

2006 Words of the Year Nominations

These are the words chosen as candidates for the 2006 words-of-the-year categories. The final votes in all categories will take place from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 5. The **Word of the Year** is usually nominated from among winners of the categories below, although new, passionate, last-minute nominations have sometimes been accepted from the floor.

MOST USEFUL

- climate canary:** an organism or species whose poor health or declining numbers hint at a larger environmental catastrophe on the horizon.
- data Valdez:** an accidental release of a large quantity of private or privileged information. Named after the 1989 oil spill by the *Exxon Valdez* in Prince William Sound, Alaska.
- flog:** a fake blog created by a corporation to promote a product or a television show.
- sharrow:** an arrow-like design painted on a roadway to mark a bicycling route.

MOST CREATIVE

- Fed-Ex:** tabloid nickname for K-Fed, a.k.a Kevin Federline, husband of Britney Spears.
- to **julie:** to organize an event. Also as a noun. From Julie McCoy, the character of cruise director on the television show *The Love Boat*, which ran from 1977 to 1986.
- lactard:** a person who is lactose-intolerant.
- snowclone:** an expression whose structure is borrowed to create new, similar expressions. Examples: *X is the new Y* (“blue is the new black”) and *X is dead; long live X!* (“the king is dead; long live the king!”).

MOST UNNECESSARY

- the decider:** with the definite article, a person who makes decisions for other decision-makers, as spoken by President George W. Bush.
- Fox lips:** lips colored and lined with makeup to seem more prominent, said of female anchors on Fox News.
- SuriKat:** the supposed nick-name of the baby girl of Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes.

MOST OUTRAGEOUS

- Cambodian accessories:** Angelina Jolie’s adopted children, of which one is Cambodian.
- firecrotch:** a person with red pubic hair.
- macaca:** an American citizen treated as an alien.
- tramp stamp:** a tattoo on a woman’s upper bottom or lower back.
- sudden jihad syndrome:** an outburst of violence from a seemingly stable and normal Muslim.

MOST EUPHEMISTIC

- lancing:** the forced public outing of a closeted gay celebrity, after ‘N Sync singer Lance Bass.
- lyric malfunction:** obscenities scrubbed from the Rolling Stones’ Super Bowl performance.
- surge:** an increase in troop strength.
- waterboarding:** an interrogation technique in which the subject is immobilized and doused with water to simulate drowning; reported to be used by U.S. interrogators against terrorism detainees.

MOST LIKELY TO SUCCEED

- carbon:** in combining forms about reducing waste emissions, used as shorthand for air pollution.
- the decider:** with the definite article, a person who makes decisions for other decision-makers, as spoken by President George W. Bush.
- macaca moment:** an ethnic or racial gaffe caught on video.
- m-, man-, men-** as “man-fixes” in compounds and blends such as *moobs*, *manboobs*, *murse*, *manpurse*, *mancation*, *man crush*, *manmaries*, *menaissance*, etc.

LEAST LIKELY TO SUCCEED

- grup:** a Gen-Xer who does not act his or her age.
- pwn:** to “own” someone; to defeat, beat, or best someone. From mis-typing in online gaming.
- stay the course:** to continue an action or undertaking despite it being less successful than desired.

NEW CATEGORY: PLUTO-RELATED WORDS

- dwarf planet:** new International Astronomical Union designation for Pluto and other not-quite-planetary bodies in the solar system.
- planemo:** an object in outer space with mass insufficient to achieve fusion but large enough to be made roughly spherical by its own gravity
- to be **plutoed:** to be demoted.
- pluton:** originally chosen by the General Assembly of the International Astronomical Union as a category for trans-Neptunian objects, like Pluto, that did not warrant designation as true planets. However, the term was already in use in geology to refer to a large mass of intrusive igneous rock believed to have solidified deep within the earth. Another candidate name was *plutonoid*.