

# Kentucky Class Notes

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859.252.NOTE

COM 101 DeSantis  
Spring 2009  
Test #1

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## Slang of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: From Flappers to Rappers

- A) Slang changes quickly
  - 10% retention rate every ten years. Some like “cool” and “nerd” are timeless.
- B) Every generation “slangs” what is important to them.
  - Studying their slang is a way to understand a generation.
- C) Used almost exclusively by the young
  - We outgrow its need.

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- D) Why is slang used?
  - More than just a toy, it is a tool.
    1. It conceals meaning from parents, teachers, authorities, etc.
    2. It identifies you as part of a tribe.
    3. It defies authority (talking like a rebel, middle finger to the system).
    4. It makes us feel special.
    5. It excludes other people (groups).

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### **From 1900- 1919**

- Before the end of WWI there was little use of slang
  - Why: Mass media was not a “national phenomenon”. Terms could not be shared or spread by youth culture.
- College students used slang “locally”
  - Local terms on campus: “Death Star”- the library; “the 90”- pick up spot in front of the library, etc.

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## 1920s- 30s: From Flappers to Jazz

- 1920s captured by F. Scott Fitzgerald
  - times were good and decadent
- The early 30s were depression years
  - times were tough. “Best of times, Worst of times”.
- The late 30s were swing and big band jazz
  - strong slang influence from black culture
  - first time musicians were making music for us.
  - became influencing force in youth culture.

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## 1940s: From the War to Babies

- 1941-45 saw WW2
  - This was the most important five years of twentieth century. War terms became slang.

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## 1950s: From Cool to Beat

- 1950s was “The Good Days” at least on the surface
  - There were always parties
- Young were restless (rejection of parents)
  - Salinger’s “*Catcher*”; Brando’s “*Wild one*”; Elvis’ “*Jailhouse Rock*”

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## 1960’s: From Beat to Pop

- Breaking away from the conservative 50s
- Rock Defined:
  - Motown, British invasion, Acid rock, hippie rock, folk and Woodstock.