Words of the Year (2019) and Words of the Decade (2010-2019)

NOMINATIONS to be voted on by
the American Dialect Society
Jan. 3, 2020, New Orleans, LA

POLITICAL WORD OF THE YEAR
#IMPOTUS: derogatory reference to Trump
(IMPeached President Of The United States)
quid pro quo: exchange of favors (central to
Trump/Ukraine impeachment scandal)
squad: nickname for four House Democrats
(Rep. Ocasio-Cortez, Omar, Pressley, Tlaib)
Trumpschmerz: suffering induced by constant
updates about the Trump administration

MOST USEFUL/MOST LIKELY TO SUCCEED
ok boomer: retort to someone older expressing
out-of-touch or condescending views
plant-based: made from plants, for food
products marketed as meat alternatives
stan: to be devoted or enthusiastic about
zoomer: member of Generation Z

SLANG/INFORMAL WORD OF THE YEAR
and I oop: catchphrase of VSCO girls,
expressing shock, surprise, or embarrassment
(first used by drag queen Jasmine Masters)
hot girl summer: a call to live one’s best life
(after Houston rapper Megan Thee Stallion)
zaddy: gender-neutral variation of “daddy” for
an attractive older person with money

MOST CREATIVE
(X)-curious: interested in something
gerrymeandering: drawing convoluted
congressional district lines for political gain
nobody: phrasal template mocking someone
providing an unsolicited opinion
skksksk: keysmash exclamation, expressing
laughter, awkwardness, or amazement

EUPHEMISM OF THE YEAR
freedom gas / molecules of U.S. freedom:
natural gas (used by Energy Dept. officials)
Heckboy: Hellboy (used on the marquee of a
Tennessee movie theater)
people of means: rich people (used by
Starbucks executive Howard Schultz)
self-partnered: single (used by Emma Watson)

DIGITAL WORD OF THE YEAR
>Date: facts (pun on “fax machine” emoji)
im🤖: emoji representation of “impeach”
VSCO girl: young woman who posts trendy
pictures of herself on the VSCO photo app

WORD OF THE YEAR (2019)
ok boomer: retort to someone older expressing
out-of-touch or condescending views
cancel: withdraw support from someone
considered problematic or unacceptable
(my) pronouns: introduction for sharing one’s
set of personal pronouns (“pronouns: she/her”)
Karen: stereotype of a complaining, self-
important white woman, typically a member
of Generation X (also “Generation Karen”)

WORD OF THE DECADE (2010-2019)
#BlackLivesMatter: expression of protest over
police violence against African Americans
climate: used in phrases related to the impact of
climate change, including “climate crisis,”
“climate emergency,” and “climate strike”
emoji: small icon in electronic communication,
used to convey information or emotional
attitude, or as a playful substitution for words
meme: a shared cultural item in the form of a
phrase, image, or video circulated online,
often with humorous, creative alterations
#MeToo: expression of solidarity for women
surviving sexual assault or harassment (coined
by Tarana Burke)
opioid crisis: epidemic of opioid-related drug
overdoses across the U.S.
selfie: a photograph that one takes of oneself,
typically with a digital camera and shared on
social media
they: gender-neutral singular pronoun for a
known person, particularly as a nonbinary
identifier (“they,” “them,” “themself”)
woke: socially aware, especially about issues of
racial and social justice (also used negatively
to mock ostensibly enlightened attitudes)