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2017 Word of the Year is *fake news,*
as voted by American Dialect Society

GRAND AMERICA HOTEL, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH—JAN. 5—In its 28th annual words of the year vote, the American Dialect Society voted for *fake news* as the Word of the Year for 2017. Defined in two ways, "disinformation or falsehoods presented as real news" and "actual news that is claimed to be untrue," *fake news* was selected as best representing the public discourse and preoccupations of the past year.

Presiding at the Jan. 5 voting session were Grant Barrett, vice president of the American Dialect Society and co-host of the public radio show "A Way With Words," and Jane Solomon, lexicographer for Dictionary.com and member of the American Dialect Society's New Words Committee.

Fake news was first considered by the American Dialect Society a year ago in the voting for the 2016 Word of the 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. In 2017, however, the meaning of *fake news* shifted and expanded, in large part due to its repeated use by President Donald Trump.

"When President Trump latched on to *fake news* early in 2017, he often used it as a rhetorical bludgeon to disparage any news report that he happened to disagree with," said Ben Zimmer, chair of the American Dialect Society's New Words Committee and language columnist for the *Wall Street Journal.* "That obscured the earlier use of *fake news* for misinformation or disinformation spread online, as was seen on social media during the 2016 presidential campaign."

"Trump's version of *fake news* became a catchphrase among the president's supporters, seeking to expose biases in mainstream media," Zimmer continued. "But it also developed more ironic uses, and it spread to speakers of all ages as a sarcastic putdown."
Fake news was nominated by the sixth-grade class of Academy I Middle School in Jersey

City, NJ, and voters at the Word of the Year event agreed with their choice.

Word of the Year is interpreted in its broader sense as "vocabulary item"—not just words but phrases. The words or phrases do not have to be brand-new, but they have to be newly prominent or notable in the past year.

The vote is the longest-running such vote anywhere, the only one not tied to commercial interests, and *the* word-of-the-year event up to which all others lead. It is fully informed by the members' expertise in the study of words, but it is far from a solemn occasion.

Members in the 129-year-old organization include linguists, lexicographers, etymologists, grammarians, historians, researchers, writers, editors, students, and independent scholars. In conducting the vote, they act in fun and do not pretend to be officially inducting words into the English language. Instead, they are highlighting that language change is normal, ongoing, and entertaining.

In a companion vote, sibling organization the American Name Society voted "*Rohingya*" as Name of the Year for 2017 in its thirteenth annual name-of-the-year contest.

AMERICAN DIALECT SOCIETY VOTE TALLIES

The number after each nomination is the number of votes it received. Winners are indicated by an asterisk. Voting totals for each category might not be identical because the number of voters might have changed for each category.

WORD OF THE YEAR

alternative facts: Contrary information that matches one's preferred narrative or interpretation of events. **12**

* fake news: 1. Disinformation or falsehoods presented as real news. 2. actual news that is claimed to be untrue. **196**

#MeToo: Indication by women that they have experienced sexual harassment or assault. **35**

milkshake duck: Person or thing that is deeply loved until problematic behavior is revealed or unearthed. **5**

persisterhood, **persister**: Blend of "persist" and "sister(hood)," an expression of solidarity for women who persist in the face of sexism and gender bias. **6**

pussyhat: Pink knitted hat worn by demonstrators at the Women's March. **2**

take a knee: Kneel in protest, especially during a time when others are standing. **30**

whomst: Humorous variant of "whom" used as a sarcastic display of intelligence. **3**

POLITICAL WORD OF THE YEAR

antifa: Anti-fascist movements and organizations, treated as a whole. 16

persister, **persisterhood**: Blend of "persist" and "sister(hood)," an expression of solidarity for women who persist in the face of sexism and gender bias. 62

* take a knee: Kneel in protest, especially during a time when others are standing. 181

DIGITAL WORD OF THE YEAR

blockchain: Technology underlying cryptocurrencies like bitcoin, which exploded in value this year. 18

digital blackface: When a (usu. white) person uses images of black people as a proxy for themselves on social media. 19

emergency podcast: An audio show prepared at a moment of dire political need. 20

get the zucc: Be banned from Facebook (from the name of Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg). 24

initial coin offering: Capital-raising process to collect funds to start up a new cryptocurrency. 21

ratio: On Twitter, amount of replies to a tweet compared to the number of retweets and likes. 25

rogue adj.: Describing someone ostensibly working in an administration who is posting messages against it. 34

* shitpost: Posting of worthless or irrelevant online content intended to derail a conversation or to provoke others 78

SLANG/INFORMAL WORD OF THE YEAR

RIP: Humorous expression of being overwhelmed by emotions or other factors, as if dying. 5

shooketh: Mock-archaic way of expressing shock or excitement. 18

snatched: Good-looking, attractive. 22

* wypipo: Humorous phonetic spelling of "white people" used to flag white privilege, cluelessness, or absurdity. 168

MOST USEFUL

angry react, sad react: Expression of anger or sorrow (describing reaction emoji, e.g. on Facebook). 38

-burger: Combining form modeled on "nothingburger." 60

* die by suicide: A variant of "to commit suicide" that does not suggest a criminal act. 108

millennial pink: Tint of pink used in goods and social media by and for millennials. 8

MOST LIKELY TO SUCCEED

* fake news: 1. Disinformation or falsehoods presented as real news. 2. actual news that is claimed to be untrue. 226

stan v.: Be a big fan (from Eminem song, "Stan"). 2

unicorn: A one-of-a-kind person or thing. 20

MOST CREATIVE

askhole: Person who continuously asks ridiculous or obnoxious questions. 78

* broflake: Man or boy who lacks resilience or coping skills in the face of disagreements or setbacks. 100

caucacity: Blatantly exhibiting white privilege or acting in a stereotypically white way (a blend of "Caucasian" and "audacity"). 36

milkshake duck: Person or thing that is deeply loved until problematic behavior is revealed or unearthed. 50

EUPHEMISM OF THE YEAR
* alternative facts: Contrary information that matches one's preferred narrative or
　　interpretation of events. 181
avocado toast: A minor indulgence for which people unfairly judge others, esp. millennials. 43
Internet freedom: Removal of net-neutrality regulations by the FCC. 23
problematic: An understated way to say something is very wrong or unacceptably politically
　　incorrect. 13

WTF WORD OF THE YEAR
* covfefe: A (probably) mistyped word of unknown meaning used in a Donald Trump tweet. 113
Oh hi Mark, **ohimark**: Catchphrase based on a line from the notoriously bad movie *The Room*. 34
procrastination nanny: Person who moderates productivity for other adults, esp. as a group
　　event. 16
raw water: Water from natural sources without filters or treatment. 74

HASHTAG OF THE YEAR
* #MeToo: Indication by women that they have experienced sexual harassment or assault. 231
#NeverthelessShePersisted: Feminist rallying cry based on Mitch McConnell's warning to
　　Elizabeth Warren during a Senate debate. 12
#ReclaimingMyTime: Phrase repeated by Rep. Maxine Waters when questioning Treasury
　　Secretary Steve Mnuchin in a House committee hearing. 25
#Resist: Slogan of the (anti-Trump) resistance. 11

EMOJI OF THE YEAR
🐐 : GOAT (Greatest Of All Time). 44
im🍑 : impeach. 50
* 🧕 : woman with head scarf or hijab. 96
🤔 : thinking face. 53

　　Founded in 1889, the American Dialect Society is dedicated to the study of the
English language in North America, and of other languages, or dialects of other languages,
influencing it or influenced by it. ADS members are linguists, lexicographers, etymologists,
historians, grammarians, academics, editors, writers, and independent scholars in the
fields of English, foreign languages, and other disciplines. The society also publishes the
quarterly journal American Speech.
　　The American Dialect Society began choosing Words of the Year in 1990. Winners
are listed below. A full account of the previous choices may be found on the American
Dialect Society's website, www.americandialect.org.
　　Not all words chosen for a particular year are destined to become permanent
additions to the vocabulary. *Y2K* in 1999 and *chad* in 2000 are examples of prominent
terms that faded quickly. An explanation of which words are likely to succeed may be found
in *Predicting New Words: The Secrets of Their Success* by Allan Metcalf.

American Dialect Society Words of Previous Years are at
http://americandialect.org/woty