

The Psychology of Digital Language, Attachment Pragmatics & Burnout (Vol. 8)

Intermittent Reinforcement in Dating Slang, Therapy-Speak Crossover & Ironic Exhaustion Coping (100% SFW, CC BY 4.0)

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All SlangLane Academic Working Papers & PDFs: <https://slanglane.com/papers>

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Abstract & Scope

Analyzes how contemporary conversational vocabulary maps onto psychological processes: variable-ratio intermittent reinforcement in digital dating (breadcrumbing, love bombing, future faking, ghosting, situationship), rejection sensitivity in read-receipt messaging, and hyperbolic humor as collective burnout regulation (cooked, revenge bedtime procrastination, emotional labor, imposter syndrome).

Interactive Companion Tools on SlangLane.com

Slang Age & Brain-Rot Diagnostic Lab: <https://slanglane.com/vibe-check>

Corporate Email <-> Gen Z Group-Chat Translator: <https://slanglane.com/roast>

Court & HR Legal Exhibit Stamp Generator: <https://slanglane.com/exhibit>

5x5 Classroom & Meeting Slang Bingo: <https://slanglane.com/bingo>

Side-by-Side Usage Comparisons (A vs. B): <https://slanglane.com/compare>

Indexed Thematic Entries (79 Headwords, Edition daily-2026-10-22-expansion)

1. anxious attachment - [Social & memes | informal conversational]

A relationship pattern marked by hyper-vigilance toward text reply times, fear of abandonment, and frequent need for reassurance. | Regions: US, UK, IE, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/anxious-attachment>

2. avoidant attachment - [Social & memes | informal conversational]

A relationship pattern where closeness triggers a need for distance, slow replies, and emotional self-sufficiency. | Regions: US, UK, IE, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/avoidant-attachment>

3. Bare Minimum Monday - [Work & online life | informal conversational]

Starting the workweek at a deliberate, low-pressure pace to prevent Sunday-night anxiety and mid-week burnout. | Regions: US, UK, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/bare-minimum-monday>

4. beige flag - [Social & memes | informal conversational]

An odd, quirky, or mildly boring habit in a partner or dating profile that is neither a toxic red flag nor a green flag. | Regions: US, UK, IE, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/beige-flag>

5. benching - [Social & memes | informal conversational]

Keeping a romantic prospect on standby with occasional friendly texts while actively dating other people. | Regions: US, UK, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/benching>

6. bossware - [Work & online life | informal conversational]

Employee-monitoring software that tracks mouse movements, keystrokes, or active status dots on remote workers' laptops. | Regions: US, UK, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/bossware>

7. breadcrumbing - [Social & memes | informal conversational]

Sending sporadic, non-committal messages or likes just often enough to keep someone emotionally invested without intending a relationship. | Regions: US, UK, IE, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/breadcrumbing>

8. cancel culture - [Social & memes | informal conversational]

Collective social withdrawal of support from a public figure or brand following an offensive statement or boundary violation. | Regions: US, UK, IE, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/cancel-culture>

9. canon event (aliases: canon events) - [Social & memes | Storytelling metaphor often ironic]

A formative experience jokingly treated as an unavoidable part of someone's personal storyline, often embarrassing or difficult. | Regions: Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/canon-event>

10. career cushioning - [Work & online life | informal conversational]

Quietly updating a resume, networking, and lining up freelance options while still employed in case of sudden layoffs. | Regions: US, UK, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/career-cushioning>

11. cleanfluencer - [Social & memes | context-dependent]

cleanfluencer: home cleaning online influencer. | Regions: Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/cleanfluencer>

12. clickbait (aliases: click bait, click-bait) - [Social & memes | Critical publishing language]

A headline, thumbnail, or piece of content built to win clicks, often by withholding the point, exaggerating, or misleading. | Regions: Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/clickbait>

13. code-switching - [People & relationships | informal conversational]

Shifting between linguistic registers, dialects, or sociolects depending on the social group, setting, or power dynamic. | Regions: US, UK, IE, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/code-switching>

14. coffee badging - [Work & online life | informal conversational]

Swiping into the office just long enough to grab coffee and be seen by management before heading home to finish work remotely. | Regions: US, UK, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/coffee-badging>

15. cushioning - [Social & memes | informal conversational]

Maintaining flirty text threads with backup crushes to soften the blow in case a primary relationship ends. | Regions: US, UK, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/cushioning>

16. dog whistle - [People & relationships | informal conversational]

Coded phrasing that sounds ordinary to a general audience while carrying a targeted secondary signal to a specific subgroup. | Regions: US, UK, IE, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/dog-whistle>

17. doomscrolling (aliases: doomscroll, doom scrolling, doom-scrolling, doomscrolls) - [Social & memes | Informal digital habits]

Continuing to scroll through distressing news or negative posts, often longer than you intended. | Regions: Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/doomscrolling>

18. double texting - [Texting shorthand | informal conversational]

Sending a second message before the other person has replied to the first, often seen as eager or urgent. | Regions: US, UK, IE, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/double-texting>

19. dry texting - [Texting shorthand | informal conversational]

Replying with flat, one-word messages like "k", "cool", or "nice" that kill conversational momentum. | Regions: US, UK, IE, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/dry-texting>

20. emotional labor - [Work & online life | informal conversational]

Managing one's own feelings and tone to keep customers, coworkers, or partners comfortable and regulated. | Regions: US, UK, IE, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/emotional-labor>

21. finfluencer - [Social & memes | informal]

finfluencer: influencer who gives advice on financial investments. | Regions: Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/finfluencer>

22. FR (aliases: fr, frfr, for real, for real for real) - [Texting shorthand | Casual sincere or questioning]

"For real": an emphasis on sincerity, a strong agreement, or a surprised question meaning "seriously?" | Regions: Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/fr>

23. future faking - [Social & memes | informal conversational]

Making grand promises about future trips, milestones, or commitment early in dating to create instant intimacy without follow-through. | Regions: US, UK, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/future-faking>

24. FWIW - [Texting shorthand | informal]

In plain English, "FWIW": for what it's worth. | Regions: Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/fwiw>

25. gaslighting - [People & relationships | informal conversational]

Manipulating someone into doubting their own memory, perception, or sanity-though often used loosely online to mean any disagreement. | Regions: US, UK, IE, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/gaslighting>

26. gatekeeping - [Social & memes | informal conversational]

Controlling or restricting who is allowed to claim membership, authenticity, or status within a subculture or hobby. | Regions: US, UK, IE, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/gatekeeping>

27. ghosting (aliases: ghosted, ghost someone) - [People & relationships | Informal relationships and contact]

Ending or abandoning an ongoing connection by stopping communication without an explanation. | Regions: Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/ghosting>

28. green flag (aliases: green flags, greenflag) - [People & relationships | Approving reassuring]

An encouraging sign that someone or something may be trustworthy, compatible, or worth pursuing. | Regions: Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/green-flag>

29. hard launch - [Social & memes | informal conversational]

Announcing a new romantic partner unmistakably on social media with a clear, full-face photo and tagged profile. | Regions: US, UK, IE, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/hard-launch>

30. haunting - [People & relationships | context-dependent]

haunting: hard to forget, staying in the mind. | Regions: Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/haunting>

31. ick (aliases: the ick) - [People & relationships | Informal aversion]

A feeling or expression of disgust or aversion. "The ick" can describe a reaction that makes someone suddenly feel put off. | Regions: Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/ick>

32. ICYMI - [Texting shorthand | internet slang]

ICYMI expands to 'in case you missed it,' introducing information for a reader who may have missed it. | Regions: Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/icymi>

33. IDK - [Texting shorthand | informal]

In plain English, "IDK": I don't know. | Regions: Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/idk>

34. IMO - [Texting shorthand | informal]

In plain English, "IMO": in my opinion. | Regions: Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/imo>

35. imposter syndrome - [Work & online life | informal conversational]

Persistent internal doubt that one's achievements are undeserved and that colleagues will eventually expose one as a fraud. | Regions: US, UK, IE, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/imposter-syndrome>

36. in-group - [Social & memes | informal conversational]

A social circle or subculture whose members share identity markers, insider vocabulary, and mutual recognition. | Regions: US, UK, IE, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/in-group>

37. IYKYK (aliases: if you know you know, iykyk) - [Texting shorthand | Knowing inside reference]

"If you know, you know": a signal that people with the shared experience or background will understand an unstated reference. | Regions: Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/iykyk>

38. left on delivered - [Texting shorthand | informal conversational]

Seeing that your message was delivered to someone's phone while they remain active online without opening your chat. | Regions: US, UK, IE, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/left-on-delivered>

39. left on read - [Texting shorthand | informal conversational]

Having your message opened-showing a read receipt-without receiving any reply from the recipient. | Regions: US, UK, IE, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/left-on-read>

40. lore (aliases: lore drop, personal lore) - [Social & memes | Storytelling often playful]

The background story and accumulated details of a fictional world, community, or person. A "lore drop" reveals a new piece of that backstory. | Regions: Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/lore>

41. loud quitting - [Work & online life | informal conversational]

Openly voicing dissatisfaction with company leadership or resigning publicly on social platforms rather than leaving quietly. | Regions: US, UK, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/loud-quitting>

42. love bombing - [People & relationships | context-dependent]

love bombing: manipulative over affection tactic. | Regions: Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/love-bombing>

43. main character energy (aliases: main-character energy) - [Social & memes | Admiring or critical]

A confident, cinematic sense of being the protagonist of the moment; sometimes a criticism of acting as if everyone else is a supporting character. | Regions: Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/main-character-energy>

44. masking - [Social & memes | informal conversational]

Consciously suppressing natural reactions or exhaustion in order to appear calm, outgoing, and socially conventional. | Regions: US, UK, IE, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/masking>

45. moral panic - [Social & memes | informal conversational]

Widespread public anxiety that a new youth subculture, slang register, or media trend threatens social order. | Regions: US, UK, IE, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/moral-panic>

46. mouse juggler - [Work & online life | informal conversational]

A tiny hardware plug or script that moves a cursor slightly so a remote worker's chat status stays green while away. | Regions: US, UK, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/mouse-jiggler>

47. OMW - [Texting shorthand | informal]

In plain English, "OMW": on my way. | Regions: Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/omw>

48. orbiting - [People & relationships | informal]

orbiting: stopping direct contact while still watching or interacting online. | Regions: Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/orbiting>

49. people pleasing - [Social & memes | informal conversational]

Habitually prioritizing others' comfort and agreement over one's own boundaries to avoid conflict or disapproval. | Regions: US, UK, IE, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/people-pleasing>

50. pocket watching - [Social & memes | informal conversational]

Obsessively monitoring or speculating about how much money another person makes or how they afford their lifestyle. | Regions: US, UK, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/pocket-watching>

51. pookie - [People & relationships | Affectionate, cutesy or playful]

An affectionate name for a loved person, such as a partner, friend or relative; as an address, roughly sweetheart or darling. | Regions: Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/pookie>

52. POV (aliases: point of view, pov) - [Texting shorthand | Perspective scenario framing]

"Point of view." In captions, it usually introduces a situation the viewer is invited to imagine experiencing. | Regions: Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/pov>

53. quiet cutting - [Work & online life | informal conversational]

Reassigning employees to lower-status roles or Eliminating their projects so they resign voluntarily without severance. | Regions: US, UK, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/quiet-cutting>

54. quiet firing - [Work & online life | context-dependent]

quiet firing: act of neglect that pushes employees to quit. | Regions: Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/quiet-firing>

55. quiet quitting - [Work & online life | informal conversational]

Performing the exact duties specified in one's job description during paid hours while declining unpaid overtime or hustle culture. | Regions: US, UK, IE, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/quiet-quitting>

56. rage applying - [Work & online life | informal conversational]

Sending out dozens of job applications in a single burst of frustration after being passed over or micromanaged at work. | Regions: US, UK, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/rage-applying>

57. rage bait (aliases: ragebait, rage-bait, rage baiting) - [Social & memes | Critical media language]

Content designed to provoke anger so people will react, argue, share, or keep watching. | Regions: Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/rage-bait>

58. ratio (aliases: ratioed, ratio'd, ratioing) - [Social & memes | Combative platform-dependent]

A social-media response showing stronger pushback than approval, or a reply that gets more support than the post it challenges. | Regions: Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/ratio>

59. red flag (aliases: red flags, redflag) - [People & relationships | Warning sometimes exaggerated]

A warning sign that something may be wrong or deserves closer attention, especially in a relationship or decision. | Regions: Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/red-flag>

60. rejection sensitivity - [Social & memes | informal conversational]

Intense emotional distress triggered by perceived criticism, delayed text replies, or subtle shifts in conversational tone. | Regions: US, UK, IE, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/rejection-sensitivity>

61. rent-free (aliases: rent free, living rent-free, lives rent free) - [Social & memes | Teasing sometimes dismissive]

Occupying someone's thoughts without effort or invitation, usually in "living rent-free in my head." It can describe delight, annoyance, or fixation. | Regions: Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/rent-free>

62. resenteeism - [Work & online life | informal conversational]

Staying in an unsatisfying job out of financial necessity while feeling openly bitter and disengaged every day. | Regions: US, UK, IE, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/resenteeism>

63. roster - [Social & memes | informal conversational]

A rotation of several casual dating prospects someone texts or sees simultaneously before choosing to commit to one. | Regions: US, UK, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/roster>

64. say less - [Texting shorthand | informal conversational]

I understand completely and I am already on board-you do not need to explain or persuade me any further. | Regions: US, UK, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/say-less>

65. side quest (aliases: sidequest, side quests) - [Social & memes | Playful gaming metaphor]

An optional detour from the main objective in a game, or a spontaneous little adventure away from your original plan in everyday life. | Regions: Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/side-quest>

66. situationship (aliases: situationships) - [People & relationships | Informal dating language]

A romantic connection whose status, expectations, or commitment have not been clearly defined. | Regions: Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/situationship>

67. soft launch (aliases: soft-launch, soft launching, soft-launched) - [People & relationships | Social media indirect reveal]

Hinting at a romantic relationship online without clearly identifying the partner or explicitly announcing the relationship. | Regions: Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/soft-launch>

68. stonewalling - [People & relationships | informal conversational]

Shutting down a conversation by refusing to reply, giving one-word answers, or withdrawing completely during a disagreement. | Regions: US, UK, IE, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/stonewalling>

69. talking stage - [Social & memes | informal conversational]

The early phase of romantic interest where two people text daily and hang out casually before defining exclusivity. | Regions: US, UK, IE, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/talking-stage>

70. task masking - [Work & online life | informal conversational]

Typing loudly, carrying a laptop briskly, or keeping spreadsheets open to look intensely busy in an open-plan office. | Regions: US, UK, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/task-masking>

71. TBH - [Texting shorthand | informal]

In plain English, "TBH": to be honest. | Regions: Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/tbh>

72. third place - [Social & memes | informal conversational]

A social space outside home and work-such as a pub, cafe, or Discord server-where informal community life happens. | Regions: US, UK, IE, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/third-place>

73. TL;DR (aliases: tl;dr, TLDR, tldr, too long didnt read, too long; didn't read) - [Texting shorthand | Concise sometimes dismissive]

"Too long; didn't read." It can dismiss a long message, but is also a common label for a short summary supplied by the writer. | Regions: Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/tldr>

74. touch grass (aliases: touching grass, touched grass, go touch grass) - [Social & memes | Teasing often dismissive]

Step away from the internet and regain some real-world perspective. Often a dismissive response to an overly online argument. | Regions: Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/touch-grass>

75. trauma dumping - [People & relationships | informal conversational]

Sharing intense, unprocessed personal distress with an unprepared acquaintance or public chat without checking their capacity first. | Regions: US, UK, IE, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/trauma-dumping>

76. virtue signaling - [Social & memes | informal conversational]

Publicly expressing an approved opinion primarily to demonstrate moral alignment and earn social status within a peer group. | Regions: US, UK, IE, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/virtue-signaling>

77. voluntold - [Work & online life | informal conversational]

Being assigned an extra task or committee under the polite illusion that you volunteered for it voluntarily. | Regions: US, UK, IE, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/voluntold>

78. weaponized incompetence - [Work & online life | informal conversational]

Pretending to be bad at a household or workplace task so that someone else gets frustrated and takes over the responsibility. | Regions: US, UK, IE, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/weaponized-incompetence>

79. zombieing - [Social & memes | informal conversational]

When someone who ghosted months ago suddenly resurfaces in your DMs or story replies acting as if nothing happened. | Regions: US, UK, Online | Canonical entry: <https://slanglane.com/terms/zombieing>