

"Omnishambles" is Word Of The Year

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The Oxford English Dictionary has chosen the neologism (new word) "omnishambles" as its Word Of The Year for 2012. The OED's blog defines this recent addition to the English vocabulary as "a situation that has been comprehensively

mismanaged, characterized by a string of blunders and miscalculations". It is a noun and is used informally. The word is a combination of the prefix "omni," which means "in all ways" or "of all things," and "shambles," which means "a state of total disorder from every possible angle". The word was first coined in 2009 in a BBC political comedy but rose to prominence earlier this year after it was used to attack the British government by at least eight politicians in the British Parliament.

Other words in Oxford's top ten include "Eurogeddon" - the threatened financial collapse in Europe - and "second screening" - to watch television and a device such as an iPad simultaneously. The texting acronym "YOLO" - you only live once - also made it onto the list. Oxford said there was no guarantee omnishambles would be added to its dictionary. It said the word first had to "stand the test of time". Oxford selects its Word Of The Year "to reflect the ethos of the year and its lasting potential as a word of cultural significance". Past winners include "podcast," "carbon footprint" and "credit crunch". This year's American winner is "gif" - the format extension of many images on the Internet.

Sources: Oxford English Dictionary / BBC

Writing

Learning vocabulary is more important than learning to speak, read, write or listen. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

dictionaries / neologisms / blog / blunders / noun / shambles / political comedy / "Eurogeddon" / financial collapse / simultaneously / device / guarantee / ethos / gif

True / False

- The word "omnishambles" was first used by Shakespeare. T / F
- "Omnishambles" means to do something "better than excellent". T / F
- The word is often found on British coins, especially old ones. T / F
- Eight or more politicians used the word to criticize the UK government. T / F
- "Eurogeddon" describes a possible war between all European countries. T / F
- The acronym "YOLO" means "you only live once". T / F
- "Omnishambles" is not in the Oxford English Dictionary. T / F
- The American winner of Word Of The Year is the image extension "gif". T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. neologism | a. promise |
| 2. comprehensively | b. mess |
| 3. characterized | c. criticize |
| 4. shambles | d. messaging |
| 5. attack | e. spirit |
| 6. simultaneously | f. typified |
| 7. texting | g. new word |
| 8. guarantee | h. mirror |
| 9. reflect | i. at the same time |
| 10. ethos | j. completely |

Discussion - Student A

- How happy are you with your knowledge of English vocabulary?
- Do you know more words than average in your own language?
- What do you think of the word "omnishambles"?
- Do you think English has enough words without adding more?
- What recent neologisms are there in your language?
- What recent world events might be an "omnishambles"?
- Could anything you've ever done be described as an "omnishambles"?
- Do you think "omnishambles" will survive?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. this recent addition to | a. is used informally |
| 2. characterized by a | b. acronym "YOLO" |
| 3. It is a noun and | c. string of blunders |
| 4. from every | d. extension |
| 5. rose to | e. possible angle |
| 6. other words in | f. the English vocabulary |
| 7. the texting | g. potential |
| 8. stand the test | h. Oxford's top ten |
| 9. its lasting | i. prominence |
| 10. format | j. of time |

Discussion – Student B

- What's the best way to learn vocabulary?
- What do you think of the other neologisms mentioned in the article?
- Have you ever made a new word?
- What do you think of so many English words being part of your language?
- What are your favourite / least favourite English words?
- Are there words in English you still keep forgetting?
- Is your teacher good at teaching vocabulary?
- How interested are you in learning neologisms?

Spelling

- chosen the neologism
- this recent addition to the English vocabulary
- characterized by a string of blunders
- The word is a combination of ...
- a state of total disorder from every possible angle
- rose to prominence earlier this year
- the threatened financial collapse in Europe
- The texting acronym "YOLO"
- no guarantee omnishambles would be added
- its lasting potential
- a word of cultural significance
- "gif" – the format extension of many images

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. j	3. f	4. b	5. c
6. i	7. d	8. a	9. h	10. e

Role Play

Traditionalist - You really don't like new words. Think of three reasons why. English already has the exact word you need for any situation. If we keep making new words, we won't understand each other. People make new words because they don't understand their language properly. They lack intelligence.

Word lover - You totally love new words. Think of three reasons why. You love the way English vocabulary has developed. The language needs new words to define new situations in life. You think people who create new words are super-cool. You think people who dislike new words live in the past.

"Omnishambles" creator - You are a very educated and intelligent writer. You have a huge vocabulary. You think English needs more words. Think of three reasons why. There was no other word to describe the situation you wanted to explain. You love Shakespeare because he invented thousands of new words.

English learner - You think "enough already!!!" You are good at English but don't want more words to learn. Think of 3 reasons why. You think "omnishambles" is a stupid word that even English speakers don't know. You think "total shambles" is better because everyone can understand this.

Speaking - Neologisms

Which of these past new words do you use often? Rank them – most used at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| • credit crunch | • LOL |
| • carbon footprint | • ground zero |
| • podcast | • cloud computing |
| • soccer mom | • bird flu |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	F	c	F	d	T	e	F	f	T	g	T	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.