Slang of the 1950s

A

1. **actor**: show-off
2. **agitate the Gravel**: to leave (hot-rodgers)
3. **ain't that a bite?**: that’s too bad
4. **ankle-biter**: a child
5. **anti-frantic**: poised
6. **apple butter**: smooth talk or flattery
7. **are you writing a book?**: you’re asking too many questions

B

8. **baby**: cute girl
9. **back seat bingo**: kissing while in a car
10. **bad news**: depressing person
11. **bake biscuits**: to make records
12. **ballad**: a love letter
13. **bash**: great party
14. **bash ears**: to talk
15. **bent eight**: a V-8 engine (hot-rodgers)
16. **Big Daddy**: an older person
17. **big tickle**: really funny
18. **binoculars**: glasses
19. **bit**: an act
20. **blanket**: sandwich
21. **blast**: a good time
22. **blow off**: to defeat in a race (hot-rodgers)
23. **bobbed**: shortened
24. **boss**: great
25. **bread**: money
26. **bug**: "you bug me" - to bother
27. **bull**: a big and strong athlete
28. **bundie**: a boy in need of a haircut
29. **burn rubber**: to accelerate hard and fast (hot-rodgers)
C

30. cast an eyeball: to look
31. cat: a hip person
32. chariot: car
33. chili: a good deal
34. chrome-plated: dressed up (hot-rodgers, originally)
35. circled: married
36. clanked: rejected
37. classy chassis: great body
38. closet case: someone to be ashamed of
39. cloud 9: really happy
40. clutched: rejected
41. Clyde: term of address, usually for a normal person
42. come on snake, let's rattle!: may I have the next dance?
43. committed: engaged to be married
44. cook, cookin': doing it well
45. cool: indefinable quality that makes something or someone extraordinary
46. cool it: relax, settle down
47. cooties: imaginary infestations of the truly un-cool
48. cop a breeze: to leave
49. corral: a school yard
50. cranked: excited
51. crazy: "like crazy, man" Implies an especially good thing
52. cream: originally, to dent a car. Later, to badly damage (hot-rodgers, originally)
53. cruisin' for a bruisin': looking for trouble
54. cube: a normal person
55. cut out: leave
56. cut the gas: be quiet!

D

57. Daddy-O: Term of address
59. deuce: a 1932 Ford (hot-rodgers)
60. dibs: a claim - as in "got dibs" on that seat
61. dig: to understand; to approve
62. Dolly: cute girl
63. don't have a cow: don't get so excited
64. drag: (hot-rodgers) a short car race; A bore
65. drowning: baffled
66. Duck Butt or D.A.: hairstyle of greasers where hair in back is combed to the middle, then with end of comb, makes a middle part.
67. **due backs**: a pack of cigarettes

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**E**

68. **earthbound**: reliable
69. **earth pads**: shoes
70. **epistle**: a letter to someone
71. **eyeball**: look around

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**F**

72. **face**: a clock
73. **fade out**: to disappear; someone who broke a promise
74. **fake out**: bad date
75. **far out**: ahead of the times
76. **Fat City**: a great thing or place; Happy; a good situation
77. **fire up**: start your engine (hot-rodders)
78. **flat out**: fast as you can
79. **flat-top**: men's hairstyle. A crewcut that is flat across the top
80. **flick**: a movie
81. **flip**: to get very excited
82. **flip-top**: a convertible car
83. **floor it**: push the accelerator to the floor (hot-rodders)
84. **flutter bum**: a good-looking boy
85. **fracture**: to amuse
86. **frail**: broke, without money
87. **fream**: someone who doesn't fit in
88. **frosted**: angry
89. **fuzzy duck**: a girl with short hair

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**G**

90. **germ**: a pest
91. **get bent!**: disparaging remark as in "drop dead"
92. **get with it**: understand
93. **gig**: work, job
94. **give me a bell**: call me on the telephone
95. **give me five**: let’s shake hands
96. **go ape**: to explode or be really mad; to get very excited
97. **go for pinks**: a drag race where the stakes are the car's pink slip (hot-rodders)
98. **goof**: someone who makes mistakes; to make a mistake
99. **goopy**: messy
100. **goose it:** accelerate the car fully (hot-rodders)
101. **greaser:** a guy with tons of grease in his hair.
102. **gringles:** worries
103. **grody:** sloppy, messy or dirty
104. **grundy:** neither good nor bad

**H**

105. **handle:** your name
106. **hang:** as in "hang out" which means to do very little; to loaf or idle
107. **heart:** a good teacher
108. **heat:** police
109. **hep:** with it, cool. Someone who knows the situation.
110. **hey bean!:** hello!
111. **hip:** someone who is cool, in the know; very good; up to date and informed
112. **hipster:** same as above (hip)
113. **hit the bottle:** to bleach one’s hair blonde
114. **hopped up:** a car modified for speed (hot-rodders)
115. **horn:** telephone
116. **hottie:** a very fast car (hot-rodders)
117. **hound:** the bus
118. **hub cap:** a boy who tries to be a big wheel but fails

**I**

119. **I’ll clue you:** I’ll tell you about it
120. **ice it:** tell someone to forget something
121. **illuminations:** good ideas, thoughts
122. **in orbit:** in the know
123. **Ivy Leaguer:** ants style. Also any person who attended an Ivy League college

**J**

124. **Jacked Up:** car with raised rear end. (hot-rodders)
125. **jacketed:** going steady
126. **Jelly Roll:** men's hair combed up and forward on both sides, brought together in the middle of the forehead.
127. **jets:** smarts, brains
128. **Joe Doe:** a boy involved in a blind date
K

129. keeper: parent
130. kick: a fun or good thing; Also, a fad
131. kill: to really impress
132. knuckle sandwich: a fist in the face
133. kookie: nuts, in the nicest possible way

L

134. large charge: something that is exciting
135. later, also later, gator: goodbye. See ya later, alligator. Response: after while
crocodile.
136. lay a patch: to accelerate so rapidly that you leave a patch of rubber on the road.
137. lay dead: wait a minute
138. lay on: to give
139. lid: a hat
140. lighter: a crew cut
141. lighting up the tilt sign: not telling the truth
142. like crazy; like wow: really good, better than cool
143. little monsters: younger siblings
144. low: depressed
145. lumpy: mediocre

M

146. machine: car (hot-rodders)
147. made in the shade: success guaranteed
148. Madison Avenue: sharp, cunning
149. make out: a kissing session
150. make the scene: to attend an event or activity
151. mark: one’s signature
152. meanwhile, back at the ranch: from TV Westerns. Usually used to get a storyteller back on track.
153. Mickey Mouse: dumb
154. mirror warmer: a piece of pastel fabric (often cashmere) tied around the rear
view mirror. A 50s version of the Medieval wearing your lady's colors.
155. moldy: a bad teacher
156. most: as in "the most" - high praise usually of the opposite sex
157. mush: homework
negative perspiration: easy
nerd: same as now. Bill Gates without the money.
nest: a hair-do
night shift: a slumber party
nod: drift off to sleep
nosebleed: as in “hey, nosebleed” - hey, stupid. Not a compliment!
no sweat: no problem
nowhere: opposite of cool.
Nowheresville: a boring, bad place to be.
nuggets: loose change

odd ball: someone a bit off the norm
off: to steal
off the line: start of a drag race (hot-rodders)
on pills: dieting
on the hook: in love
on the stick: pulled together. Bright, prepared...

pad: home; an apartment
pale one: a dull person
panic and a half: a very funny joke
paper shaker: cheerleader or Pom-Pom girl
party pooper: no fun at all; a killjoy
passion pit: drive-in movie theatre
peepers: glasses
pile up Z's: get some sleep
Pinky's out of jail: your slip is showing
play dead: to keep quiet
pooper: no fun at all
pop the Clutch: Release the clutch pedal quickly so as to get a fast start
pound: beat up
proof: identification showing that one is old enough to buy liquor
punch it: step on the gas (hot-rodders)
punk: a weak, useless person
put an egg in your shoe and beat it!: leave!
put down: to say bad things about someone
192. queen: a popular girl
193. quote: to repeat oneself

194. radioactive: very popular
195. rag top: a convertible car
196. rap: to tattle on someone
197. rattle your cage: get upset
198. raunchy: messy or gross in some other way
199. razz my berries: excite or impress me
200. real gone: very much in love. Also a little unstable.
201. reds: the Communists; an angry state of mind
202. refuel: to eat
203. righto: okay
204. rock: a diamond
205. rocket: a car (hot-rodders)
206. rod: a car (hot-rodders)
207. round up time: the end of summer vacation
208. roust: under arrest
209. running lights: eyes

210. salty: angry
211. scooch: a friend
212. scorch: popular
213. scream: go fast
214. screamer: a hot rod
215. set of wheels: a car
216. sewer: someone who is incapable of keeping a secret
217. shoot low, they're riding Shetlands: be careful
218. shot down: failed
219. shuck, shuckster: a deceiver, liar or cheat
220. sides: vinyl records
221. sing: to tattle or inform on someone
222. skinny: broke, without money
223. slip me: give me
224. slodge: a friend
225. sluff: to cut classes
226. slurp: a milkshake
227. smog in the noggin: lost memory; forgot
something

228. **snowed**: infatuated
229. **Sophie**: one’s girlfriend
230. **sounds**: music
231. **souped up**: a car modified to go fast
232. **spaz**: someone who is uncoordinated. A klutz.
233. **split**: leave
234. **square**: a regular, normal person. A conformist.
235. **stable the horses**: park the car
236. **stack up**: to wreck a car (hot rodder)
237. **storming machine**: a car that will go fast
238. **straight**: reliable, honest
239. **subterranean**: a hipster.

\[T\]

240. **tank**: a large sedan (usually driven by parents)
241. **that’s close**: something wrong or not true
242. **the man**: police
243. **thin one**: a dime
244. **think Fast**: usually said right before someone threw something at you
245. **threads**: clothes
246. **tight**: good friends
247. **total**: to completely destroy, most often in reference to a car
248. **touch home**: to make sense
249. **tube steak**: a hot dog
250. **tune out**: to go away

\[U\]

251. **unborn**: extremely naive
252. **unreal**: exceptional

\[V\]

253. **vacant**: uncertain

\[W\]

254. **wail**: go fast (as in a car); or to perform superbly
255. **warden**: a teacher
256. **way out**: innovative
257. weed: a cigarette
258. wet rag: someone who's just no fun; unpopular
259. what's buzzin, cuzzin: what's new?
260. what's your tale, nightingale: what's the story?
261. wheelie: lift the car's front wheels off the ground by rapid acceleration
262. wig chop: a haircut
263. word from the bird: the truth

y
264. yoot: a youngster
265. you make the king’s jive: your English is good

z
266. zorros: the jitters

Sources: [http://www.fiftiesweb.com/fashion/slang.htm](http://www.fiftiesweb.com/fashion/slang.htm); [http://www.newberry.k12.sc.us/mchs/50sSlang.htm](http://www.newberry.k12.sc.us/mchs/50sSlang.htm); Flappers 2 Rappers, American Youth Slang: by Tom Dalzell.