

INTRODUCTION

A community is known by the language it keeps, and its words chronicle the times. Every aspect of the life of a people is reflected in the words they use to talk about themselves and the world around them. As their world changes – through invention, discovery, revolution, evolution, or personal transformation – so does their language. Like the growth rings of a tree, our vocabulary bears witness to our past.

When we talk about writing books today, our use of the words *write* and *book* fossilize a culture much different from ours. For *write* comes from a root word that meant ‘to scratch’, and *book* from one that also gives us *beech* (tree), thus suggesting that early records were scratched on beech wood. While our linguistic ancestors still dwelled on the European continent, they discovered the paved road (*via strata*) of the Romans, and borrowed the second half of the Latin term to become our *street*. Having translated themselves to the British Isles, they played host to the Danes, who paid for the hospitality with words like *they* and *sky*, and to the Normans, who brought with them *chair* and *table*. As English speakers went on meeting new situations and developing new manners and morals, the vocabulary of English went on changing too.

Today the English word stock is a multileveled record of the history of English speakers. And, as we have not yet reached the end of history, neither have we reached the end of our vocabulary. This volume is a record, partial and imperfect to be sure, of some changes in English words during the fifty years 1941–1991. The changes were recorded, in the first instance, in a semiregular column called “Among the New Words” published in the journal *American Speech*. That journal had been founded in 1925 at the instigation of the Sage of Baltimore, H. L. Mencken, whose avocation was studying the language of America. Its first editors were a troika of distinguished scholars, Louise Pound, Kemp Malone, and Arthur Kennedy. In 1971, the journal acquired sponsorship

by the scholarly organization dearest to Mencken’s heart – the American Dialect Society; its current editor is Ronald R. Butters of Duke University.

In 1941 Dwight L. Bolinger, who had been writing a column on new words (“The Living Language”) for a magazine published in Los Angeles, transferred his work to *American Speech* and renamed it “Among the New Words.” Bolinger continued to edit the feature until 1944, when it came under the guidance of I. Willis Russell, who looked after it for forty-two years, until his death in 1985. During the first fifty years of the feature’s publication in *American Speech*, it appeared in 113 installments, with 222 persons acknowledged as contributors of citations or other assistance.

Still appearing in practically every issue of *American Speech*, “Among the New Words” is the longest-running documentary record of new English words. Although dictionaries of new words have become increasingly popular in recent years, in one sense, English lexicography began with new-words books. The first monolingual English dictionaries recorded “hard words” exclusively, and so were mainly glossaries of unusual new words in the language intended to help ambitious yuppies of the seventeenth century keep up with the knowledge explosion of their day. In that sense, “Among the New Words” is in a very old tradition.

The motive behind “Among the New Words” is, however, quite different from that of the early “hard words” dictionaries. They were do-it-yourself books intended to help “unskilled,” that is, unschooled, persons educate themselves in the buzzwords of their age. The aim of “Among the New Words” is more detached. When *American Speech* began publication, it had a motto blazoned on its cover: “They haif said. Quhat say they? Lat thame say.”

That cryptic motto (traceable to an inscription over a door at Marischal College in Aberdeen, but with antecedents going back to magical amulets of the late

Classical period) has several interpretations. But most probably it was intended as a statement of editorial policy: The aim of *American Speech* was to observe and record the language of the populace, without concern for correcting it – to be descriptive, not prescriptive, in its approach to its subject, to glory in the vernacular.

So too, the aim of “Among the New Words” has always been to catch change in our vocabulary on the wing, to record it, to marvel at it, and when possible to explain it. The feature has been a dispassionate, albeit sometimes amused, observer of the lexical and social flux of our society, especially as change in our words interacts with and reflects change in our folkways and mores. A fitting motto for “Among the New Words” might be this: “Et Verba Nova et Origines Exquirere” (To seek out new words and their origins).

It would be incorrect to say that the mission of the column is to boldly go where none have gone before, because the quest for neologisms is an old one. However, “Among the New Words” is distinguished by how it has gone about its mission, especially by the evidence it presents. A characteristic feature of its entries is their extensive documentation. New words are shown as they are used in real language through many, often long, quotations for which full source information is given.

The body of this volume reprints the 113 installments that originally appeared between 1941 and 1991. These installments include many of the significant words added to the English vocabulary during those decades. However, they also omit some significant words and include a good many insignificant ones. The principles on which words were chosen for “Among the New Words” explain both the omissions and the inclusions.

COLLECTING NEW WORDS

1. What is a new word?

For “Among the New Words,” a NEW WORD is a form or the use of a form not recorded in general dictionaries. The form may be one that is usually spelled as a single word (*guesstimate*) or a compound (*sandwich generation*) or even an idiomatic phrase (*out of the loop*, *go double platinum*).

The form of the word itself may be novel, a shape that has not before been seen or heard in English (*flextime*, *phillumenist*, *ecotage*), or the newness may lie in a novel use of an existing form. In the latter case, the novelty may be in what the word refers to (*turf* as ‘a location, subject, or responsibility claimed as one’s own’), the word’s grammar (*looney tunes* developing from the name of an animated cartoon to an adjective ‘erratic, absurd’), or even its relationship to those who use it (British *toyboy* entering American use via super-market tabloids).

The early installments of “Among the New Words”

tried to include words that were new in an absolute sense – words that had come into use within a few years before their documentation in the column. It is often difficult, however, to be sure of when a word was actually first formed, and some words have a long underground existence before they are reported. So the column eventually adopted an operational definition of *new*: A word is “new” if it (or a particular use of it) does not appear in general dictionaries at the time it is included in the column.

The list of dictionaries taken as touchstones for “newness” changes as fresh ones are published and old ones are revised. At the time of this writing, the following works are being consulted as the column’s dictionaries of record:

Random House Webster’s College Dictionary, 1991.
Oxford English Dictionary, 2d ed., 1989.
World Book Dictionary (Thorndike-Barnhart), 1989.
Webster’s New World Dictionary, 3d College ed., 1988.
Random House Dictionary, 2d ed. Unabridged, 1987.
Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, 1983.
Webster’s Third New International Dictionary, 1961.

Except for the two major dictionaries of record (the *OED* and *Webster’s Third*), the list is limited to significant American dictionaries published during the preceding ten years.

British dictionaries (other than the *OED*) are consulted only for words suspected to be of British origin, and the inclusion of a word in a British dictionary does not exclude it from “Among the New Words” if it appears to have extended its use from British to American English. On the other hand, occasional installments of “Among the New Words” or particular entries in an installment document British new words, regardless of their use in American English. The additional British dictionaries of record for “Among the New Words” are currently the following:

Concise Oxford Dictionary, 8th ed., 1990.
Chambers English Dictionary, 1988.
Collins Concise Dictionary, 2d ed., 1988.
Collins Dictionary, 2d ed., 1986.
Longman Dictionary, 1984.
Reader’s Digest Great Illustrated Dictionary, 1984.

Dictionaries specializing in new words are also routinely consulted, and a word entered in one of them is not usually included in “Among the New Words” unless the editors have citational evidence providing additional information about the word. The new-word glossaries currently consulted are these:

Third Barnhart Dictionary of New English, 1990.
Longman Register of New Words, vol. 1, 1989; vol. 2, 1990.
New New Words Dictionary, 1988.
Longman Guardian New Words, 1986.
12,000 Words, 1986.

In addition to such books, the other major periodical record of neologisms regularly consulted is *The Barnhart Dictionary Companion*, 1982–.

A form or use that is not adequately accounted for

in such dictionaries is a “new word” and thus a candidate for inclusion in the column, and normally only words not entered in them are included. Consequently, if a recently coined word appears in a new dictionary, it will never appear in “Among the New Words.” The column is therefore a record of such new words as have not yet made their way into dictionaries at the time the column is being prepared.

On the other hand, “Among the New Words” does not scruple to include words that would not usually appear in any general dictionary: nonce words and stunt words. A *NONCE WORD* is one coined for a particular use and unlikely to become a permanent part of the vocabulary. A *STUNT* is a nonce word intended as a joke or a clever display of the coiner’s virtuosity. Such words are not included in “Among the New Words” if they have nothing else to recommend them; the column does not seek to record the merely novel and cute. When, however, stunt and other nonce words illustrate a pattern of word formation or are especially indicative of the life of the time or otherwise exemplify something important about language, they may find their way into “Among the New Words.”

The proliferation of Watergate words is a case in point. Many of the *Water-* and *-gate* forms were ephemeral, of no intrinsic interest. But they showed how rapidly a new suffix can come into widespread use, they were highly topical in American society, and many exemplified a spirit of play that has as much claim to being a central function of language as any of the more sober purposes usually set forth as humanity’s reason for talking.

2. How are new words found?

The identification of potential new-word candidates and the gathering of documentary evidence – that is, citations with source information – is the major task in preparing “Among the New Words.” The column can be written only because, from its beginning, words and citations have been contributed by members of the band of volunteer workers listed in the Index to Contributors.

New contributors join the band every year. They watch for words that strike them as new uses in whatever material they customarily read or listen to. Because printed evidence is easy to gather, most of the new words are attested from newspapers, magazines, and books. However, speech and other forms of writing are equally valid sources of evidence. The dominance of printed citations is a matter of convenience, not intended to privilege the published word over the spoken or handwritten. Oral and manuscript citations are used when they are available.

Some contributors do preliminary checking in one of the dictionaries of record listed above, but verifying “newness” is the responsibility of the editors. Contributors need primarily an awareness of what is

likely to be novel and an inclination to gather citations as they come upon them in their ordinary reading and listening.

If the material to be cited is disposable, such as a newspaper or popular magazine, contributors underline the word in red or highlight it, tear out the page, and send it to the editors. The page must contain the name of the publication, the date, and the page number. If that information is not printed on the page, it has to be written on the tear sheet by the contributor.

If the material is not disposable, the preferred method of collecting is to copy the page xerographically (with source information – author, title, place, publisher, date, and page number – added by hand as necessary), and then to treat the copies in the same way as tear sheets. If it is not convenient to copy pages, handwritten or typed quotations with source information are sent on either sheets of paper or four-by-six slips.

An oral citation, which may be handwritten or typed, should consist whenever possible of a full sentence containing the new word. Source information includes the date the sentence was heard and its circumstances (if a broadcast, the radio or TV station call letters and city; if in a conversation or public speech, a brief description of the occasion). Some identification of the speaker is often useful: the name of a public figure or a brief characterization of a private person – sex, approximate age, etc.

All citations are added to the New Words files of the American Dialect Society, which are the basis for “Among the New Words.” Those files are in any of three forms, depending on how the citations were gathered: slips, tear sheets or clippings, and computer records.

All active contributors are members of the American Dialect Society’s New Words Committee by virtue of their contributions. They receive an irregular newsletter reporting on the state of the committee’s work and listing new words for which citations are especially sought. In each installment those who supplied citations for that installment are listed, and once a year active contributors are acknowledged.

THE MAKING OF NEW WORDS

There are six basic etymological sources for new words: *CREATING*, *BORROWING*, *COMBINING*, *SHORTENING*, *BLENDING*, and *SHIFTING*. Each of those six, however, has a number of important subtypes, so the total number of distinct sources is large. All six of the basic types and a number of subtypes have been represented during the fifty years of “Among the New Words.” There is also a seventh category of words whose source is unknown. Etymologists strive, ever unsuccessfully, to reduce the membership of that category to zero.

1. Creating

Some new words are made from nothing or, at least, not from existing words. This source is the least productive of the six; most new words derive in one way or another from old words. The purest kind of creating would be to make a word completely from scratch, creation *ex nihilo*. Theoretically, it should be possible to make up words in that fashion; but in fact there are no such words of which we can be sure. To make something out of nothing does not seem to be a human talent.

Another kind of creating is to make a word whose sound resembles some sound in nature: the *moo* of a cow or the *pow* of a blow to the chin. Such words are called **IMITATIVE**, **ECHOIC**, or **ONOMATOPOETIC**. Instances in this book are *bebop*, *bleep*, *blimp*, *burp*, *gack*, *gobbledygook* or *gobbledegook*, and *re-bop*. *Gobbledygook*, which is said to imitate the sound of a turkey, is based partly on the existing echoic *gobble* but extends that word with a new echo.

2. Borrowing

A more productive source of new words is to borrow them from other languages. A great proportion of the total English vocabulary is composed of words made from ultimately foreign elements. However, many such words were actually formed in English, so the extremely high percentage of borrowing sometimes reported for English is exaggerated. Yet many loanwords did enter English in the past, and we continue to borrow words from other languages as they fill a need in English.

Simple loanwords Simple **LOANWORDS** ARE **ADOPTED** directly into English, sometimes with minor modifications of pronunciation needed to make them conform to English sound patterns, and sometimes with spelling changes of a similar kind, but with no major change of form. Ever since 1066 French has been the main source of **LOANS** into English, and it is the most prolific contributor in this volume, being the source of the following:

brouhaha, *chichi*, *discotheque*, *lettrisme*, *lettrist*, *magicienne*, *maquis*, *marché légal*, *marché noir*, *marché parallèle*, *messagerie*, *Minitel*, *Minutelist*, *nacelle*, (*la*) *nouvelle cuisine*, *nouvelle cuisinier*, *plastique*, *plastiqueur*, *repechage*.

French, however, also borrows from English, and sometimes the borrowing doubles back upon itself, so that we have items that combine French and English: *les shorts*, *Watergaffe*.

German was the source of a fair number of loanwords at the time of World War II, most military in nature:

blitzkrieg, *buna*, *Festung Europa*, *flak*, sometimes respelled in a more English-looking fashion as *flack*, *Herrenvolk*, *Luftwaffe*, *panzer*, *schnorchel* with variants *schnorkel*, *schnorkle*, and eventually *snorkel*, *sitzkrieg*, and *Wuwa*.

Spanish has provided a few loanwords, especially of American Spanish origin, relating to politics, music, and drugs: *Fidelismo*, *Fidelista*, *mambo*, (*el-*)*primo*, *rubia* (*de la costa*). Portuguese is likewise of the American variety, heavy on music: *bossa nova*, *lambada*, *lambad-eria*. Russian loans are political in their overtones: *perestroika*, *sputnik*, *Tass*.

Other languages provide a smattering of loans: Afrikaans *apartheid*, Arabic *intifada(h)*, Modern Hebrew *Israeli*, Kikuyu *Mau Mau*, Norwegian *rumptaske*, Panjabi *bhangra*, Swedish *jul otta*.

Adapted loanwords Some loans involve remodeling of meaningful parts of their form (morphological change), rather than only adjustments of pronunciation or spelling (phonological or orthographic change). They are **ADAPTED** from their foreign word pattern to a more native one. A foreign ending may be omitted, as in *dol* from Latin *dolor*; in the case of *Lettrism* and *Fidelism*, the French *-isme* and Spanish *-ismo* were replaced by the corresponding English *-ism*. In *spelunker*, *cybernetics*, *ataractic*, *ataraxic*, and *emporiatrics*, the grammatical endings of Latin *spelunca* and of Greek *kybernetes*, *ataraktos*, *ataraxia*, and *emporos* were omitted and the suffixes *-er*, *-ics*, *-ic*, and *-iatrics* added, with other spelling changes to naturalize the orthography. *Rhochrematics* compounds two Greek roots, *rho-* and *chremat-*, and adds the suffix *-ics*.

Ever since the Renaissance, English has raided the classical languages for impressive-sounding root words. So extensive has such learned borrowing been that a large number of Greek and Latin roots are now a part of English, used like any other elements to make compounds and affixed derivatives. However, we still sometimes go back to the classical sources to borrow roots when we need a fancy term, especially in medicine or technology.

Loan translations Instead of borrowing the form of a foreign word, English sometimes borrows its meaning, rendering the foreign sense by appropriate words already in the language. Such borrowings, called **CALQUES** or **LOAN TRANSLATIONS**, may exist alongside the corresponding simple loans they translate. Instances are the French *animateur*, *basket*, *fourth force*, and *new cuisine* (beside *nouvelle cuisine*); German *Fortress Europe* (beside *Festung Europa*) and *guestworker* (for which the simple loan *Gastarbeiter* also exists, although it is generally used only for guestworkers in Germany); Russian *apparatus* (for which there is also the simple loan *apparat*, usual only in the context of communism), and *fellow traveler*; Spanish *blonde from the coast* (beside *rubia de la costa*); and Chinese *barefoot doctor*.

3. Combining

A far more productive source of new words – indeed, by most counts, the most productive of all – is to com-

INTRODUCTION

5

bine existing words or word parts (technically known as MORPHEMES) into a new form. Such combinations are said to be of two types: COMPOUNDS and DERIVATIVES. The difference is that a compound combines two or more full words or bases, whereas a derivative combines a base with one or more affixes.

A BASE is the part of a word to which prefixes and suffixes may be added. It may be an independent word, such as *comb* in *uncombed*, or it may be a morpheme that does not occur alone as a separate word, such as the *kemp* of *unkempt*. An AFFIX is a PREFIX if it comes before a base (like *un-*), and a SUFFIX, if after a base (like *-ed* or *-t*). A combination of bases or of a base and affix to which another affix may be added is called a STEM; so in *short-timer*, the combination of bases, *short-time*, is the word's stem, and in *activity*, the combination of base and suffix, *active*, is likewise a stem.

The theoretical distinction between base and affix is, however, neater than the reality. Affixes are sometimes used as independent words, as *ism* and *ology* are. On the other hand, independent words may be used in an affix-like way and eventually become affixes. An example is the word *like*, which is a kind of suffix in *affix-like*. Its Old English source word, *lic*, is also the origin of the suffix *-ly*. So *like*, *-like*, and *-ly* are historically all developments of the same word, though today they are a base-word, a quasi-affix, and an ordinary affix.

A different kind of example is *anthrop(o)-*, which combines with a word in *anthropogenesis* and with a suffix in *anthropoid* but is not used alone. A form like *anthrop(o)-* or *-like* is called a COMBINING FORM and can be regarded as either a base or an affix. The distinction between the compounding of bases and derivation by affixes is a useful one, but there are combinations that can be looked at in either way.

Prefixes Traditional prefixes are well represented among new words. The following occur in this volume: *anti-*, *be-*, *bi-*, *bin-*, *contro-*, *counter-*, *crypto-*, *de-*, *electro-*, *ergo-*, *exo-*, *extra-*, *hydro-*, *hyper-*, *hypo-*, *infra-*, *inter-*, *kilo-*, *maxi-*, *mega-*, *mini-*, *mono-*, *multi-*, *neo-*, *non-*, *off-*, *out-*, *over-*, *paleo-*, *pluto-*, *post-*, *pre-*, *proto-*, *quadri-* (with variants *quadra-* and *quadro-*), *quasi-*, *re-*, *retro-*, *semi-*, *sub-*, *super-*, *thermo-*, *tri-*, *turbo-*, *ultra-*, *un-*, *under-*, *up-*, *urbi-*, and *xeri-* or *xero-*.

New prefixes or new senses of old prefixes often develop to augment the list of traditional ones. For example, *aer(o)-* is a form meaning 'air' that combines with other word parts, as in *aerate* and *aerobic*. However, because of its association with *aeronautics* and the British *aeroplane*, it has acquired the sense 'aviation' as in *aeropause* and *aeropolitics*. Similarly, *agriculture* was a loanword from Middle French, ultimately from Latin *agricultura*, in which *agri-* was a combining form of the Latin word for 'field', *ager*. Today, however, that

form has taken on the sense of the whole word *agriculture* and become a prefix, as in *agribusiness*. *Bio-* continues its earlier sense of 'life' but is sometime used more specifically to mean 'biological', as in *bio-robot*, which is not a living machine, but one used in biological experiments.

Docu- has the sense 'in a documentary style' in forms like *docu-pulp*, *docu-reenactment*, and *documusi-cal*. *Eco-* has taken on the sense 'ecology, ecological' in a very large number of words (*eco-awareness*, *ecodefender*, *ecopolitics*, etc.) and is a vogue affix today. Another currently much used form is *Eur(o)-*, which has both the general sense 'European' and the more specific one 'pertaining to the EC (European Community)'. *Execu-* in *execu-crime* means 'executive, white-collar'. *Heli-* used in the sense 'helicopter' balances the short form *copter* in showing how English speakers have divided the full form despite its etymology, which is *helico-pter* 'spiral-wing'.

Micro- has its usual sense of 'small', but in addition has developed a new use as in *microcook* 'cook in a microwave oven'. Similarly, *para-* acquired a new meaning in *paradoctor* 'a medical person making parachute calls', *parastreaker* 'a naked parachutist', and *paratrooper* 'member of a parachute troop', along with a score of other such words. *Petrochemical*, *petrodipomat*, *petrodollar*, and *petropolitics* are concerned with petroleum rather than with rocks. *Psychodrama*, *psychohistory*, and *psycholinguistics* are not about the soul but are respectively playacting used as psychotherapy, history from a psychoanalytical standpoint, and study of the psychological aspects of language.

Radio-poison is poisoning from radioactive fallout. *Strato-suit*, *stratocruiser*, and *stratopen* refer not to clouds or layers, but to things used in the stratosphere. A *telecourse* is not just distant, but is taught by television; a *teleprompter* is a nearby device showing television performers what to say; and a *telethon* is a televised show to raise money.

Suffixes Suffixes are more numerous than prefixes, and they are more frequent. Traditional suffixes, or combinations of suffixes, that have been used to form recent new words are *-able*, *-ac*, *-aceous*, *-age*, *-aire*, *-(al)ly*, *-(i)ana*, *-ate*, *-ation*, *-cide*, *-dom*, *-ectomy*, *-ed*, *-ee*, *-eer*, *-eering*, the extremely productive *-er* (which has several uses), *-(e)ry*, *-ese*, *-esque*, *-ette* (whose recent use is more pejorative than it once was), *-eur*, *-euse*, *-ey*, *-fication*, *-fy*, *-grapher*, *-graphy*, *-ian*, *-iatrics*, *-ic*, *-ical*, *-ics*, noun-forming *-ie* or *-y*, *-in*, *-ing*, *-ion*, *-ish*, the very popular *-ism* with a pseudo-Spanish variant *-ismo*, *-ist*, *-ite*, *-ity*, *-ium*, *-ive*, *-ization*, *-ize*, *-latry*, *-less*, *-let*, *-logist*, *-logy*, *-ly*, *-ment*, *-metrician*, *-ness*, *-oid*, *-or*, *-osis*, *-phile*, *-phobe*, *-ster*, *-stress*, *-tomy*, *-wise*, and adjective forming *-y*.

Some suffixes are positioned oddly, especially when converting phrases like "lust after" or "speed up" into words. In *lustable-after* (beside *lust-afterable*) the suffix

-able is interposed rather than put at the end of the word. In *speeder-upper* and a number of similar forms, -er is reduplicated.

The placename element -(s)v*ille* is used also to form words with a metaphorical allusion to place. *Hoover-ville* was a 1930s instance, and a more recent one that never found its way into “Among the New Words” is *dullsville*. Although *photogenic* originally meant ‘produced by light’, by the 1920s it had come to mean ‘good as a subject for photography’ and in that sense was the source of a new meaning for the suffix -*genic* in *mediagenic*, *phonogenic*, *radiogenic*, and *telegenic*. Although the suffix -*nik* is older in English, it received a double-barreled boost in the late 1950s from *sputnik* and *beatnik*; later examples are *discothequenik*, *folknik*, *gatenik*, and *neatnik*.

Derivatives sometimes have linking vowels or consonants added to the stem of a word before an affix for ease of pronunciation or by association with related words. So the complex suffix -*arianism* of *communitarianism* carries over the *t* from that word and from others like *Rotarianism* to the new form *cosmotarianism*. Similarly, the -*ateer* of *pulpateer* reflects the vowel and *t* of *pamphleteer* or *profiteer*. The same linking sounds (*at*) occur in *ismatism* as an echo of such medical terms as *rheumatism* and *astigmatism*.

Some new suffixes are formed, just as some prefixes are, by a process of blending. Thus, *breath* and *analyzer* were blended in a tradename “Breathalyzer,” and the ending -(a)lyzer was extended as a suffix to *eye(a)lyzer*. The old words *secretariat* and *proletariat* are the source of the suffix -*ariat* in *infantariat* and *salariat*. Similarly, blends of *inflation* have produced a voguish new suffixal form -*flation* in *gradeflation*, *oilflation*, *taxflation*; it also occurs as the stem in *un-flation*, an alternative to the much older *deflation*. Another suffix created by fracturing a word is -*holic* from *alcoholic*; the prototypical form seems to have been *workaholic* in the late 1960s.

The ending of *broadcast* has become a new suffix -*cast*, used in forms like *narrowcast*, *telecast*, and *newscast*. Other derivatives from it are the -*caster* of *sportscaster* and the -*casting* of *beer-casting* (beer-advertising on TV). The second part of *Watergate* became a suffix for a political scandal complicated by efforts at a cover-up, but was used jokingly in many stunt words from *Abdulgate* to *Winegate*. There is no reason why the last syllable of *Watergate* should have become a suffix, except that it was short, snappy, and suggested an opening for satire.

A shortage of various commodities during World War II resulted in illegal dealers in them; consequently the older term *bootlegger* (originally ‘one who carries contraband in his boot legs’) became the source of a new suffix, -*legger* in *foodlegger*, *tirelegger*, *gas legger*, and the like. The early clipping of *automobile* to *auto* left the second half of the word for use as a suffixal form; the prototype, *bookmobile*, is from the

1920s, but a later example is *bloodmobile*. Although *sandwich* has no connection with *sand* (anymore than *hamburger* does with *ham*), its first syllable has been replaced by various words indicating fillings: *duckwich*, *Spamwich*, *turkeywich*.

Argonaut begat *astronaut* as early as 1880; later suffixal uses of -*naut* for explorers of the watery or stellar deeps are *aquanaut*, *bathynaut*, *cosmonaut*, and *hydronaut*. Other terms for spaceship passengers have first parts describing the traveler: *plastinaut* (a plastic dummy) and *chimp(o)naut*. Only a vague sense of spaciness seems to connect the foregoing to the blend *Reaganaut* ‘a supporter of Ronald Reagan’. *Economic(s)* has been clipped to a suffixal -(o)*nomics*(s), as in *Fordonomics* and *Reaganomics*; the suffix is especially favored when it can be blended with a word ending in *n*: *McGovernomics*, *Nixonomics*, *electionomics*.

Panorama yielded the suffix -*rama* (ultimately from Greek *horama* ‘a view’) as early as the first half of the nineteenth century. General Motors used the form in its etymological sense as part of the name of their exhibition at the 1939 New York World’s Fair, *Futurama*; since that time the suffix has become diverse and vaguer in meaning. The suffix -(a)*thon* is the kind of innovation linguistic pecksniffery loves to hate. Of this suffix, the *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2d ed., looking down a very long and censorious nose, remarks: “barbarously extracted f. MAR)ATHON, used occas. in the U.S. (*talkathon*, *walkathon*), rarely in Britain, to form words denoting something carried on for an abnormal length of time.” The events so named are often fund-raisers for charity.

The suffix -*iad*, abstracted from *Olympiad*, is used for a different sort of quadrennial event in *presidentialiad*. The abstraction of -*on* from *aileron* to add to *deceler(ate)* in *deceleron* ‘an aircraft brake’ added another sense to the several scientific and technological uses of the -*on* suffix. On the other hand, the abstraction of -*onics* from *electronics* in order to make *bionics* produced a new suffix. The playful, joking suffix -*aroo*, -*eroo*, or -*roo*, probably abstracted from *buckaroo*, occurs in words like *switcheroo*.

The rare suffix -*ere* in *gomere* ‘female gomer’ (a gomer being an undesirable emergency-room patient) perhaps reflects such French gender distinctions as *couturier/couturière* and *cuisinier/cuisinière*, although the analogy is imperfect. The -*erie* of *shooterie* likewise seems to be modeled on French as a variant of the more usual -*ery*. The -*ers* of *bleepers* is perhaps the British slang suffix of *champers*.

New suffixes are still occasionally borrowed from the classical languages, such as -*tron* from Greek to form names for devices or facilities of scientific study. It has doubtless been reinforced by its similarity to the ending of the word *electron*. Endings suggestive of the inflections of classical languages are sometimes added to words for effect, without adding any very precise meaning. The Greek-looking -*os* in the trade-

mark *Domestos* is an example, as is the Latin-looking *-us* in *goofus*.

Near the borderline between suffixation and compounding is the formative *happy*, which does not look much like a suffix because it is usually spelled with either a hyphen (*headline-happy*) or a space (*flak happy*). However, its meanings are different from those of the independent word *happy*. Suffixal *happy* has two senses: ‘confused and disoriented from’ (*battle-happy*) and ‘impulsive or obsessive about’ (*trigger-happy*, *power-happy*). Both senses are negative, whereas the independent word *happy* is normally positive in its meanings. The prototype of the use was probably *slaphappy*, from the 1930s, which already had the seed of both senses, specifically ‘punch-drunk’ and ‘irresponsibly zany’. The suffix radiated in its uses during World War II.

Another borderline suffix is the prepositional *-in*, with three senses: ‘a public protest’ (prototype *sit-in*, also *pray-in*), ‘a place to which one comes’ (prototype *drive-in*, also *fly-in*), ‘a large group entertainment’ (prototype *love-in*, also *streak-in*). Similar are *-off* and *-out*. Although *play-off* is from the nineteenth century, *bake-off* is a mid-twentieth-century form. *Punch-out*, with an intensifying sense of *-out*, suggests the older *knock-out*. *Brown-out* and *dim-out* are obviously patterned after the older *black-out*. *Fallout* and *cookout* involve yet other senses of the suffix, directional and locational.

Compounds Compounds, the result of joining two or more bases, are the most numerous type of combination.

About 90 percent of new compounds are nouns. Adjectives and verbs account for less than 10 percent, and other parts of speech are even rarer. Several factors account for the preponderance of nouns. There are more new things to name than there are new events or qualities. We rarely come upon a new action or characteristic, but often invent or discover new objects. Also English prefers to put semantic information into nouns and use a few dummy verbs like *have*, *take*, and *do* with them; we “dine” less often than we “have dinner,” “rest” less often than “take a rest,” “research” less often than “do research.” Moreover, it is easy in English to use a noun to modify another noun, so we have less need for distinctive adjectives. On the whole, the English vocabulary favors nouns.

Compounds generally consist of two (occasionally more) words combined as a lexical unit. They are usually written with a space between them (*architectural barrier*), less often solid (*blacktop*) or with a hyphen (*user-friendly*). There is, however, a good deal of variation: *toyboy* or *toy-boy*, *spaceship* or *space ship*, *product mix* or *product-mix*, *tinseltown*, *tinsel-town*, or *tinsel town*.

(a) Suffix-like compounds. Compounds are sometimes formed according to a pattern of using a partic-

ular word in first or last position, very much like an affix. During World War II, United States military forces were based at various locations around the world, so forms like *Aleutian-based*, *Italy-based*, *Marianas-based*, *Saipan-based* were frequent. Common nouns were also used as the first elements of *-based* compounds: *carrier-based*, *homebased*, *shore-based*. Although less prolific now than it was in the 1940s, the pattern still produces new forms: *reality-based*.

Other forms with similar popular suffix-like use are *-bashing* (especially in British use: *fag-bashing*, *granny-bashing*, *Paki-bashing*, *square-bashing*, *yuppy-bashing*), the enduring *-burger* (*nutburger*, *SPAMburger*), *-buster*, which enjoyed a fad in the 1940s (*atom-buster*, *belly buster*, *blockbuster*, *crime buster*, *gangbuster*, *ghost buster* ‘an exposé of fraudulent mediums’ rather than the later ‘exorcist’, *knuckle buster*, *racket buster*, *trust-buster*, *union-buster*, and many others), *circuit* (*Borscht circuit*, *chicken-patty circuit*, *subway circuit*), *curtain* (*bamboo curtain*, *iron curtain*, *paper curtain*), *-hop* (*bed-hop*, *city-hop*, *job-hop*, *museum-hop*, *table-hop*), *-intensive* (*earnings-intensive*, *fuel-intensive*, *time-intensive*), *look* (*bare look*, *layered look*), *-mania* (*condomania*, *Olliemania*), *privilege* (*executive privilege*, *journalistic privilege*, *judicial privilege*), *-speak* (*businessspeak*, *computerspeak*, *Haigspeak*, *Valley Girl-speak*), and many others.

(b) Prefix-like compounds. Certain other words are favored as the first element of compounds and so are prefix-like. *Bamboo* was used with the sense ‘native’ with reference to the Philippines in *bamboo English*, *bamboo government*, *bamboo telegraph*; later *bamboo English* was used also for English influenced by Japanese and Korean. *Big* has similar prefixal use in *big banking*, *big labor*, *big money*, and *big oil*. *Golden* in *golden handshake*, *golden parachute*, *golden shackle*, and many other combinations refers to a financial settlement benefiting the employee or the employer. Other such initial elements are *living*, *motor*, *power*, *shock*, *sky*, and many more.

(c) Classical compounds. In its early history, English borrowed a great many compounds from Latin and Greek (although most Greek words were filtered through Latin, and even today new loans from Greek are generally represented in English as though they had passed through Roman mouths and hands). Because we adopted a large number of classical compounds, we also adopted the classical pattern for forming them. In English, if we want to compound two words, we generally just stick them together: *self* + *rule* = *self-rule*. In Greek, it was generally necessary to have a vowel between two compounded bases: *aut* + *o* + *nomia* = *autonomia*, which we borrowed as *autonomy*.

When we form new compounds in English, using morphemes from the classical languages, we often combine them more or less according to the classical pattern. So *o*’s pop up in many new words like *chemosphere* and *magnetosphere*, which otherwise might just as

well have been “chemical sphere” and “magnetic sphere.” “New Latin” and “New Greek” compounds include *Legionella pneumophila* (the bacillus of Legionnaire’s disease), *Homo habilis*, and *zinzanthropus*, although the Romans and Hellenes would hardly have known what to make of them.

(d) Letter compounds. Some compounds consist of a noun and one or more letters of the alphabet. The letters often stand for words, as the *A* in *A-bomb* is for “atom,” and thus the word is a compound of an acronym (see below) and another word. Military use favors such letter compounds, but they are also used in other circumstances as cryptic short forms (*Q fever*, for “query” because of questions about the nature of the illness) or euphemisms (*F-word* and many humorous imitations of that pattern).

In other cases, however, the letter has a different origin. It may represent a point in a series, as *Baker Day* (with *baker* as the signaler’s name for the letter *B*) is the second day in a military operation. Occasionally, the letter merely reduplicates the first letter of a following noun: *H-hour*. Sometimes it is a pun: *U-Drive* for “you drive.” Although there have been no examples in “Among the New Words,” the letter is sometimes iconic, as in *S curve* and *V neck*. In a few cases, the meaning of the letter is unknown, as in *g-string*.

(e) Alphanumeric compounds. Some compounds are made of combinations of letters and numerals (*V-1* ‘a German bomb’), sometimes of numerals alone (*1080* ‘a rat poison’), sometimes of letters and numerals joined with an ordinary word (*vitamin B₁₂*). The parts may be individually significant, as in *1947N* the name of a comet, the fourteenth (hence *N*) discovered in 1947. Or they may be from an arbitrary system of classification, like *4F* as the designation for those rejected for military service during World War II. Often the motivation for the parts of the compound fades from awareness, as in *20-20* ‘perceptive, accurate’ from the ability to see normally with both eyes at a distance of twenty feet.

(f) Sound patterns in compounds. Sound repetition plays a part in a few compounds. At the greatest extreme of repetition, some compounds reduplicate a word: *bleep bleep*, *lurgy lurgy*, *ping-ping-pong-pong* (which puts one instance of the reduplicated word inside the other), *quad-quad*, *short shorts*, *zero-zero*.

Rime plays a part in others: *brain drain*, *creepie-peepie*, *fuddie-duddie*, *Hacky Sack*, *Ike-liker*, *jet set*, *no-show*, *peepie-creepie*, *shock frock*, *shock jock*, *surround sound*, *tot lot*, *toyboy*, *wait state*.

Alliteration is probably at least a supporting motive behind such compounds as *baby bust*, *belly bundle*, *bumble bomb*, *buzz bomb*, *chump change*, *death dust*, *double-digit* (which is more popular than the synonymous but unalliterative *double-figure*), *down and dirty*, *gas guzzler*, *glower and grin*, *hidden hunger*, *hollow hunger*, *lend-lease*, *metermaid*, *roid rage*, *sky scout*, *sweepswinger*.

The assonance of the vowels contributes to the effect of *brass hat*, *date rape*, *eager beaver*, *fanny pack*, *hit list*, *hot rod*, *jampacked*, *punch-drunk*, *whirlybird*.

Some compounds combine sound effects; alliteration and assonance in *fanny flask*, *sword and sorcery*, *winkie-wiggling*; alliteration and consonance (the repetition of consonant sounds after the vowel) in *Tinseltown*, *war-weary*.

(g) Respelled compounds. Unconventional spelling has long been a device of trade names to make a distinctive commercial label out of an ordinary word or phrase (“*Holsum*,” “*Bestovall*”). In that tradition is the British *Filofax* (from “file of facts”) for a loose-leaf notebook with filler pages of many kinds.

(h) Compound phrases. Some items are new “words” in the sense that they have a single idiomatic meaning, yet look and behave as though they were phrases. Verbal idioms like *turn over* (the ball in a football game) and *rev it up* (of an engine) are such phrases of one kind. Others are prepositional phrases used adjectivally or adverbially, such as *on the beam* and *behind the curve*. Others are complex noun phrases, such as *discrimination in reverse* or *back-to-the-basics*.

4. Shortening

A new word can be made by omitting some part of an old word.

Clipping The simplest form of shortening is by CLIPPING an expression at the boundary between its main parts (its primary morpheme boundary). Thus, *DNA fingerprinting* loses its first element by FORE CLIPPING to become *fingerprinting*, and *billboard antenna* loses its second element by HIND CLIPPING to become *billboard*. Such clipped forms usually look like merely a new use of the short form, but they are derived from an original longer expression, usually a compound, but sometimes an affixed word, as in the hind clipping of the suffix *-ie* from *yuppie* to make *yup*.

Other examples of fore clipping: (*Big*) *Bang*, (*architectural*) *barrier*, (*Smokey*) *Bear*, (*Hotel*) *de Gink*, (*user-*) *friendly*, (*gas*) *guzzler*, (*escalation*) *index*, (*couch*) *potato*, (*landing*) *strip*, (*ear*) *wire*.

Other examples of hind clipping: *Anderson* (*shelter*), *baka* (*bomb*), *department* (*store*), *disco* (*theque*), *doodle* (*bug*), *double-digit* (*figure*), *four-channel* (*sound/equipment*), *giveaway* (*show*), *heavy* (*bomber*), *jet* (*-propelled plane*), *Legionnaire’s* (*disease*), *mach* (*number*), *main* (*course*), *Mexican* (*marijuana*), *Michoacan* (*marijuana*), *micro* (*wave*), *Molotov* (*cocktail*), *nickel* (*bag*), *nouvelle* (*cuisine*), *nylon* (*hose*), *palazzo* (*pants*), *Panama* (*red*), *percentage* (*of the winnings/profits*), *platinum* (*record album*), *probable* (*casualty*), *robot* (*bomb*), *security* (*blanket*), *sniffer* (*and snorter*), *soap* (*opera*), *Streakers* (*Party*), *string* (*bikini*), *take-home* (*pay*), *weekend* (*party*).

A combination of both fore and hind clipping produces (*lysergic*) *acid* (*diethylamide*).

INTRODUCTION

9

(a) Internal clipping. Many shortened forms omit, not a whole main element of the original form, but only part of one of the main elements. Thus, *parachutist* was formed from *parachute* + *-ist*, which are its main elements. In *chutist*, only part of the first element was clipped. The clipping was still at a morpheme boundary, since *parachute* consists of *para* + *chute*, but it was not at the primary boundary within the word.

Other instances of such internal clipping: *biopic* from *bio(graphical) pic(ture)*, *Cabbage (Patch) Kid*, *Cominform* from *Com(munist) Inform(ation Bureau)*, *computeracy* from *computer (liter)acy*, *computerate* from *computer (liter)ate*, *demoth(ball)*, *(gold-)fish bowl*, *Legionnaire(s) disease*, *maître d'(hôtel)*, *microwave (oven)-proof*, *peak(-load) pricing*, *photo op(portunity)*, *physia* with respelling from *physio(therapist)*, *(car) pooler*, *(car) pooling*, *quad(riphony)*, *rehab(ilitation)*, *sencit* from *sen(ior) cit(izen)*, *Syncom* from *syn(chronous) com(munications satellite)*, *tiptank* from *(wing)tip tank*, *twi(light)-night*, *2–4-Di(chlorophenoxyacetic acid)*, *stepping* from *step (danc)ing*.

(b) Innovative clipping. In yet other cases, forms are clipped not at a morpheme boundary at all, but instead at a point that does not correspond to any part of the original word structure. New morphemes are created by such clipping. For example, *condominium* has the structure *con* + *domin-ium*; its clipping to *condo* was at no morphological boundary and so made a new word element.

Other instances of such innovative clipping: *amtrac* or *amphtrack* from *am(ph(ibious) trac(tor))*, *Amvets* from *Am(eric)an Vel(eran)s*, *avgas* from *av(iation) gas(oline)*, *bascart* from *bas(ket) cart*, *blacketeer* from *black (mark)eteer*, *(be)bop*, *bra(ssière)*, *capcom* from *cap(sule) com(municator)*, *Cominch* from *Com(mander) in Ch(ief)*, *comsymp* from *com(munist) symp(athizer)*, *conelrad* from *con(trol of) el(ectromagnetic) rad(iation)*, *conillum* from *con(trol of) illum(ination)*, *(heli)copter*, *corti(co)s(ter)one*, *cyborg* from *cyb(ernet)ic org(anism)*, *fax* respelled from *fac(simile) transmission*, *hazchem* from *haz(ardous) chem(icals)*, *Juco* from *ju(nior) co(llege)*, *mimstud* from *mi(ddle-aged) m(ale) st(ick-in-the-m)ud*, *mod(ern)*, *Nip(ponese)*, *nuke* respelled from *nuc(lear ship/weapon)*, *nonsked* or *non-sched(uled airline)*, *op(tical) art*, *prefabricated*, *prop(eller)-stop*, *quas(i-stellar) (object)*, *sitcom* from *sit(uation) com(edy)*, *tr(ans)axle*, *twee(t)* as a lisping pronunciation of *sweet*, *Valgirl* from *(San Fernando) Val(ley) girl*.

Alphabetism ALPHABETISMS OR INITIALISMS are abbreviations using the initial letters of the words of an expression, pronounced by the alphabetical names of the letters. One of the most successful is *TV*. Sometimes the letter names are spelled out, as in *Jaycee* or *Elsie* (for *LC*, *landing craft*, with a pun on the female name). Occasionally alphabetical names other than the conventional ones are used, as in *ack-ack*, with a

British signal corps name for the letters *AA*, although the echoic value of *ack-ack* in suggesting the sound of anti-aircraft fire also doubtless played a part.

Other alphabetisms: *AA*, *A-B-C*, *ABL*, *ACS*, *AMG*, *AT*, *BW*, *CAT*, *CATV*, *CFA*, *CPK*, *CRP*, *DDT*, *DE*, *dh*, *DI*, *DNB*, *DP*, *DPH*, *E*, *EAM*, *ETO*, *EVA*, *FFI*, *FM*, *FVT*, *GCA*, *GEM*, *IBM*, *ICBM*, *IMP*, *LCI*, *LCM*, *LCR*, *LCT*, *LCVP*, *LFC*, *LP*, *LST*, *MLF*, *MTB*, *MVA*, *OCD*, *ODT*, *OGO*, *OPA*, *OWI*, *PET*, *POW*, *PTFP*, *PV*, *PW*, *RDX*, *ROK*, *RV*, *sro*, *SST*, *TBS*, *TD*, *TOFC*, *TSO*, *TV*, *UNO*, *USO*, *VIP*, *WLB*.

Acronymy The term **ACRONYM** is used in several ways, but here it is a form made of the initial letters of the words of an expression, like an alphabetism, but pronounced according to the normal rules of English orthography. An example is *scuba* 'self-contained underwater breathing apparatus'. Some forms are either alphabetisms or acronyms; for example *ROK* is pronounced with letter names "are-oh-kay" when it stands for 'Republic of Korea' but as an orthographic word sounding like "rock" when it is used for a soldier of the *ROK* army.

Many acronyms are homonyms with another word and thus pun on it. Frequently the acronym is invented for the sake of the pun. Thus the *ZIP* of *ZIP Code* is said to stand for 'Zone Improvement Plan', but there can be little doubt that the word was chosen to suggest that the numerical postal codes would speed up mail delivery.

Yuppie, an acronym for 'young urban professional' plus the suffix *-ie*, has radiated a large number of similar terms, often involving puns. They include *bluppy*, *dink*, *droppies* with a pun on "drop (out)," *dumppie*, *dumpy* with puns on "dump," *flyer*, *guppie*, *guppy* (variously, 'grown-up pauper', 'gay urban professional', 'greedy upwardly mobile professional' or 'green yuppie'), *nuppie*, *sampy*, *serf*, *skippie*, *yap*, *yappie*, *yuca*, *yumpo*.

Instead of an initial letter only, sometimes several letters or a whole syllable is used. Thus in *CREEP* 'Committee for the Re-Election of the President', the syllable "Re" enters the acronym. And in *Fin-Creep* 'Financial Committee to Re-Elect the President', so do the first three letters of the first word. If a word is made up chiefly from syllables or groups of letters, it would usually be called a clipping. Acronyms are clippings in which most of the parts are reduced to single letters. A form like *loran* 'long-range navigation' is often called an acronym, but it is close to a form like *sitcom* 'situation comedy', which is usually called a clipping.

Some forms mix the alphabetic and acronymic principles, pronouncing the word partly with letter names and partly in the normal spelling-pronunciation way. The alphabetic part of such forms usually spells out the letter names. An example is *veep* 'vice president', in which "vee" is an alphabetical

spelling and “p” is acronymous. Another is *umtee* ‘Universal Military Trainee’, in which “tee” may represent either the letter name or be a mid clipping of *T(rain)ee*.

Other acronyms: *ANZUS*, *BEV*, *Cincus*, *DOVAP*, *DRAM*, *E-COM*, *ELAS*, *ENIAC*, *Fido*, *flip*, *Fosdic*, *FOSDIC*, *gleep*, *jato*, *LEM*, *LOCA*, *lox*, *MOL*, *Mouse*, *nab*, *NERVA*, *OPEC*, *Ovra*, *PABA*, *PAC*, *piat*, *radar*, *REM*, *Sage*, *SHAEF*, *snafu*, *SPARS*, *STOL*, *sug*, *thobber*, *UNIVAC*, *UNRRA*, *WAAF*, *WAAS*, *WAC*, *WASP*, *WAVES*, *WOWS*, *zert*.

Phonetic elision The omission of a sound is not always a deliberate decision to shorten a word (a morphological remodeling); it is sometimes a result of phonetic processes (APHESIS, APOCOPE, SYNCOPE). Normally, such processes make alternate pronunciations of an old word rather than a new word. But occasionally the elided form may be treated as a new word. *Stonewash* ‘bleached in streaks’ (of denim cloth) is an apocopated form of *stonewashed*, omitting the final [t] sound. *Fax* is a commercial respelling of a pronunciation of *facts* with elided [t], as also partly is *Cee-fax*, a BBC teletext service punning on “see facts.”

Back formation BACK FORMATION is the process of shortening a word by omitting what is, or is thought to be, an affix or other constituent morpheme. The noun *zipper*, originally a trademark for a kind of slide fastener, was the origin of the verb *zip* ‘to open or close with a zipper’, formed by omitting the *-er* ending, as though it were the agent suffix on a verb.

The process of back formation often involves METANALYSIS – a reinterpretation of how a form is structured. So, *shotgun marriage* was a compound of those two nouns; from it, however a verb was formed by omitting the final *-age* as though that suffix had been added to an original *shotgun-marry*. The word was thus reanalyzed from *shotgun + marriage* to *shotgun marry + -age*.

Occasionally a backformation omits a prefix, like *ruly English* from *unruly*, or substitutes whole words, like the verb *jump-shoot* in basketball from the noun *jump-shot*. But most back formations omit suffixes and thus are a process of “de-suffixation.” The following examples are listed by the omitted suffix:

-ed: brown off, chicken-fry, custom-make, fair-trade, field test, flight test, gift-wrap, jet-propel, polyunsaturate

-er or *-or*: baby sit, bargain-hunt, book-keep, chain-smoke, city-edit, cliff-hang, copyread, fellow-travel, guest-conduct, housepaint, pinchhit, script-write, sharecrop, tenant-farm

-ing: air condition, bellyland, brainstorm, brainwash, breast feed, breath-test, Christmas-shop, compulsory-test, contour-plow, crash land, double-park, fact-find, featherbed, grass-feed, hedgehop, lip-read, night-drive, pattern-bomb, pistol-whip, plea-bargain, price fix, pubcrawl, quisle, radar-track, soft-land, stock-take, touch dance, window-shop

-ion: air-evacuate, automate, mass-produce, noun-incorporate, trial subscribe

5. Blending

The process of simultaneously combining and shortening is BLENDING. A blend is a word made by joining two or more forms but omitting at least part of one. This simple process has a number of variations, some quite complex.

Blending with clipped first element The word that begins the blend may have had its ending shortened:

adenovirus < aden(oid) + o + virus
aeroneer < aeron(aut) + -eer
Alcometer < alco(hol) + meter
bar-b-burger < bar-b-(cue) + burger
Binac < bin(ary) + -ac
build-down < build(-up) + down
femspeak < fem(inine) + speak
hit lady < hit (man) + lady
hit woman < hit (man) + woman
hot lederhosen < hot (pants) + lederhosen
near collision < near (miss) + collision
Okie < Ok(lahoman) + -ie
ploughperson’s < plough(man)’s + person
synchrocyclotron < synchro(nize) + cyclotron
transaxle < trans(mission) + axle
vidspud < vid(eo) + spud
Waterbungler < Water(gate) + bungler

The blending of the words may be encouraged by an overlapping of sounds, usually at the point where the words join:

gazunder < gazu(mp) + under
lumberjill < lumberj(ack) + jill
niacin < ni(cotinic) aci(d) + -in
robomb < rob(ot) + bomb
smist < sm(oke) + mist
smurk < sm(oke) + murk
triathlete < triathl(on) + athlete
videot < vide(o) + idiot
Watergimmick < Waterg(ate) + gimmick
Watergoof < Waterg(ate) + goof
yup-scale < yup(pie) + up-scale

Or the overlapping sound may be at the beginning or end of the word:

doodle < dr(aw) + doodle
filipin < filipin(o) + -in

A number of puns based on *Watergate*, some fairly complex in the words they combine, belong to this general type:

Waterbugger < Water(gate) + waterbug + bugg[ing] + -er + bugg(er)

Waterbuggery < Water(gate) + waterbug + bugg[ing] + bugg(er)ery

Waterbugging < Water(gate) + waterbug + bugging

Waterfallout < Water(gate) + waterfall + fall-out

In the following example, the clipping comes in the middle of the first expression, so the other word is inserted into it: