



Slang of the 1950s

A

1. **actor:** show-off
2. **agitate the Gravel:** to leave (hot-rodders)
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-rodders)
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-rodders)
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-rodders)



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-rodders, 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-rodders, 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
58. **D.D.T.:** initials for "Drop Dead Twice". The response: What, and look like you?



59. **deuce:** a 1932 Ford (hot-rodders)
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-rodders) 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

E

68. **earthbound:** reliable

69. **earth pads:** shoes

70. **epistle:** a letter to someone

71. **eyeball:** look around

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



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

N

- 158. **negative perspiration:** easy
- 159. **nerd:** same as now. Bill Gates without the money.
- 160. **nest:** a hair-do
- 161. **night shift:** a slumber party
- 162. **nod:** drift off to sleep
- 163. **nosebleed:** as in “hey, nosebleed” - hey, stupid. Not a compliment!
- 164. **no sweat:** no problem
- 165. **nowhere:** opposite of cool.
- 166. **Nowheresville:** a boring, bad place to be.
- 167. **nuggets:** loose change

O

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

P

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



Q

192. **queen:** a popular girl
193. **quote:** to repeat oneself

R

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

S

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. **slurg:** 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.newberry.k12.sc.us/mchs/50sSlang.htm>;
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