Gen-Z lingo
EXPLAINED

Here's a guide from a zoomer on how to actually use the Gen-Z vernacular, so you can stop taking an L every time you try to fit in

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Every so often, on a leisurely stroll through social media, you'll see a string of words that ages you by thirty years. As you struggle to comprehend the sentence, you realise how far behind you've been left by your peers and your generation. It can be tempting to dive into the deep waters, unprepared and ill-informed. However, the only way to bring yourself back from the Paleolithic era is to choose your words carefully. Here are a few mistakes to avoid while navigating the beautiful language of brainrot.

Mistake 1: Getting your terms mixed up
Using terms in the wrong contexts is the easiest way to out yourself and risk a lifetime of social exclusion. Knowing the subtle difference between *mewing* and *looksmaxxing* might one day save you from getting ratioed in the comments section by some ten-year-old. It's also worth noting how the different dialects of brainrot branch out. Context is key, as *cooked* and *ate* somehow mean the same thing, but using the wrong one in a circle that uses the other is a shortcut to earning *negative aura*.

Mistake 2: Trying too hard
Random equals funny is a formula that stopped working in the 2010's. The worst thing you could do is recklessly splice words together hoping something will be funny. Throwing in twenty-five random words like *skibidi* and *sigma* in every sentence won't help with the boomer allegations. Neither will dropping 'fr' at the end of every sentence. Desperation is something to be preyed upon and mercilessly ridiculed for the collective enjoyment of the masses.

Mistake 3: Getting left behind
The tongue of the youth evolves rapidly and chaotically. No phrase retains its relevance after a week of use, and it's important to keep up. Staying connected perpetually by doomscrolling for at least six hours a day is imperative, be it through TikTok or Instagram Reels (which is just TikTok but one month behind). After all, who needs time for lame things like hobbies and productivity when there's a world of endless short-form-content consumption just waiting for you?
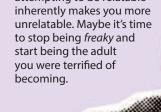
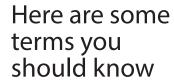**Mistake 4: Confusing Gen-Z with Gen-Alpha**
Identifying the differences in vernacular between Gen-Z and their younger counterpart Gen-Alpha is vital. Although there is a lot of overlap, these days, Gen-Zs tend to consider Gen-Alpha terms *cringe*, so it can be hard to traverse the various lexical pitfalls. You might even feel compelled to choose a side, as factions of the youth seem to be at odds with each other. In times like this, context-clues are your best friend. As all these different factors overwhelm you, you might even begin to question how young you even are anymore, and if learning all these do's and don'ts is just a Sisyphean task, doomed to fail again and again as you hopelessly cling on to some semblance of youth.

Mistake 5: Not mourning the loss of your youth
As you begin to lose yourself in the stream of internet lobotomisation, you will realise that you can't send a single text anymore without at least three accompanying emojis that make no sense contextually, and you'll wonder what you've become. Looking in the mirror and beholding your thinning hair and the wrinkles on your face, you'll wonder what made you *delulu* enough to embark on this pursuit of relatability. You'll realise that you wince everytime you type *rizz* or *goated*, because you're ashamed of your unworthy attempts at fitting in online with people half your age. As random back pain constantly reminds you of your mortality, you'll realise that attempting to be relatable inherently makes you more unrelatable. Maybe it's time to stop being *freaky* and start being the adult you were terrified of becoming.

Here are some terms you should know

IT'S GIVING
A versatile expression used to convey that something meets or exceeds expectations, or delivers a certain vibe or essence.

MOTHER
A woman who's iconic (does not always refer to a person's actual parent).

SENDING ME
Used to express extreme excitement, joy, or amusement.

ATE AND LEFT NO CRUMBS
To execute a task with complete precision and finesse.

COOKED
Often used to describe a job well done, but can also be used to refer to a struggling or exhausted person.

ERA
Used to label a person's current interests, aesthetic or dominant personality trait. Could also be used to describe a certain lifestyle choice.

POOKIE
A common euphemism to describe something or someone cute. Sometimes used to express approval of someone or their character.

ILLUSTRATION: **SYEDA AFRIN TARANNUM**