

TEXT 1**LANGUAGE CORNER**

By Merrill Perlman

8 January 2018

- 1 Words-of-the-year pronouncements seem to gain traction every year, even as the number of "contests" themselves seem to be increasing. Like the *Time* magazine "person of the year", they are more exercises in highlighting current societal trends than they are momentous awards. Some words of the year are determined by popularity, meaning they spiked in online searches. By definition, then, they are related to happenings in the world.
- 2 That's the case with *Merriam-Webster's* word of the year, "feminism". As explained, searches of feminism spiked several times in 2017 – after the women's marches in January; with the arrival of movies featuring strong female characters, like *Wonder Woman* and *The Handmaid's Tale*; and with the tsunami of sexual harassment accusations against powerful men.
- 3 Dictionary.com also shows how popular culture is tied in. Searches for its word of the year, "complicit", spiked when a talk show ran a parody advertising a new perfume called "Complicit" by Donald Trump's daughter, Ivanka. Searches for the word spiked again almost a month later, when, in a television interview, Ivanka Trump said, "If being complicit is wanting to be a force for good and to make a positive impact, then I'm complicit." As Dictionary.com said, "being complicit is decidedly negative, as it means that a person is involved with someone or something that's wrong. Whatever your politics, this meaning is not up for debate." (What should be debated is Dictionary.com's claim that, "When the meaning of words is called into question, people turn to Dictionary.com as a source of truth." As we've noted, when people need definitions, they turn to dictionaries, regardless of their URLs.)
- 4 Both of those word-of-the-year decisions are based on visits to individual websites. For a broader view, a corpus, a massive database of how words are used in context, can be analysed. There are many kinds of corpora, and Brigham Young University offers access to many of them. One, called News on the Web, or NOW, is used to determine its word of the year. For 2017, it was "fake news". (Yes, that's two words, but the database includes multi-word expressions.) As its site explains, "we looked at the actual frequency of words in 2017 and we compared this to the frequency in 2016."
- 5 The American Dialect Society is far less scientific, having its members nominate and vote for the word of the year. Nonetheless, it came up with the same word of the year, "fake news". It was a contender last year but at the time its meaning was restricted to fictional or embellished stories presented as authentic news, disseminated for financial gain or for propagandistic purposes. This year, President Trump, often used it as a rhetorical bludgeon to disparage any news report with which he disagreed. (More often than not.)
- 6 Now, to a couple of outliers. Oxford Dictionaries named as its word of the year "youthquake". It's not surprising if you haven't heard of it, since Oxford is a British institution, and admits that it "has yet to land firmly on American soil". It's defined as "a significant cultural, political, or social change arising from the actions or influence of young people". Its usage, Oxford says, has travelled throughout the Empire, to New Zealand and Australia, but its origin is actually American, coined in the 1960s, when youth around the world were rebelling and gaining their political balances.

- 7 In contrast to "youthquake" is "snowflake". *Merriam-Webster* suggests calling millennials snowflakes arose because they were allegedly too convinced of their own status as special and unique people to be able (or bothered) to handle the normal trials and travails of regular adult life. They are a generation viewed by many as coddled by their "helicopter parents" and an "everyone's a winner" philosophy. The usage is traced to the 1996 novel *Fight Club*, when one character tells others: "You are not a beautiful and unique snowflake. You are the same decaying organic matter as everyone, and we are all part of the same compost pile."
- 8 And the Oxford University Press named as its children's word of the year "trump". (Note the lowercase.) It was "picked because of its significant increase in use by children writing in this year's competition and the sophisticated way in which they used it to convey humour and satire, and evoke powerful descriptive imagery".
- 9 Out of the mouths of babes ...

[Adapted from <<https://www.cjr.org>>]

TEXT 2

A gap year is an intentional transition between high school and university that results in meaningful learning and growth. A key factor to be considered in the intentionally designed gap year is the authentic engagement with interests. This can be accomplished by working, interning, or volunteering in a manner that exposes students to experts and provides enough experience to illustrate the nuance and complexity of interests.

A gap year does not require students to travel internationally. Students can create gap years that incorporate all of these factors with careful planning. Perhaps the most obvious beneficiaries of gap years are the students and their families. Research suggests that the purpose and direction they gain from their gap year will pay great dividends when they get to university. Most specifically, they're likely to perform better in classes and may even graduate earlier. Given the cost of tuition, this suggests that students and families are likely to receive a stronger return on their higher education investments if there is a gap year first.

[Adapted from: <<https://www.psychologytoday.com>>]

TEXT 3

The best gap year programme is the one that's best for you. What might be the best, perfect fit for someone else might not have anything to do with your interests. When it comes to choosing the best gap year programme for you, you need to think about your goals. Are you looking for work experience that will set you apart in your career? Are you trying to support yourself by teaching a language or skill abroad? Would you like to get immersed in a language or launch a new educational path?

[Adapted from: <<https://www.goabroad.com>>]

TEXT 4

A gap year should be more than just travel or service. This unparalleled adventure is "Thinking Beyond Borders" (TBB) signature programme. You'll live, explore, and learn in six countries over two semesters with friends who'll be with you for life. This is the ultimate gap year programme for those that want to make the most of their gap year and discover how they can create meaningful change in the world. Why don't you explore the challenges and solutions to critical global issues in communities around the world?

[Adapted from: <<https://www.gooverseas.com>>]

TEXT 5



ONE CHILD IS HOLDING SOMETHING
THAT'S BEEN BANNED IN AMERICA
TO PROTECT THEM.
GUESS WHICH ONE

We keep 'Little Red Riding Hood' out of schools because of the bottle of wine in her basket. Why not assault weapons?
MOMSDEMANDACTION.ORG

**MOMS
DEMAND
ACTION**
FOR GUN SENSE
IN AMERICA

[Source: <<https://momsdemandaction.org>>]

TEXT 6



ONE CHILD IS HOLDING SOMETHING
THAT'S BEEN BANNED IN AMERICA
TO PROTECT THEM.
GUESS WHICH ONE

We ban the game dodgeball because it's viewed as being too violent. Why not assault weapons?
MOMSDEMANDACTION.ORG

**MOMS
DEMAND
ACTION**
FOR GUN SENSE
IN AMERICA

[Source: <<https://momsdemandaction.org>>]

TEXT 7

[Source: <<https://www2.ed.gov>>]

TEXT 8

[Source: <<http://laschoolreport.com>>]

TEXT 9

Is “rapider” a word?

With Rapid Rewards, you can use points for any seat, any day, any time. So your next trip is closer than you think.

Yes to rewards you can actually use.

That's Transfarency.



[Source: <<https://www.southwest.com>>]