

- ▶ acronyms and affixes
- ▶ blending and 'raiding'
- ▶ combining words

8.2 Vocabulary Forming new words



Reading for gist

1 Read the text about new words and answer the questions.

- 1 What is the purpose of the article?
- 2 List the ten ways of creating new words mentioned by the writer, plus one example for each.

Free trade in words

COUNTRIES may struggle with fair and free trade, but languages have no such problems, at least when it comes to English: it endlessly imports and exports words. Not only does it take in words from other languages, but its users regularly create new words. You can too. Want to talk about the major emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India and China? Go for an acronym: *BRIC*. Or just get a letter, *e* for electronic will do, and attach it up: *e-commerce*, *e-business*, *e-tailing*.

Need to describe the new concept of moving your production or service abroad – off your own shores? Put the old word and affix together to build a new word: *offshore*. Feel like extending this? How about *offshore* as a verb and *offshoring* as a noun? And an adjective? That'll be *offshorable*. This process can open the floodgates – look out for *onshoring*, *farshoring*, *nearshoring*, even *rightshoring*. Just don't ask me what they mean.

Blends are another favourite. Grab *zeitgeist* words like *global* and start playing. *Globalize* and *globalization* are old hat now, but what about blending in parts of other words: *global* and *local* – *glocalize* will serve, not forgetting *glocalization*. Hate globalization? Reach for Greek: *globaphobic*. Need a noun? Raid an obvious suffix and you've got *glocality*.

Talking of raiding, grab words from other contexts. Feeling dramatic? Don't just start your meeting, *kick it off*. Too spiritual for sport? Be a business *guru*. Love brevity? Go for short and *max out* your credit card. Like phrasal verbs? 'Nounize' them: you used to *stop over*, now you have a *stopover*. Poetic and love rhymes? Bricks and mortar is so last millennium, now it's all *clicks and mortar*. Like metaphors? We've had *glass ceiling*, what about older employees, prejudice and the *silver ceiling*? Or combine two words in a novel combination: *swarm businesses*.

Who's to say these words will still be around in 10 or 20 years? That's not the point. Language is about the here and now. Words are the lifeblood of English. Create them, use them, free trade them. And that's a verb.