

# Word Coinage

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Did you know that some scholars estimate that William Shakespeare is responsible for adding over 1500 words and phrases to the English language? When he needed a new word to describe something, he simply made one up! The term for making up a word in a language is *coining*. Here are just a few of the words and phrases that Shakespeare coined: *arch-villain, eaten out of house and home, fashionable, full circle, lustrous, method in the madness, neither rhyme nor reason, one fell swoop, outbreak, sorry sight, unearthly, vulnerable*.

These three phrases were probably coined in the play *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*:

as a nose on a man's face (Act II, sc. i)

cruelhearted (Act II, sc. iii)

make a virtue of necessity (Act IV, sc. i)

Modern technology is responsible for the coining of many new words. Many coinages are combinations of two or more words to make the new word. Can you tell what words were combined to make the following words? Check your dictionary to find out.

blog

brunch

spork

webinar

## Try It!

Coin a word for one of the following definitions. (Or start with a definition of your own.)

- the noise that a can of soda makes when you open the tab,
- the look in someone's eyes when they realize they've said the wrong thing, or
- the phenomenon of trusting a GPS for directions even when you know the way yourself.

Write your word and your definition below. Try to use your new word three times today. Then ask an adult whether you can send your coined word and its definition to us at [www.summershakespeare.org](http://www.summershakespeare.org). We'll post some of our favorites on the website. Who knows? Maybe your word will end up in a dictionary some day!