Like every language, English is filled with lots of words and phrases that are interesting, useful and inspiring. The language is constantly evolving, and [new words](https://www.english.com/blog/?p=6077) are introduced into the English dictionary every year.

I tried to ask both native and non-native English speakers to let me know what their favourite English words and phrases are. I hope you find them useful and motivating…

**Allophilia**

**Fathima Dada, Global Managing Director, English and Schools at Pearson English:** *“Allophilia should be our word and our work for 2017! ‘Positive attitude for a group that is not one’s own.’ Our world needs allophilia!”*

This word is derived from the Greek meaning “liking or love of the other” and was first used by Harvard Professor Todd L Pittinsky in 2006 when he couldn’t find an antonym for “*prejudice*” in any dictionary.

**Absolutely fabulous**

**Suzana Marinkovic:** *“There are a great number of English words and phrases that I enjoy listening to and pronouncing. I like to hear or say ‘absolutely fabulous’ because it sounds so perfect to me – the sound of the words is what attracts me most.”*

This phrase emphasises something that is really, really good. You might also be familiar with the TV series and/or movie *Absolutely Fabulous*, starring Jennifer Saunders and Joanna Lumley.

**Everything happens for a reason**

**Dhelynn Rurac Delabahan:***“‘Everything happens for a reason’ – because I believe that God will give me the best that I deserve.”*

This is a common phrase – especially for people who are religious or spiritual. It is the belief that even if bad things happen to you, there’s a purpose or reason for it – as decided by God or fate.

**Polymath**

**Steffanie Zazulak, Senior Marketing Manager at Pearson English:**

*“Even as native English speakers, it’s almost impossible to know all the words in the English language. I learned about the word ‘polymath’ a few years ago, which is a noun that means “a person of great learning in several fields of study”. I’ve never been great at one thing but good at many things… so when I learned about the word, I instantly connected with it.”*

This word describes a person of wide knowledge or learning.

**To learn one must be humble**

**Alcides Ferreira:** *“‘To learn one must be humble’ – because when I teach, I’m humble enough to learn a lot with my students and vice versa.”*

This quote comes from James Joyce, author of *Ulysses*. The full quote reads: “To learn one must be humble. But life is the great teacher.”

**Serendipity**

Cecilia Boyd: *“Serendipity.”*

**Michael Davies:** *“‘Serendipity’ is a good word.”*

Meaning “a fortunate happening or a pleasant surprise”, it was coined by Horace Walpole in 1754. In a letter to a friend Walpole explained an unexpected discovery he had made by reference to a Persian fairy tale, *The Three Princes of Serendip*.

**Glamorous**

**Yasmin Alsaleh:** *“‘Glamorous’… I like to say it!”*

This word can be used to describe something that is attractive in an exciting or special way.

**Pick yourself up…**

**Blanca Torres:** *“‘Pick yourself up, dust yourself off and start all over again.’ I like it because we all have faced adversity, but we should never, ever give up.”*

This is from a popular song composed in 1936 by Jerome Kern, with lyrics by Dorothy Fields, written for the film *Swing Time*.

**Yes**

**James Choles:** *“There are many words that are always pleasing to say, but my favourite English word is simply ‘yes’.”*

The word “*yes*” is great – and there are lots of others ways to say it in English, such as “*yeah*”, “*yep*” and “*aye*”.

**Literature**

**Evelyn Teacher:** *“It’s always a pleasure to pronounce the word ‘literature’. Immediately my mind is flooded with scenarios, characters and stories.”*

In its broadest sense, this word describes any kind of written or printed matter. More restrictively, it is writing considered as an art form, or a piece of writing deemed to have artistic or intellectual value.

**Jungle**

**Shalini Srinivasan:** *“I like the word ‘jungle’ – I could be speaking English or Hindi!”*

Many English words have origins on other languages. “*Jungle*” comes via Hindi from Sanskrit “*jangala”,*meaning “rough and/or arid terrain”.

**Sesquipedalian**

**Jamie Rumball:***“I like the word ‘sesquipedalian’, which is something that is characterised by using unnecessarily long-winded words. I also enjoy the irony.*

This word comes from the Latin “*sesquipedalia verba*”, which literally translates as “words of a foot and a half”!

**Smash factor**

**Andrew Geekie:** *“‘Smash factor’: a golfing term meaning the amount of energy transferred from the club head to the golf ball. The more smash factor the better!”*

Golfing champ Tiger Woods has a smash factor of about 1.48, while the average amateur player has a smash factor of 1.20.

**Asparagus**

**Anandi Vara:** *“I like the word ‘asparagus’ – it’s fun to say!”*

To eat asparagus in season in the UK, you’ll have to be quick – the season is very short, just a few weeks from the end of April to the summer solstice, 21 June.

**Good times**

**Jon Watkins:***“My favourite phrase is ‘good times’. I say it all the times when things are going well just to reaffirm that positive things are happening.”*

This phrase can stand alone, to emphasise that everything is ok or going well.