Generational Slang

Teacher's Key | Level B1 | EnglishBridges.com

Sections follow the student handout. Delete a section here when you delete it from the handout. The handout uses the short (quick) version of the reading.

Vocabulary: Fill in the Blank

1. slang
2. informal
3. disappointment
4. charm
5. puzzled
6. pattern
7. belong / fit in
8. outsiders
9. fade
10. survive / remain
11. invent / build / design / make
12. spread / traveled / travelled
13. reversed / switched / changed
14. relative

Word Partners

Part A. 1 g 2 f 3 h 4 e 5 d 6 c 7 b 8 a

Phrases: the younger generation; a big disappointment; turn on the charm; feel like an outsider; follow a pattern; memories begin to fade; spread like wildfire; a close relative.

Part B. 1 belonging 2 invention 3 disappointed 4 survivors 5 charming 6 puzzling

Comprehension Questions: Model Answers

1. *What does the teenager mean when she says the soup is "bussin"?*
She means that the soup is good. "Bussin" is Gen Z slang for excellent or delicious.

2. *What is a generation?*
A generation is a group of people born around the same time.

3. *Name one slang word that Baby Boomers used to say and one that Generation X used to say.*
Baby Boomers used to say "groovy" or "far out." Generation X used to say "rad" or "As if!"

4. *What do Gen Z speakers mean when they say "no cap"?*
They mean that they are telling the truth.

5. *Which slang words were chosen as Words of the Year for 2023 and 2025?*
Oxford chose "rizz" for 2023, and an online dictionary, Dictionary.com, chose "6-7" for 2025.

6. *What pattern does the writer see in the slang of every generation? Give two examples.*
Every generation needs words for "excellent" (groovy, rad, bussin) and for "not good enough" (lame, basic, mid). The words change, but their jobs stay the same.

7. *Why does a slang word often begin to fade?*
It often begins to fade when adults, such as parents, start using it, because it no longer helps young people feel different from outsiders.

8. *Where do "cap" and "bussin" come from, and what did the internet do to words like these?*
"Cap" and "bussin" come from African American English. The internet did not invent them, but it spread them around the world very quickly.

9. *How does verlan work? Give the example from the reading.*
Verlan turns words backwards. For example, "femme" (woman) becomes "meuf."

10. *True, False, or Not Given: "The word cool first became popular among jazz musicians in the 1960s." Explain your answer using the reading.*
False. "Cool" became popular among jazz musicians in the 1940s, not the 1960s.

11. *Yes, No, or Not Given: "The writer believes that the internet invented most Gen Z slang." Explain your answer using the reading.*
No. The writer says the internet did not invent these words, but it spread them around the world.

12. *Author's purpose: Why does the writer begin with a family dinner? Is it (a) to show that people of different ages use different words for the same idea, (b) to explain how to cook soup, or (c) to prove that older people do not understand any slang?*
(a) To show that people of different ages use different words for the same idea. The cousin, grandfather, and mother all mean "this is good."

True or False

1. **T.** The reading says every generation has its own slang.
2. **T.** Many Boomers used to call exciting things "groovy" or "far out."
3. **F.** Those are the Millennials. Generation X was born from about 1965 to 1980.
4. **T.** Gen Z says "no cap" when they are telling the truth.
5. **F.** Oxford chose "rizz" for 2023. Dictionary.com chose "6-7" for 2025.
6. **T.** Slang helps young people belong to a group and keeps outsiders out.
7. **F.** A word often begins to fade when adults start using it.
8. **F.** It survived. People of almost every age still use it.
9. **F.** "Cap" comes from African American English. The internet spread it but did not invent it.
10. **T.** Verlan turns words backwards, so "femme" becomes "meuf."

Language Focus: Used To for Past Habits and States

Model answers. Accept any answer that uses the form correctly and makes sense.

1. When I was a child, I used to watch cartoons every Saturday morning.
2. At my old school, my friends and I used to play soccer at lunch.
3. My family used to go to the beach every summer.
4. I didn't use to like coffee, but now I drink it every day.
5. I didn't use to be very good at English, but I practice a lot now.
6. I used to play hide-and-seek with my cousins.
7. I used to say "awesome" all the time.
8. I used to watch cartoons on YouTube after school.
9. I used to hate mushrooms, but now I like them.
10. We used to go to the shopping mall or the park.

Accept would + base verb for repeated actions (I would play outside every day), but not for states. In questions and negatives, accept use to; mark used to after did or didn't as an error.

Notes on the Evidence

Generation years follow Pew Research Center (2019): Boomers 1946 to 1964, Gen X 1965 to 1980, Millennials 1981 to 1996, Gen Z 1997 to 2012. Gen Alpha has no fixed start; Dictionary.com and others use roughly 2010 to 2024, which overlaps Pew's Gen Z, so the reading says "since about 2010." All ranges are approximate and differ by source and country.

Words of the Year: Oxford University Press chose "rizz" for 2023 (from charisma) and "brain rot" for 2024. Dictionary.com named "6-7" its 2025 Word of the Year on 29 October 2025, describing it as deliberately nonsensical; its origin is usually traced to the 2024 song "Doot Doot (6 7)" by Skrilla and to clips of NBA player LaMelo Ball (CBC). "Skibidi": the word was first popularized in a 2022 TikTok dance video and then made famous by Alexey Gerasimov's animated YouTube series Skibidi Toilet from February 2023 (Dictionary.com). The reading says "made famous by," not "came from." Cambridge Dictionary added "skibidi" in August 2025.

Origins: "cool" in the sense of excellent took off among jazz musicians in the 1940s and 1950s (Mental Floss); "groovy" began in 1930s jazz slang and became widespread in the 1960s counterculture (Word Origins). "Cap" (a lie) and "bussin" are traced

to African American English; "slay" is widely linked to Black and LGBTQ ballroom culture (Wikipedia, List of Generation Z slang, which gives no origin for slay on its own entry; the reading phrases it as "common in" rather than "invented by"). "On fleek" spread from a 2014 Vine video; "YOLO" was popularized by a 2011 Drake song. The idea that slang fades when adults or brands adopt it is a common observation by linguists, not a measured rule, so the reading says "often."

Verlan: documented since the 19th century; femme becomes meuf, and some words that became mainstream were reversed again, for example beur (from arabe) becoming rebeu (Wikipedia, Verlan). Resource links were opened with a fetch tool on 12 October 2026.