

in standard dictionaries but will be so identified. Both colloquial usage and slang are more common in speech than in writing.

Colloquial speech often passes onto standard speech. Some slang also passes into standard speech, but other slang expressions enjoy momentary popularity followed by obscurity. In some cases, the majority never accepts certain slang phrases but nevertheless retains them in their collective memories. Every generation seems to require its own set of words to describe familiar objects and events.

It has been pointed out by a number of linguists that three cultural conditions are necessary for the creation of a large body of slang expressions. First, the introductions and acceptance of new objects and situations in the society, second, a diverse population with a large number of subgroups; third, association among the subgroups and the majority population.

Finally, it is worth noting that the terms 'standard', 'colloquial', and 'slang' exist only as abstract labels for scholars who study language. Only a tiny number of the speakers of any language will be aware that they are using colloquial or slang expressions. Most speakers of English will, during appropriate situations, select and use all three types of expressions.

- With which of the following topics is the passage primarily concerned?
 a. *Standard speech* c. *Different types of speech*
 h. *Dictionary usage*
- How is **slang** defined by the author?
 n. *Words and phrases accepted by the majority for formal usage*
 p. *Words and phrases understood by the majority but not found in standard dictionaries*
 c. *Words and phrases that are understood by a limited group of speakers*
 d. *Words and phrases understood by a large number of speakers but not accepted as formal usage*
- The author mentions all of the following as requirements for slang expressions to be created EXCEPT
 a. *new situations* c. *interaction among diverse groups*
 b. *a new generation* d. *a number of linguists*

- The word 'appropriate' in line 7 could best be replaced by
 a. *suitable* c. *elegant*
 h. *congenial* d. *direct*
- The word 'them' in line 18 refers to
 a. *words* a. *memories*
 b. *slang phrases* d. *the majority*

Exercise 31

CL Match some idioms with their explanations; consult a dictionary if necessary.

1. to be at sea	a. to be in strong opposition
2. to be at loggerheads	b. to have the same opinion, to agree
3. a piece of cake	c. in short
4. odds and ends	d. an easy or simple thing
5. to make head or tail of	e. not to meet expectations
6. to talk through one's hat	f. to have a natural talent for easy relationship
7. to keep one's fingers crossed	g. to make exaggerated or inaccurate statements
8. to pull one's leg	h. to in taking a decision
9. to see eye to eye	i. very rarely
10. to let a cat out of the bag	j. to be in a state of confusion
11. to have a way with	k. to trick someone into believing just for fun
12. in a nutshell	l. to act with determination
13. to fall short	m. to disclose a secret
14. once in a blue moon	n. to understand
15. to take the bull by the horns	o. a variety of things
16. to take a back seat	p. to wish for good luck

b. Now replace the underlined words with an appropriate idiom out of those above, make changes if necessary.

- In short, what we need is your public support on this issue.
- I am sure this task won't be of any difficulty to me.