young, to tell them that their daily lives matter and are worthy of recording. Roald Dahl is remembered for his solitary, kind-hearted child heroes—Charlie, who visited a chocolate factory, and Sophie, who befriended a floppy-eared giant, among them—and their triumphs over bullying adults. But the beloved British children's book author was also known for the distinctive language he used to create the vivid, often dark, worlds in which the characters lived.To honor the centenary of his birth this month, the Oxford English Dictionary has updated its latest edition today (Sept. 12) with six new words connected to Dahl's writing, and revisions to four other phrases popularized by Dahl's evocative stories. In May, the Oxford University Press also published a Roald Dahl Dictionary complete with 8,000 words coined or popularized by the author.There was linguistic method to Dahl's mad use of language. "He was using very linguistic principles," says Vineeta Gupta, head of children's dictionaries at Oxford University Press. Dahl invented words based on old words, rhymes, malapropisms, and spoonerisms (swapping the first letters of words around, such as "catastorous disastrophe" from The BFG). Dahl also played with sound ("sizzle-pan" to refer to a frying pan in The BFG, for example).Here are the new Dahlisms added to the OED, and the revised phrases, with notes on their origins.New entriesDahlesqueThe characteristics of Dahl's work—in the OED's words, "eccentric plots, villainous or loathsome adult characters, and gruesome or black humour"—now have their own adjective. The term was first used in 1983 by the literary magazine Books Ireland.Golden ticketThese refer to the tickets hidden in chocolate bars that granted access to Willy Wonka's chocolate factory in Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (1964). The first golden ticket, however, was awarded to 16th century painter William Hogarth, giving him admission to the Vauxhall Gardens in London, in recognition of his paintings of the venue.Human beanThis is a mispronunciation of "human being," uttered by the giant in The BFG (1982). "We is having an interesting babblement about the taste of the human bean. The human bean is not a vegetable." The first instance of the phrase is over a century older, having been used in an issue of the British satirical magazine Punch in 1842.Oompa LoompaThe diminutive factory workers who played music and danced in Charlie and the Chocolate Factory were made more famous by the 1971 film adaption of the book, starring Gene Wilder. Gupta called the phrase "typical Dahlesque," reflecting how the author played with sound to convey meaning.Scrumdiddlyumptious"Extremely scrumptious; excellent, splendid; (esp. of food) delicious." Although the word was first found in The American Thesaurus of Slang in 1942, Dahl's giant's use of it planted it firmly in the minds of every child who read The BFG: "Every human bean is diddly and different. Some is scrumdiddlyumptious and some is uckyslush."Witching hourReferred to in The BFG as "a special moment in the middle of the night when every child and every grown-up was in a deep deep sleep, and all the dark things came out from hiding and had the world to themselves." We can thank Shakespeare for this evocative phrase: according to the OED, "witching time" first appeared in Hamlet (1604).Revised phrasesFrightsomenAnother word from The BFG, meaning to cause fright. It was first used by the Scottish poet and army officer William Cleland in 1689, in which he refers to "walled cities [and] frightsome forts."GremlinThe OED updated its definition of this term to reflect that Dahl's 1943 novel, The Gremkins, helped popularize it. The phrase itself originates in Royal Air Force (RAF) slang from 1929, referring to a menial or lowly person. By 1942 it was being used by the RAF to describe mechanical glitches—Dahl's novel itself centers around mythical creatures who sabotaged aircraft, the inspiration of which is said to have come from Dahl's time as a fighter pilot during World War Two. Writing in a 1944 edition of its journal American Speech, the American Dialect Society explained that "the gremlin seems to be extending its sphere of operations, so that the term can be applied to almost anything that inexplicably goes wrong in human affairs."ScrumptiousThe OED dates this word, originally an English dialect term for "stinky," back to 1823. In Dahl's James and the Giant Peach, published in 1961, the Contipede says: "I've eaten many strange and scrumptious dishes in my time." Its shorter variant, "scrummy," was first used in 1844.SplendiferousRemarkably fine; magnificent, splendid, according to the OED. In Dahl's Danny, the Champion of the World (1975), Danny's father refers to his own dad as a "magnificent and splendiferous poacher." The state of being splendiferous is an equally superb word: splendiferousness.Image taken by Jan Willem van Wessel on Flickr. Used under a Creative Commons license (CC BY 2.0)Linguists have long debated prescriptive and descriptive models of language: Does the dictionary describe the words already in use or prescribe how we use them? The gender-neutral prefix "Mx.," which was already in use by some government forms and banks in the U.K. when the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) decided to consider it for inclusion, is a perfect example of the descriptive model. With the genderqueer community in need of an honorific that doesn't force anyone into a binary, the dictionary began considering options to meet popular demand. OED Assistant Editor Jonathan Dent told The Sunday Times, "This is an example of how the English language adapts to people's needs, with people using language in ways that suit them rather than letting language dictate identity to them."The preferences of pangender, bigender, agender, and otherwise genderqueer people have also given rise to gender-neutral pronouns like ze, hir, and they, and the latter now being commonly used by journalists not just to describe genderqueer people, but also to refer to people of unspecified gender (e.g., to address the reader without assuming the gender of their romantic partner—see? I just did it there).So where does the word come from?A report released on the tumblr The Genderqueer Activist details the history and use of "Mx.," which first appeared in 1980. Many government and private organizations in the U.K. have been using it since the turn of the century.How is the U.S. stacking up against the U.K. on this front? Typing "Mx" into the Merriam-Webster dictionary yielded "MX: a mobile ICBM having up to 10 independently targeted nuclear warheads," so maybe we've got some catching up to do. I also couldn't find "hir" or "ze" in Merriam-Webster.Is Miss/Mrs to Ms. after all, the issue should be that gender is unimportant. How about one generic title for everyone? For instance, M. Smith, M. Jones. But that's flawed, it might be confused with Monsieur, a blatantly sexist word. From now on, we should all go by Mx. pronounced "mix" or "mux." This will make the world safe for democracy by concealing our genders from the sexist element.Huh, I was just pronouncing it "M.X." Mix is already a word (though, granted, words with multiple meanings are a thing) and "Mux" sounds like "musk," so neither sound quite right to me, but now that I think of it, "M.X. Smith" sounds incredibly foolish. Oops.So should you start going by Mx.?While some people strongly identify as cisgender or transgender and will prefer Mr. or Ms., and some are strongly genderqueer and immediately embrace gender-neutral words as they emerge, I fall into what I believe is a significant portion of people who don't feel strongly about their gender identity. I identify as a woman mainly out of convenience, and if it were more convenient, I'd be happy to go by words like "they" and "Mx."However, gender-neutral words are still largely seen as exclusive to the genderqueer community. Gender-nonconforming people's ability to use these words is more important than mine because they don't have another comfortable way to identify themselves. Eventually, though, wouldn't it be great to see a shift toward people of all gender identities using gender-neutral words? It would signify that our gender identities don't define us, no matter what they are — and that sounds like progress on all fronts.So, I was happy to read in The Genderqueer Activist's report that Mx. "can be used by anyone regardless of gender or marital status." This makes its purpose twofold: to provide an option for people who do not identify with a gender and to avoid defining people by their gender. At my age, people don't typically address me with honoraries, and if they did, I'd be afraid that most people would find an attempt to correct "Ms." to "Mx." confusing. And if I addressed anyone else this way, they would probably view it as a typo — something journalists can't afford to have in their emails. But if more dictionaries adopt this word and it gains widespread enough use that others know what it signifies, I'll welcome the chance to use it.Images: Pandawhale; Giphy (2)

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