

Reading Passage (251 words): Problems with Slang

Slang words like “dude,” “groovy,” and “fresh” can be heard in movies, songs, and slang is also used in every day English by many. According to <dictionary.com> slang is more metaphorical, playful, and ephemeral than ordinary language. Many native speakers of English will correct other people as well as their children whenever they hear slang because slang is considered vulgar, confusing, and should not be used in professional environments.

In some instances, slang can be considered vulgar. One genre of music that uses slang is Rap music. The music is filled with slang words that reference everything from clothes, cars, and neighborhoods. Not all of the slang is vulgar, but much of the criticism has been because of the vulgar words towards women. Also, critics believe that slang has overtaken the language of Rap, and that is hurting the spread of properly spoken English.

Slang can be confusing because, if a certain individual or group of people is speaking about a particular subject, it can confuse the people around them. Slang can be offensive because those who do not know the terms are oblivious to the content of the conversation, and this could be off putting to the listener.

Slang should not be used in professional environments because the grammar or word is incorrect or does not exist in American English. Moreover, in an academic setting “colloquial” or everyday language is not advised for essays or research. For guardians of the English language, it is important to preserve the integrity of English and promote proper usage.

Writing Prompt: How does the information in the lecture contradict the information in the reading passage?

Lecture (355 words): Advantages of Slang

Today's lecture is about the negative stigma that slang has in American English. Slang constantly gets a bad "rap" because it is not proper American English, and many of its detractors say that the English language is deteriorating because of slang. Let's take a minute to look at the benefits of slang and show how the benefits create a sense of community.

One of the biggest complaints about slang is the fact that it can be vulgar. Now, I want to clarify that there are certainly levels of slang that indeed can be considered vulgar. For example, parts of Rap music and lyrics can be considered vulgar, but Rap is not the only music genre that uses slang words. Country and Rock use slang as well, and the words are not always considered "proper". The presence of vulgar language in slang is what makes music and film culturally authentic because slang creates a more realistic community and environment.

The whole purpose of slang is to confuse other people. The idea that slang should be understood by non-slang speakers would take away the essence of slang. Many people use slang as a way to create a sense of "other" within their own communities, but slang is not considered high culture by some because it is not refined. For learners of American English, slang can also be used as a way to "get in" or acquaint oneself with a native speaker or group. By using slang, they can begin to use English and learn about the different regions of the United States as well as create a niche in a community for much needed practice.

Many critics of slang say it should not be used in professional environments because it is improper English. We have to remember that words in the American English lexicon are always evolving and are continually added over time. For a professional setting, it can be argued that the medical field has slang, but it is called "jargon." Restaurant workers, for example, will even use restaurant slang like "on the fly" for rushed food or "eighty-six" when they run out of a dish.