

Bahçeşehir University Proficiency Exam is at level B2, the second stage for the Independent User” level according to the CEFR. A successful B2 language user;

- can understand the main ideas of complex spoken and written English on both concrete and abstract topics.
- has active and passive vocabularies sufficient to cover a wide range of subjects.
- can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity.
- can explain their point of view on a topical issue.
- can read, respond to and write clear, detailed texts on a wide range of subjects.

Bahçeşehir University Proficiency Exam is aimed to assess all four language skills – speaking, writing, listening and reading .

Bahçeşehir University Proficiency Exam Components:

PART 1 WRITTEN EXAM

Number of questions: 50 (multiple-choice) – 1 writing task

Duration: 160 minutes

Weigh: 75 %

Description: The questions on the test have been designed to assess the following major aspects of integrated language skills, mainly reading, listening and writing.

Skills to be Tested	Duration	Question Types	Number of Questions
Reading	50 min	Reading Comprehension	12
		-Main Idea	
		-Inference	
		-Reference	
		-Guess the meaning	
		Locate irrelevant information	3
		Sentence completion	3
		Paragraph completion	3
		Restatement	3
Dialogue completion	3		
Responding to a situation	3		
Listening	50 min	Note-Taking	12
		While-Listening	8
Writing	60 min	Essay Writing (app.250 words)	1

PART 2: SPEAKING EXAM

Duration: 6-8 minutes per student

Weigh: 25 %

Description: The speaking part of the exam consists of two assessed phases which are:

- General Introduction (introducing oneself, exchanging personal information, responding to daily life questions.)
- Candidate-led discussion of a theme based topic. (expressing point of view, supporting your view, giving examples, responding to the questions.)

Procedure: After the introduction phase, the examiner brings the topic by asking a question to the student. The discussion is led by the student who provides most of the input. The examiner may ask guiding questions to reinforce the discussion.

Themes: Students will be asked to express their opinion about the following topics:

- Society
- Family
- Work and Business
- Global Affairs (Population, wars, world economics, disasters, etc.)
- Global Organizations (UNICEF,G8, Greenpeace, etc.)
- Environment
- Sports
- Travel
- Language
- Advertising
- Education
- Arts
- Media
- Crime
- Health



Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi Dil Yeterlik Sınavı ADK (Avrupa Dil Konseyi CEFR) seviyelerinden B2 – “Bağımsız Dil Kullanıcısı” seviyesine tekabül eder. Başarılı bir B2 öğrencisinin aşağıdaki yetilere sahip olması beklenir.

- Konuşma ve yazma dilinde soyut ve somut konuların ana fikirlerini anlayabilir.
- Pek çok farklı konuda yeterli aktif ve pasif kelime bilgisine sahiptir.
- Spontan ve akıcı düzeyde iletişim kurabilir.
- Belli bir konu üzerinde fikirlerini beyan edebilir.
- Pek çok farklı konuda detaylı yazıları okuyup yorumlayarak cevaplayabilir.

Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi Dil Yeterlik Sınavı gerçek hayattaki dil kullanımını esas alarak, okuma, yazma, dinleme ve konuşma becerilerini ölçmeyi hedefler.

Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi Dil Yeterlik Sınavı İçeriği:

BİRİNCİ BÖLÜM: YAZILI SINAV

Soru sayısı: 50 çoktan seçmeli – 1 kompozisyon yazma

Süre: 160 dakika

Ağırlık: %75

Tanımı: Bu sınavdaki sorular öğrencinin okuma, yazma ve dinleme becerilerini ölçmeyi hedefler.

Ölçülen Beceri	Süre	Soru Tipleri	Soru Sayısı
Okuma	50 dakika	Okuduğunu anlama	12
		-ana fikir bulma	
		- çıkarım	
		- referans	
		- bilinmeyen kelime	
		Ait olmayan cümleyi bulma	3
		Cümle tamamlama	3
		Paragraf tamamlama	3
		Farklı ifade biçimi	3
Dialog tamamlama	3		
Bir duruma yanıt verme	3		
Dinleme	50 dakika	Not alma	12
		Dinlerken Cevaplama	8
Yazma	60 dakika	Kompozisyon yazma (ort. 250 kelime)	1

BÖLÜM 2: SÖZLÜ SINAV

Süre: 6 / 8 dakika (her öğrenci için)

Ağırlık: %25

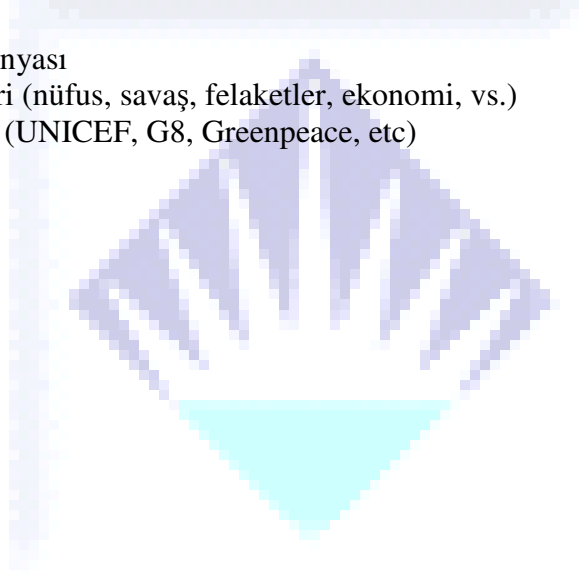
Tanımı: Sınavın bu bölümü iki aşamadan oluşur:

- i. Genel konuşma becerileri (kendini tanıtmaya, kişisel bilgi alışverişi, günlük yaşamı ilgilendiren durumları yanıtlama)
- ii. Belli bir konu üzerine öğrenci tarafından yönlendirilen karşılıklı konuşma. (kendi fikrini ifade etme, fikrini savunma, örneklendirme ve soruları cevaplandırma)

Prosedür: Genel konuşma bölümünden sonra sınavı yapan okutman öğrenciye bir konu ile ilgili sorular sorar ve tartışmayı başlatır. Konuşmanın geri kalan kısmının öğrenci tarafından yönlendirilmesi beklenir. Okutman konuyu geliştirmek amaçlı yönlendirici sorular sorabilir.

Konular: Aşağıda belirtilen konulardan herhangi biri hakkında öğrencinin fikrini belirtmesi beklenir:

- Toplum
- Aile
- İş ve çalışma Dünyası
- Dünya Meseleleri (nüfus, savaş, felaketler, ekonomi, vs.)
- Dünya Örgütleri (UNICEF, G8, Greenpeace, etc)
- Çevre
- Spor
- Seyahat
- Dil
- Reklam
- Eğitim
- Sanat
- Medya
- Suç
- Sağlık



SAMPLE EXAM

SECTION 1- READING (30 POINTS)

Questions 1-3: On your answer sheet, mark the alternative which best completes each sentence.

1. Having begged for a few years,

- a) the decision to sell “ The Big Issue” gives Dave a big chance.
- b) selling “ The Big Issue” is a great opportunity for Dave.
- c) making 7.5 dollars a day is not enough for Dave.
- d) Dave knows hecklers and “taxing” are common problems.

2. to whom they report.

- a) A growing body of evidence does indeed suggest that Enron was a case of bad management
- b) In theory, a company’s auditors are appointed independently by its shareholders
- c) The Enron fiasco has shown that all is not well with the governance of many big American companies
- d) In Congress, politicians are engaged in an investigation of Enron’s managers

3. Since unemployment is a major social concern,

- a) people enjoy the benefits of living in a rich country.
- b) the new government has been making tremendous efforts to reduce it.
- c) unemployment compensation scheme had been abolished.
- d) the economic prospect seemed discouraging.

Questions 4-6: On your answer sheet, mark the alternative which best completes each paragraph.

4. Mount Everest, 29.002 feet high, is situated on the border of Tibet and Nepal. Since the end of the nineteenth century climbers have been ambitious to conquer it and stand on the highest point of land in the world. However, it was on 29th May 1953 that Everest was conquered for the first time; two British climbers were able to reach the top.

In fact, before this successful climb, there had been ten other attempts and they had all ended in failure.

- a) The first climbing expeditions to the Everest were organized by the Royal Geographical Society in London.
- b) One should remember that snow and ice are not the climber’s greatest enemy on Everest.
- c) On the other hand, after the Second World War, Everest expeditions had to start not from Tibet but from Nepal.
- d) Thus, they were the first men known to have done so.

5. Japanese culture places a strong emphasis on mutual help among blood relatives. As a result, the proportion of elderly people living with their children is very high when compared with European countries. This is partly due to migration but also to rising numbers of unmarried older people and childless couples.

- a) All efforts, therefore, should be directed to meeting their needs.
- b) In fact, in Japan the rate of divorce was increasing rapidly.
- c) In some families, grandmothers take over the child care roles of their daughters.
- d) This proportion was even higher, but has declined since 1960’s.

6. The president is the Head of State and represents the unity of the Turkish Nation. His duties also include calling the parliament to session, publishing laws, returning laws to parliament for reconsideration, deciding upon renewal of parliamentary elections, appointing the Prime Minister or accepting his resignation.

- a) He is to come from a very educated family educated in modern and credited schools.
- b) The president should use his authority to decide upon renewal of parliamentary elections.
- c) He oversees the workings of the Constitution and ensures that the departments of the state function harmoniously.
- d) The Prime Minister must be personally in line with the Presidential tendencies.

Questions 7-9: On your answer sheet, mark the alternative which best gives the answer in that situation.

7. You have been to a special exhibition of Ottoman art, held in the National Museum. You have been much impressed by the variety and the beauty of the exhibits. So, next day in the office, you recommend it to your colleagues, you say:

- a) The National Museum sometimes holds special exhibitions; at present there is one on Ottoman art.
- b) Yes, I went to the exhibition at the National Museum, and do agree that it is very representative.
- c) The exhibition of Ottoman art at the National Museum is apparently quite unique one. I suppose you've already seen it.
- d) Yesterday, I went to that exhibition of Ottoman art at the National Museum, and thought it was superb. Make sure you don't miss it.

8. Your music set is not working well, so you want to get it repaired, but don't know where to take it. You want a friend to suggest a good place. You say:

- a) My music set is in need of repair. Can you recommend someone good?
- b) You know, this music set cost a lot, but it is always breaking down.
- c) I am afraid they will charge an awful lot to repair it.
- d) Were you satisfied with the service they offered?

9. A friend is worried about his son because he has been getting really poor marks at school. Your friend's manner is rather too authoritarian and you think he is too hard on the boy. Rather tentatively, you say:

- a) What are his friends like? Are they a bad influence on him?
- b) It is serious. You will have to make him work harder.
- c) Perhaps you are putting too much pressure on him; he is just at the age that reacts badly to pressure.
- d) Don't charge your manner. He'll give in.

Questions 10-12: On your answer sheet, mark the best irrelevant alternative in the paragraph.

10. England has a sad record of journalists succumbing to pressure from politicians and officials. (II) Indeed, many of them are virtually bought by powerful interests. (III) They find it hard to resist the combination of temptation and pressure that the government has at its disposal. (IV) Naturally, the country as a whole realizes what is happening and has no confidence in its newspapers. (V) The Sunday Times, which is based in London, is Britain's biggest newspaper.

- a) II
- b) III
- c) IV
- d) V

11. (I) The collapse of the economies of Southeast Asia in the early years of the decade was later followed by that of Korea, the classic tiger economy. (II) What happens next in a region that is now strewn with the wrecks of so-called economic miracle? (III) This leaves Europe and United States as significant mass markets. (IV) The assumption that recession will spread in the region owing to capital flight and belt-tightening is most plausible. This will deepen as foreign investors increasingly reduce their profile in southeast Asia.

- a) I b) II c) III d) IV

12. Stress affects almost everyone from the highly pressured executive to the busy homemaker or student. (II) It can cause a variety of physical disorders ranging from headaches to stomach ulcers and even alcoholism. (III) It is believed that a little bit stress won't do any harm. (IV) Stress, like common cold, is a problem that can't be cured; however, it can be controlled. (V) A person can learn to control stress by setting realistic goals, enjoying a hobby and/ or physical exercise, and by maintaining a good, warm relationship with family and friends.

- a) II b) III c) IV d) V

Questions 13-15: On your answer sheet, mark the alternative which best rewrites each sentence.

13. I have been abroad for nearly two years, so I am out of touch with everything here.

- a) I feel quite like a stranger now that I am back after almost two years abroad.
b) Two years or so out of the country will make you feel differently about your own country.
c) On my return after almost two years, I was touched to find a few changes here.
d) Two years abroad has estranged me, so I don't want to go back to my country.

14. International conventions have long been prohibiting the use of chemical weapons during war, but how effective is this likely to be?

- a) Can such international bodies be relied upon to ban effectively in the long-term the use of chemical weapons in time of war?
b) For many years now, chemical warfare has been banned by international agreement, but can the ban be enforced?
c) How effectively might the prohibition of chemical warfare be if it had the backing of so many international bodies?
d) Over a period of very many years, various international agreements have been drawn up to prohibit the use of chemical weapons in wartime, but they have hardly been effective, have they?

15. Unless a country can establish the fact that its economy is sound, the world's public and private lenders alike refuse to extend loans.

- a) As long as a country has a reliable economy, investors from all over the world will refrain from granting loans.
b) Only when a country builds up stable economy do public and private investors of the world agree to lend loans.
c) If a country fails to formulate a static economy, public and private investors will be intent on making investments there.
d) Until a country proves the fact that it has a stable economy, investors from all over the world will queue up to make investments in that country.

Questions 16-18: On your answer sheet, mark the alternative which best completes each dialogue.

16. **Burton:** I've been reading about landing operations during World War II.

Dennis:

Burton: Quite a lot! Did you know that American submarines sank nearly 500 ships in European waters alone?

Dennis: No, I didn't. That's quite an impressive figure.

- a) Yes, I've read that book. But I am not sure how reliable the information is.
- b) Well, do you think that you are an expert on these matters?
- c) So, you say it is rather interesting! Then why don't you give it to me after you've finished it?
- d) Well, what have you learned?

17. **Emily:** How are you getting on with that novel? James Joyce is supposed to be difficult to read.

Miriam: Let's say his style is unusual and you do need to get used to it.

Emily:

Miriam: Oh, certainly. His ideas are really very interesting and impressive.

- a) I suppose all popular writers have their own individual style.
- b) Well, in the end, do you think it is worth all that effort?
- c) I haven't read any of his books yet, but I believe I will develop a sudden interest in them.
- d) Does his special style of writing serve any useful purpose?

18. **Patient:** Well, doc, I've been suffering from a soar throat and high fever since yesterday evening.

Doctor: It is probably due to common cold.

Patient:

Doctor: I will prescribe some pills and antibiotics for you, but the best thing you should do is a good deal of rest in bed.

- a) What should I do to overcome it?
- b) Is my condition too serious?
- c) Do you think I will really need to rest for a while?
- d) How long does it take me to recover fully and go back to work?

Questions 19-25: Circle the best options according to the paragraphs below.

(I)

There are several points to remember when buying food. First of all, larger shops sell goods at lower prices than smaller shops. As most people know, supermarkets often sell their own brands of many products. 'Own brands' are, on average, cheaper than the brands of leading manufacturers. For example, on items such as peas, beans, soap and soap powder, own brands can be up to 15 percent cheaper. On some lines, such as washing-up liquid, the savings can be even greater. There is no reason to suppose that own brand ones are inferior. They are commonly produced in the same place as the branded ones. Often the difference is the packaging and the price.

19. It can be inferred from the paragraph that

- a) all own-brand items expired long ago.
- b) own-brand items are cheaper because they are produced by the company itself.
- c) own-brand items are usually lower in quality, and thus in price as well.
- d) Own-brand items are not lower in quality than other products.

20. It can be inferred from the paragraph that

- a) all items are said to be cheaper in supermarkets than in small shops.
- b) leading manufacturers earn better by producing own-brand items for supermarkets.
- c) price difference between own-brand items and others can be no greater than 15%.
- d) washing-up liquid has a low cost of production.

21. What does 'their' refer to?

- a) supermarkets' b) manufacturers' c) supermarket's d) manufacturer's

22) What does 'ones' refer to?

- a) brands b) products c) prices d) packs

(II)

(1) When Lydia Nash appeared on the TV program. Who wants to be a millionaire? And was fortunate enough to win \$16,000, she decided to give all the money away. **This** wouldn't have been surprising if she had been rich or famous, but Lydia is a 19-year-old student.

(2) Lydia gave all the money to a charity in Thailand which helps orphan children- children without parents. **They** were living in an institution called orphanage. She had also worked there as a volunteer for the previous three years, asking for no money. 'I first visited the orphanage when I was seventeen, and I felt very depressed by what I saw. When I got back to England I felt angry- looking around all I could see were people who were obsessed with money. That convinced me to return to Thailand the following year.

(3) After she won the money some of her friends at university thought that maybe she had made the wrong decision. 'Some people said I should have saved it for a deposit to buy a house or to pay back my students loan.' Lydia said. 'That really annoyed me. Students seem to live in an unreal world, where they always complain about being poor. But there's an enormous difference between our situation and people who have absolutely no money.'

(4) With the help of the money Lydia gave them, the charity has just finished building 'Rainbow House', a new facility that will house 50 young children, where they will live until they are adopted.

23) In paragraph 1, what does 'fortunate' mean?

- a) unlucky b) risky c) lucky d) destiny

24) In paragraph 4, what does 'adopted' mean?

- a) employed b) taken in c) abandoned d) droned

25) In paragraph 1, 'This' refers to ____.

- a) making a surprise
- b) being rich and famous
- c) giving all the money away
- d) appearing on TV

26) In paragraph 2, 'They' refers to ____.

- a) parents
- b) charities
- c) children
- d) orphans

(III)

For years, it has been assumed that obesity is the result of 'too much food and too little exercise'. While this maxim is largely correct, the etiology of obesity can be much more complex. There is a well-documented familial tendency, but whether this is of environmental or genetic origin is unclear. Studies of twins separated at birth and living apart provide strong evidence for a substantial genetic influence. Children of overweight parents, when adopted by lean families, have a greater tendency to become obese than do adoptees from non-obese natural parents. 'Energy efficiency' may contribute to obesity; with reserves of fat deposits readily available to metabolize in the obese, a given amount of activity requires a smaller expenditure of energy. This theory has been invoked by those who complain that they 'gain weight whether they eat or not', and indeed there is evidence of differences in energy efficiency among individuals. Similarly, obesity has been attributed to abnormally low basal metabolic rates (BMRs) since obese individuals do show lower BMRs. However, this fact is due to an artifact of BMR measurement; a larger proportion of the total fat mass of an obese person is inert, low-metabolizing fat, a fact that makes BMR calculations lower.

27) The main idea of this passage is _____.

- a) to discredit the idea that there is a greater degree of energy efficiency in the obese.
- b) that the environmental and the genetic causes of obesity are more or less the same.
- c) To establish that the factors behind obesity are highly complex and even contradictory.
- d) That obesity is a serious health hazard and that a great deal more research into the treatment of it is required.

28) What does the word 'assume' mean?

- a) suppose
- b) satisfy
- c) affirm
- d) promise

29) Find the word in the paragraph which means 'provide, supply'.

- a) gain
- b) contribute
- c) metabolize
- d) require

30) Find the word in the paragraph which means 'proof, verification'.

- a) expenditure
- b) artifact
- c) lean
- d) evidence

SECTION 2 LISTENING (20 POINTS)

PART A: WHILE LISTENING

You are going to listen two people talking about taking classes over the Internet. You have 3 minutes before you listen to the conversation. Then choose the correct answer for each question.

31. James is trying to _____.
a. register for classes at a community college
b. decide what subject to major in
c. register for an online course
d. be friends with Rick
32. According to Rick, online classes are _____.
a. the same as traditional classes
b. more convenient than traditional classes
c. more easier than traditional classes
d. more challenging than traditional classes
33. James finds it difficult to complete his education at the community college because _____.
a. many of the classes are held while he is at work
b. he cannot afford tuition
c. it is very expensive
d. it does not offer the courses he needs
34. James wants a degree so that he can _____.
a. move ahead in the company where he works
b. find a job at a different company
c. learn another language
d. go to graduate school
35. According to Rick, one advantage of taking online classes is _____.
a. scheduling
b. cost
c. forming relationships with classmates
d. professors
36. In his online courses, Rick has to _____.
a. send emails to his classmates
b. post comments on a discussion board
c. meet with his classmates in person
d. chat with his professors
37. Rick often participates in his online classes _____.
a. before he goes to work
b. during the weekend
c. while he is at his job
d. at nights
38. According to Rick, in an online course _____.
a. it is easy to form relationships with other students
b. it is difficult to catch up if you fall behind
c. students are not taught by qualified professors
d. it is clear that they are difficult

SECTION 2 LISTENING (20 POINTS)

PART B: NOTE – TAKING

You are going to listen to a lecture about slang in language. Listen to the lecture and take notes.



SECTION 2 LISTENING (20 POINTS)

PART B: NOTE – TAKING

Now answer the following questions using your notes.

39. The speaker defines slang as _____
- informal language used by a particular group of people.
 - informal language used by most people.
 - informal language used only by young people.
 - informal language used by students.
40. Students use slang _____
- all the time.
 - never.
 - only where it's accepted.
 - only in class or at work.
41. Slang is considered cool because _____
- it shows that the speaker is in style.
 - it shows that the speaker is intelligent.
 - it shows that the speaker is trustworthy.
 - it shows that the speaker is rich.
42. The most common slang theme is _____
- love and romance.
 - approval and disapproval.
 - study and the workplace.
 - home and outside.
43. Today, slang is _____ it was ten years ago.
- more acceptable than
 - less acceptable than
 - about as acceptable as
 - not acceptable
44. Historically, slang has been associated with _____
- the media
 - youth
 - criminals
 - soldiers
45. Young men and women use _____ slang expressions.
- the same
 - different
 - similar
 - close
46. There are _____ types of slang words explained in the lecture.
- 2
 - 4
 - 3
 - 5
47. Slang can communicate _____ emotional experience.
- shared
 - strong
 - rare
 - fake
48. Students use _____ colloquial vocabulary.
- less slang than
 - more slang than
 - the same amount of slang as
 - as much slang as
49. Which is not an example for currently popular slang words?
- dope
 - chill out
 - the bomb
 - gimme five
50. Which one of these statements are false?
- All cultures contain subcultures.
 - Slang is rarely humorous.
 - A word that "works hard" has several meanings
 - How's it hanging* is a slang expression that disappeared quickly.

SECTION 3 WRITING (25 POINTS)

Write an essay on one of the following topics. (min. 250 words.)

- **Discuss the negative/positive effects of TV on children.**
- **Discuss whether there should be capital punishment or not.**
- **Discuss whether the government should ban smoking in public places or not.**



WHILE LISTENING TRANSCRIPT

A: Rick

B: James

A: Hey, James... what are you reading?

B: Oh... it's the course catalog for the community college.

A: Are you signing up for classes?

B: I'm trying to sign up. It's really difficult trying to work full-time here and complete my degree. I find it really frustrating. Most of the classes necessary to complete my B.A. meet during the day – during work hours. Or, if they meet in the evening, I end up missing too many classes because of last minute sales trips or something keeps me late at work. I mean, I need this degree to get ahead here at the company, but it seems nearly impossible!

A: Why not take the classes over the Internet? I've started taking classes online, and I completed six hours over the past couple of months. So far, I've taken Beginning Accounting, Business Law, and Economics.

B: Online? I've thought about that, but... I don't know... don't you miss the real relationships and contacts with your professor and other students?

A: I'll admit, it's not quite the same as sitting next to other people who share the same interests... but there are many advantages. The scheduling, for example.

B: How does it work? I mean, how do you attend class?

A: It is pretty simple, really. Have you ever used an online discussion board?

B: Sure, who hasn't?

A: Well, attending class is basically like that. You are required to post four messages a day to a message board which is monitored by your professor.

B: What about lectures? Does the professor give lectures?

A: Those are posted online, too. Then you need to post your comments. I participate – share my opinions – much more than I ever did in a traditional class.

B: Really?

A: Yes... and the best part is that I can do it any time. In fact, I usually participate in a discussion during my morning coffee break... and then again at lunch. That fulfills my required participation for one day. You could say I've attended class that day.

B: Do you do this for a full semester?

A: Each three unit class I've taken so far lasts for a single month.

B: That's great! Can you really finish a class in only thirty days?

A: Yes. But it can get pretty intense... you really have to keep up with the work. You can't fall behind because there is no time to catch up.

B: What about the assignments? Are they similar to traditional class assignments? Do you write reviews and papers and turn them in over the Internet? Do you take tests online?

A: Yes, all that is done online... or completed at home and then sent to the professor over the Internet.

B: What about the reading. You don't read entire textbooks on the computer, do you? I don't think I'd like that.

A: Reading is a little different. Some materials, like journal articles and class lectures, are available online. The university has an online library.

B: What about the textbook. There is a textbook, isn't there?

A: Yes, it's a traditional text – you have to get it ahead of time. A buddy told me to get in advance and start reading, because after the class begins, it is really hard to keep up on the reading. I found that to be true.

B: Is it rigorous? I don't want to offend you, but I've heard that these classes aren't as serious as real... I mean traditional classes. A friend told me that the online university tells students that their classes are as thorough, but it isn't true.

A: I think there probably are some online universities that don't really provide serious classes... but I have to say, the classes I've taken have been real challenges, and I feel I did all the work any student does in any classroom.

B: But a classroom is more than just lectures and texts and assignments... Do you remember how we met?

A: How could I forget? In our Introduction to Statistics class at the community college.

B: We had to work on that group project with that guy who basically did nothing but complain... what was his name?

A: Ethan.

B: Ethan. Anyway, the best part was working together, learning from each other, and getting to know one another. I really valued that. I wouldn't have this job if we hadn't become friends.

A: I'll admit... there is nothing quite like that in my online class. I never see my classmates, and besides, they live thousands of miles away.

B: Hey look at the time. We need to get back to work!

A: and I need to get back to class!

B: I'd like to talk to you more about this later.

A: Of course, but right now...

NOTE-TAKING TRANSCRIPT

TEACHER: OK, let's get started... Today we're going to be looking at a really interesting phenomenon, slang. We'll be looking at where slang comes from, who uses it and why. We all use it more often than you might think – every day of our lives, in fact. And we use it for a reason.

You know, most of us are fascinated with slang. We continually hear new words and phrases enter the language and replace old, and we see familiar words take on new meanings. We feel a need to keep in touch with these changes, to be aware of the latest street talk. Fact is, we love slang. But what is it exactly? What is slang? Anyone like to suggest a definition?

STUDENT 1: Isn't it basically kind of casual talk?

TEACHER: Can you say a bit more?

STUDENT 1: You know, the sort of words we use with friends... in relaxed situations.

TEACHER: Good. You are pretty much there with your idea of casual language. We can say that slang is language that's found only in the very informal speech of particular groups of people. It can help to identify the communities, the groups of people, who use it. And this brings me to the first important point of the lecture – why people use slang.

A lot of slang comes from not wanting to be understood by outsiders, people outside of your circle. In other words, people exploit slang to give their group an identity, by making their language exclusive, or at least private. Through this private language, they can tease one another, enjoy shared experiences, and keep everyone else at a distance. All cultures contain groups or subcultures with different interests and priorities, and each group tries to establish a separate identity. They want people to know who they are, what they stand for - and slang helps to construct and cement that identity. We can say, then, that slang reflects the experiences, beliefs, and values of its speaker.

Now let's look more closely at this relationship between slang and community, slang and identity. A nice example of this is, uh, student language, sometimes called "youth speak." Young people use a lot of slang, and many of the words they use are used by both sexes, often metaphorically rather than literally. That is to say, the conventional meaning of the words change. For example, words that have traditionally had strong negative literal meanings that are used as insults have taken on, uh, gentler, and in many cases even positive meanings in conversation. We'll look at some examples later.

Now, if you ask college students why they use slang, they'll tell you it's cool, and that's true in several different ways. First, it's cool because it's in style, in fashion. Using current slang shows that the speaker is in tune with the times... you know, that he or she knows what's in fashion and is part of that fashion.

Second, slang is cool in the sense of showing that the speaker is knowledgeable... the speaker is "in the know," the speaker knows when slang is acceptable. People don't use slang all the time, only in situations and with people who

accept the use of slang – a point I'll return to later. Research tells us that although young people often deny that they use slang intentionally, in fact they clearly choose whether or not to use it depending on the situation they are in. As we've already said, slang's typically used in informal rather than formal settings, and this is certainly true among college students: they usually avoid using it in the classroom or a work environment, for example. Anyone like to suggest why?

STUDENT 1: People won't understand them.

STUDENT 2: Yeah, so it's like a waste of time.

TEACHER: Well, that may be true, but it's not the main reason. They don't use it simply because it could make them look bad. And everyone hates looking bad, right?

So, to review, we've said that students use slang only in certain situations. But they also use it with certain people, usually friends. When they use slang, they are showing that they share social and emotional experiences – so slang reinforces their relationships. But... it also gives special meaning to what they say. For instance, to say "That party was the bomb" is more than merely saying it was a very good party. It shares an emotional experience that might otherwise take several sentences to explain. In other words, it's a kind of ... shorthand.

The third and final way slang's cool is that it's fun; it's very creative in the same way that poetry is, and it's often humorous. In other words, it's a form of play, a way of entertaining.

So... uh, let me repeat: I've said that slang's cool for three reasons: One, it shows the user's fashionable and in tune with the times; two, it's a way of reinforcing relationships and communication efficiently; and three, it's fun and entertaining. Got that?

All right then, let's now take a look at different kinds of slang, in particular three types of slang words: those that are currently most used, those that linger year after year, and those that have become unfashionable.

So... now what is the most used slang? Well, research tells us that over the past few years, in the number one position is "dope" which basically means very good, great, excellent, attractive, or nice. So somebody might say, for example, that his friend's new motorbike is really dope; in other words, it's very good. Other words that feature in the top twenty include "chill out" (to calm down or relax), "the bomb" (meaning the best or most excellent), "1"whack" (which means bad, unfair, crazy or foolish), and "dude" (meaning person – usually a man, actually). Any other examples? Yes?

STUDENT 1: Hella.

TEACHER: Meaning?

STUDENT 1: Very, a lot.

TEACHER: OK, yep, Luis?

STUDENT 3: "Kick it," which means, like, to hang out, uh relax, you know, sit around doing nothing.

TEACHER: Right. And it's interesting, isn't it, how most slang terms indicate approval or disapproval; they show what we feel positive or negative about. So, like "dope" and "the

bomb”, we have “sweet,” “phat” – spelled P-H-A-T, not F-A-T - “cool”, and “tight” – all meaning good, excellent, nice, or attractive.

And then you have words like “bad” which really mean good; so “That new CD is bad” actually means it’s good! So you see, slang does strange things with language. Like I said earlier, it’s certainly creative. As a matter of fact, some slang words have many different meaning, sometimes as many as nine or ten. For instance, the word “trip” or “tripping” has various meanings, but they all reflect the idea of unusual, strange, or extreme. When a word’s used a lot or has a number of different meanings like this, we sometimes say it “works hard.” The word “trip” then, is a word that works hard.

Uh... now, the second type of slang consists of words that linger from decade to decade and never seem to go out of fashion – and these words also work hard, that is, they have a lot of meanings. A great example is the word cool – forever popular it seems! Other terms in this category are “nerd”, “cheesy”, “chick”, “the man”, “toasted”, “wasted”, “what’s up”, “blow away”, and “gross”. And once again most of these show approval or disapproval.

And... now, finally, there are slang terms that come and go; they disappear almost as quickly as they appear. Examples include “gimme five”, “how’s it hanging”, and “core”. Words like these often disappear because they are closely associated with famous personalities who similarly come and go - they are popular, in the spotlight for a while, and then seem almost to disappear. And when they disappear, the slang associated with them tends to disappear as well.

Now, today, public tolerance of slang is at an all-time high – just look at how widely it’s used in newspapers. But how do college teachers and academics view slang? Well, some persist with the idea that its use will degrade... uh, you

might even say “pollute” academic discourse. However, among themselves students tolerate words their teachers might consider taboo. Students are actually very good at code-switching; that is, they are very good at using different styles or codes of communication in different situations. Do you agree? Do you use slang in your essays or when you speak with a teacher?

STUDENT 3: Personally I never use slang in essays. It just doesn’t feel right. It’s true, you know, most students know when to use slang, and when not to.

STUDENT 2: I agree. I sometimes use it with teachers, though; it just depends on who the teacher is.

TEACHER: Why, I imagine most people do the same. Here’s something you ay find surprising: A recent study on student conversation suggest that students don’t in fact use slang that often but instead they choose more ordinary colloquial vocabulary.

OK, to finish up, now let me say something about the history of slang. Many years ago, slang was closely associated with underground, criminal organizations, groups that deviate from mainstream society... uh... with notions of outcasts and socially unacceptable behaviors. A look back in time shops, for example, that in the seventeenth century more than twenty words were used to refer to vagrants, that is, to someone who has no home or job. Today, of course, these associations are much weaker and slang’s used much more widely. As underground culture has become more mainstream, there is not the same need for the kind of secret code that slang offered. Today, most of use slang and aren’t ashamed of using it. It may still have negative connotations, but like it or not it’s here to stay, and increasingly it’s become the subject of serious academic study. And why not? As I’ve tried to who, it’s a fascinating social as well as linguistic phenomenon. So, any questions?...

ANSWER KEY

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|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|
| 1. | C | 11. | C | 21. | A | 31. | A | 41. | A |
| 2. | C | 12. | B | 22. | B | 32. | B | 42. | B |
| 3. | B | 13. | A | 23. | C | 33. | A | 43. | A |
| 4. | D | 14. | A | 24. | B | 34. | A | 44. | C |
| 5. | D | 15. | B | 25. | C | 35. | A | 45. | A |
| 6. | C | 16. | D | 26. | D | 36. | B | 46. | C |
| 7. | D | 17. | B | 27. | C | 37. | C | 47. | A |
| 8. | A | 18. | A | 28. | A | 38. | B | 48. | A |
| 9. | C | 19. | D | 29. | B | 39. | A | 49. | A |
| 10. | D | 20. | A | 30. | D | 40. | C | 50. | B |

