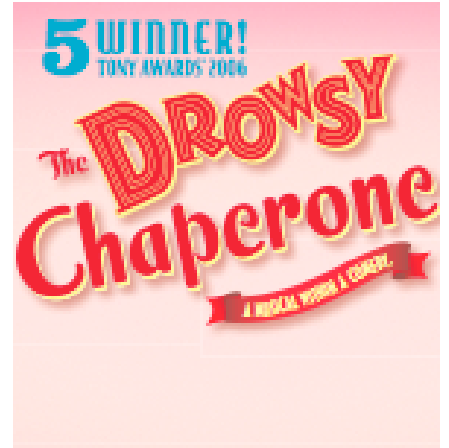


SCREWY SLANG FROM THE ROARING TWENTIES

Slang did not become an important element of American speech until the 1920's. The zany words and phrases of the era created silly images, were said with humorous sarcasm, and drove the older generations mad! Many of the terms coined during the Jazz Age are still used today. Check out just some of the 1920's screwy slang below.



A

all wet: wrong, mistaken

applesauce: sweet talk, gibberish, i.e. "Aw, applesauce!"

Attaboy!: Good going! (also, Attagirl!)

B

baby: darling, sweetie

balled up: puzzled, bewildered

beat it: get away, leave

bee's knees: great, terrific, wonderful

beef: complaint or grievance

big cheese: very important person

bird: term for a man or woman

blow: to leave

bootleg: illegal liquor

bull: 1) any law enforcement official; 2) drivel, hot air

C

cat's meow: excellent, terrific

cheaters: eye glasses

cigg: cigarette

clam: a dollar

copacetic: great, unflappable, just dandy

crush: an infatuation

D

daddy: a young woman's beau, especially if he's rich

dame: woman

dapper: a flapper's dad; handsome

dick: private investigator

dogs: feet

doll: a good-looking woman

dolled up: dressed to the nines

SCREWY SLANG — 2

dope: drugs
doublecross: to stab in the back, to betray
dough: money
dry: shut-up
ducky: great, wonderful

E

earful: enough, sufficient
edge: intoxication, a buzz
egg: a person who lives large

F

fag: cigarette
fella: man
fish: 1) college freshman; 2) first-timer in prison
fly boy: a romanticized term for a pilot
frame: to give false evidence, to set up
fried: drunk

G

gams: a woman's legs
gay: happy, joyful (no homosexual connotation)
get-up: an outfit
get in a lather: to get upset, worked up
gold-digger: a woman who's after a man for his money
goofy: in love

H

hair of the dog: a shot of alcohol
handcuff: a wedding ring
heebie-jeebies: the creeps, the shakes (from a popular song)
high hat: snob
hooch: bootleg liquor
hood: ruffian, a thug
hotsy-totsy: pleasing
Hot dawg!: Great! Wonderful!

I

icy mitt: rejection, dismissal
insured: engaged
ish kabibble: an angry reply, i.e. "Like I care!"
It: sex appeal

SCREWY SLANG — 3

J

jalopy: an old car

java: coffee

joint: club, bar

john: toilet

juice joint: a speakeasy

K

keen: pleasing, appealing

killjoy: spoilsport

kisser: mouth

knocked up: to become pregnant

L

lay off: cut it out, leave me alone

level with me: be straightforward, be truthful

line: insincere flattery

live wire: an energetic person

M

moonshine: homemade whiskey

moll: a mobster's girlfriend

mop: handkerchief

N

neck: to kiss passionately

nifty: superb, tremendous

nookie: sex

O

old boy: term of address or greeting, i.e. "How are things, old boy?"

on the lam: to hide from the police

on the up and up: honest, trustworthy

ossified: drunk person

P

pet: to make out

pill: an unpleasant person

piker: a coward

pinched: to be arrested

pushover: easy prey, sucker

putting on the Ritz: chic, in high style

SCREWY SLANG — 4

R

rag-a-muffin: an unkempt person

razz: to tease

Real McCoy: the real deal, authentic

ritzy: elegant

rubes: money

rummy: a drunk

S

sap: a dim-witted person

screwy: crazy

shiv: knife

skirt: a pretty woman

speakeasy: a bar which sells bootlegged liquor

spill: to tell all

stuck on: have a crush on

swanky: posh, classy

swell: super, fantastic

T

tasty: likable, enjoyable

tight: eye-catching, appealing

tomato: a female

torpedo: a hired gun

U

upchuck: to throw up

upstage: to show someone up

V

vamp: seducer, flirt

W

wet blanket: spoilsport

What's eating you?: What's the matter?

whoopie: to have fun

Y

You slay me!: You're so funny! That was hilarious!

Courtesy of *The Drowsy Chaperone*