Rhyming Slang

- Slang is a type of word used in informal situations – e.g. gobsmacked (amazed) and gutted (very disappointed).
- Different groups of people have their own slang. Cockneys from the East End of London have what is known as Cockney rhyming slang.
- In rhyming slang, a word or pairs of words is invented which rhymes with the word that the speaker would normally use. The slang word or phrase is used instead of the actual word. For example, ‘mouth’ becomes ‘north and south’, ‘tea’ becomes ‘Rosie Lee’, and ‘feet’ becomes ‘plates of meat’.
- Frequently, when speaking, only one word of the rhyming phrase is used. Thus money is referred to as ‘bread’ rather than ‘bread and honey’, and the stairs may be called ‘apples’ rather than ‘apples and pears’.
- Australia has its own version of rhyming slang. Examples of Australian rhyming slang are: ‘after darks’ for ‘sharks’, ‘Ned Kelly’ for ‘belly’, and ‘steak and kidney’ for ‘Sydney’.

Can you Adam and Eve it?

Did you know?

The expression ‘porkies’ meaning ‘lies’ comes from the rhyming slang ‘pork pies’.

Can you make sense of the following statement which uses rhyming slang?

(Answers at the bottom of the sheet)

I’m watching Eastenders on the custard. I was cream-crackered and could ‘ardly keep me mincies open. Then the dog goes. It’s me blister. She’s out of bread. Could I give her the lend of an Ayrton? When I says ‘No’ we have a right bull and cow.

Answers: Can you Adam and Eve it?

bull and cow = low
Ayrton = Ayrton Senna = tenner = £10 note
head = bread and honey = money
blister = eleven
dog = dog and bone = phone
minces = mince pies = pies
escalin = escalator = escalator
Jezz and Lee = believe
New rhyming slang is constantly being invented. The rhyming slang for a £10 note (a tenner) is ‘Ayrton’ from ‘Ayrton Senna’ (the Formula 1 racing driver). A new term for ‘money’ is ‘Bugs’ from ‘Bugs Bunny’ (the cartoon character).

A group of children were asked to invent rhyming slang for words about school. Some of the phrases they invented were ‘doom and gloom’ for ‘classroom’, ‘Jack Horner’ for ‘reading corner’, ‘lost and found’ for ‘playground’.

Can you work out what each one means?

1. Dead creature .................. Answer = Head teacher
2. Do your best
3. Munch and crunch
4. Skip and climb
5. Sweepstaker
6. Grand Slam
7. Centre Parks
8. Mystery session
9. April Fools
10. Lucky dip

Answers: New Rhyming Slang

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