

The Roaring Twenties: Station Six

*The Jazz Age Glossary*

*The exuberant '20s were extraordinarily fertile years for language in America; dozens of new words and expressions sprang into existence. Much of the new verbiage was scornful of established ways; no less than half a dozen of the terms are roughly synonymous words meaning "nonsense." A partial list of terms that were coined or popularized in the decade appears below.*

<b>All wet</b>	wrong; arguing a mistaken notion or belief.
<b>Applesauce</b>	a term of derogation; nonsense; same as baloney, bunk, banana oil, hokum, and horsefeathers
<b>Baloney</b>	nonsense.
<b>Banana oil</b>	nonsense.
<b>Bee's knees</b>	a superb person or thing.
<b>Belly laugh</b>	a loud, uninhibited laugh.
<b>Berries</b>	anything wonderful; similar to bee's knees.
<b>Bible belt</b>	an area in the South or south Midwest where Fundamentalist religion prevails (coined by H.L. Mencken).
<b>Big cheese</b>	an important person.
<b>Blind date</b>	a date with an unknown person of the opposite sex, usually arranged by a mutual friend.
<b>Bronx cheer</b>	a loud derisive noise from an audience (coined by the humorist Bugs Baer, who credited Bronx rooters at athletic events with inventing this mode of expression)
<b>Bull session</b>	an informal group discussion.
<b>Bump off</b>	to murder

<b>Bunk</b>	nonsense ( a shortened form of "bunkum," which is also spelled "buncombe," from the name of a North Carolina county whose representative in Congress in 1820 explained the irrelevance of a speech he was making by saying that he was "talking to Buncombe").
<b>Cake-eater</b>	a ladies' man.
<b>Carry a torch</b>	to suffer from unrequited love.
<b>Cat's meow</b>	anything wonderful; similar to bee's knees, berries.
<b>Cheaters</b>	eyeglasses.
<b>Copacetic</b>	excellent.
<b>Crush</b>	an infatuation with a person of the opposite sex.
<b>Darb</b>	an excellent person or thing.
<b>Dogs</b>	human feet.
<b>Drugstore cowboy</b>	a fashionably dressed idler who hangs around public places trying to pick up girls.
<b>Dumb Dora</b>	a stupid girl.
<b>Fall guy</b>	a scapegoat
<b>Flapper</b>	a typical young girl of the '20s, usually with bobbed hair, short skirts and rolled stockings.
<b>Flat tire</b>	a dull, boring person.
<b>Frame</b>	to cause a person's arrest by giving false evidence.
<b>Gam</b>	a girl's leg.
<b>Gatecrasher</b>	a person who attends a party without an invitation, or a show without paying admission.
<b>Giggle water</b>	an alcoholic drink.
<b>Gin mill</b>	a speakeasy.
<b>Gold digger</b>	a woman who uses feminine charm to extract

	money from a man.
<b>Goofy</b>	silly.
<b>Gyp</b>	to cheat
<b>Hard-boiled</b>	tough; without sentiment.
<b>Heebie-jeebies</b>	the jitters.
<b>Hep</b>	wise.
<b>High-hat</b>	to snub.
<b>Hokum</b>	nonsense.
<b>Hooch</b>	bootleg liquor (from Hoochinoo,: a tribe of Alaskan Indians who made distilled liquor).
<b>Hooper</b>	chorus girl.
<b>Horsefeathers</b>	nonsense.
<b>Hotsy-totsy</b>	pleasing.
<b>Jake</b>	okay (most commonly used in the phrase "Everything's jake.")
<b>Jalopy</b>	an old car.
<b>Keen</b>	attractive; appealing.
<b>Kiddo</b>	a familiar form of address.
<b>Kisser</b>	the mouth.
<b>Line</b>	insincere flattery.
<b>Lounge lizard</b>	a ladies' man.
<b>Lousy</b>	bad; contemptible.
<b>Main drag</b>	the most important street in a town or city.
<b>Neck</b>	to caress intimately.
<b>Nerts (Nuts)</b>	an interjection expressing the speaker's disgust.
<b>Ossified</b>	drunk.
<b>Peppy</b>	full of vitality.
<b>Pet</b>	same as neck.
<b>Pinch</b>	to arrest.
<b>Pushover</b>	a person or thing easily overcome.

<b>Raspberry</b>	same as Bronx cheer.
<b>Ritzy</b>	elegant (from "Ritz," the Paris hotel).
<b>Real McCoy, the</b>	the genuine article (the derivation is in dispute; it comes either from a Scottish clan leader named MacKay; a boxer named Kid McCoy, who had a rival with the same name, or a bootlegger named McCoy who did not water-down his liquor).
<b>Run-around</b>	deceptive or delaying action, especially in response to a request.
<b>Scram</b>	to leave hurriedly (from "scramble").
<b>Screwy</b>	crazy; eccentric.
<b>Sex appeal</b>	physical attractiveness to members of the opposite sex.
<b>Sheba</b>	a young woman with sex appeal.
<b>Sheik</b>	a young man with sex appeal.
<b>Smeller</b>	the nose.
<b>Sob sister</b>	a woman reporter who leans toward sentimentality in the treatment of her subject matter.
<b>Speakeasy</b>	a saloon or bar selling bootleg whiskey.
<b>Spifflicated</b>	drunk.
<b>Spiffy</b>	having an elegantly fashionable appearance.
<b>Struggle buggy</b>	a car (from its use as a place in which boys tried to seduce girls).
<b>Stuck on</b>	having a crush on.
<b>Swanky</b>	ritzy.
<b>Swell</b>	marvelous.
<b>Torpedo</b>	a hired gunman.
<b>Upchuck</b>	to vomit.
<b>Whoopee</b>	boisterous, convivial fun.