

Coinage

One of the least common processes of word formation in English is **coinage**, that is, the invention of totally new terms. The most typical sources are invented trade names for commercial products that become general terms for any version of that product. Older examples are *aspirin*, *nylon*, *vaseline*, and *zipper*, more recent examples are *kleenex*, *teflon*, *tylenol*, and *Xerox*.

New words based on the name of a person or a place are called **eponyms**. The common eponyms are *sandwich* (from the eighteenth-century Earl of Sandwich who first insisted on having his bread and meat together while gambling) and *jeans* (from the Italian city of Genoa where the type of cloth was first made). Some eponyms are technical terms, based on the names of those who first discovered or invented things, such as *fahrenheit* (from the German, Gabriel Fahrenheit), *volt* (from the Italian, Alessandro Volta) and *watt* (from the Scot, James Watt)

Borrowing

It has been estimated that the English language contains more than a million words, of which fewer than half are included in unabridged dictionaries. It is natural to wonder where all these words came from. The answer is not difficult to find.

First of all, our language contains a core of words that have been a part of it as far back as we can trace its history, 5000-plus years. A few examples are these words: *sun*, *man*, *foot*, *father*, *eat*, *fire*, *I*, *he*, *with*, *of*.

Second, English has been a prodigious borrower of words from other languages throughout its history, and a vast number of borrowed words are now in our language. This has come about through invasions, immigration, exploration, trade, and other avenues of contact between

English and some foreign language. Borrowing can be defined as the taking over of words from other languages. Throughout its history, the English language has adopted a vast number of words from other languages, including *croissant* (French), *dope* (Dutch), *lilac*, *bazaar* (Persian), *piano* (Italian), *pretzel* (German), *sofa*, *sheikh* (Arabic), *tattoo* (Tahitian), *tycoon* (Japanese), *yogurt* (Turkish) and *zebra* (Bantu).

Compounding

A compound is a unit consisting of two or more bases. Compounding is simply the joining of two or more words into a single word, as in *hang glider*, *air strip*, *cornflakes*, *devil-may-care*, *second-hand*, *son-in-law*, *windmill*, *ten-year-old*, and *loudmouth*. As the foregoing examples show, compounds may be written as one word, as a hyphenated word, or as two words.

Types of compounds

1. Noun compounds:

Examples: headache, brainwashing, walking stick, typing paper, sun-bather

2. Adjective compounds:

Examples: mouth-watering, handmade, good-looking, homesick, well known

Note: *Well known* in the first example is written as two words, while in the second it is hyphenated.

His books are not well known.

He is a well-known doctor.

3. Verb compounds:

Examples: sightsee, baby-sit, lip-read, house-hunt, brainwash

Assignment: Use the compounds above in sentences.

Blending

Blending is the fusion of two words into one, usually the first part of one word with the last part of another, as in *gasohol*, from *gasoline* and *alcohol*. The resultant blend partakes of both original meanings.

Exercise

Give the originals of these blends:

1. gasohol: gasoline + alcohol
2. smog.....
3. smurk.....
4. smaze.....
5. motel.....
6. Chunnel.....
7. brunch.....

Exercise

Give the blends that result from fusing these words

1. transfer + resister =
2. automobile + omnibus =
3. escalate + elevator =