



# LAKE SUPERIOR STATE UNIVERSITY

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## Lake Superior State University Unveils 2025 Banished Words List

(Sault Ste. Marie, MI) – A new year brings the promise of fresh beginnings, but it is also the perfect moment to reflect on the words and phrases that may have worn out their welcome. Lake Superior State University (LSSU) proudly reveals the 2025 edition of its Banished Words List, a quirky tradition that dates back to 1976, when former LSSU Public Relations Director Bill Rabe and his colleagues delighted word enthusiasts with the first “List of Words Banished from the Queen’s English for Mis-Use, Over-Use and General Uselessness”.

Each year, this lighthearted list shines a spotlight on words and terms that are overused, misused, or simply unnecessary. It offers a moment to laugh, pause, and consider how we can be more mindful of the language we use every day.

“Words matter! Old habits can be hard to break and we’re happy to serve as a resource for the court of public opinion on what should continue to be part of the English language and what needs to be put to rest,” says Lake Superior State President, Dr. David Travis.

LSSU received submissions from across the globe this year, including entries from Canada, Australia, Denmark, Germany, India, South Africa, and the United States. The fact that some of the same banished word suggestions came from different parts of the world underscores the universal struggle of dealing with challenging words and phrases.

Here are the 2025 words and phrases selected for banishment, along with the reasons they made the list:

### 1. Cringe

While “cringe” once packed a punch, it has now overstayed its welcome. Overuse has dulled its impact, and ironically, using it might now cause the very reaction it describes. “Saying someone ‘caused you to cringe’ or stating that ‘you cringed at something’ is a pretty easy and proper way to use the word,” writes Ash from Newton, Alabama. “Hearing someone say ‘someone is so cringe’ makes me cringe!”

## **2. Game Changer**

How many times can a game change before it is no longer recognizable? This phrase, often used to describe anything remotely innovative, is as tired as a well-worn cliché. “Nothing is a game changer if everything is a game changer,” writes Patrick of Washington, DC.

## **3. Era**

Unless you are Taylor Swift, it might be time to leave “era” behind. The term’s overuse has made every fleeting moment feel like it demands a historical marker. Leah of Holland, Michigan submits, “Thanks to the name of Taylor Swift’s tour, now there is an ‘era’ for everyone and everything! ‘He’s in his fatherhood era’, ‘She’s in her pottery-making era,’ etc., etc.. It’s overused and tiring.”

## **4. Dropped**

Once edgy and cool, “dropped” has become more of a letdown. Whether it is an album, a trend, or a product, this term has fallen flat. “Books, music, and all kinds of unnecessary things are currently being ‘dropped’ rather than introduced, released, or offered for sale. Banished for overuse, misuse, abuse, and hurting my head when all that “dropping” stuff lands on me!,” laments Susan of Littleton, CO.

## **5. IYKYK (If You Know, You Know)**

Internet slang and texting abbreviations are often fan-favorites of Banished Word submitters each year. Cryptic and exclusionary, this phrase offers little clarity or substance. If you know, you might agree it is time to let this one go. Amy from Redford, MI feels this phrase should go for being both irritating and nonsensical.

## **6. Sorry Not Sorry**

A half-hearted apology masquerading as bold honesty, this phrase feels as disingenuous as it sounds. Banished Word enthusiasts recommend just saying what you mean or in at least one case showing a little kindness. Sabrina from Wrenshall, MN writes, “It is really tiring to hear, and it is giving people another reason to be jerks to one another.”

## **7. Skibidi**

This viral word may have resonated with a younger crowd, but for many it is just noise. Agatha from Denmark explains, “Nobody cares about a Skibidi toilet, Skibidi fizz, or Skibidi Ohio fanum tax. At this point, nobody even knows what it means and it just annoys people.”

## 8. 100%

Is it possible to be over-enthusiastic about retiring the phrase “100%”? Absolutely! Its overuse has left no room for nuance or doubt. A phrase predominantly nominated for its overuse, some felt it was simply not applicable. “Since when should a percentage be used to describe your agreement in a conversation?” asked Stephen from Sudbury, Ontario.

## 9. Utilize

A classic offender, “utilize” proves that longer is not always better. Why complicate things when “use” works just fine? Everett from Cumby, Texas encourages readers to “Write like you talk,” and added, “Lord, I hope you don’t talk like that.”

## 10. Period

Yes, we understand your point—no need to verbally punctuate it. Overuse has turned this into a period we are ready to end. Theresa from Detroit, MI, recommends that we banish this word by putting it in a bottle and sending it out to sea.

As LSSU celebrates the 49th year of this playful tradition, the whimsical Banished Words List continues to highlight the dynamic nature of communication and how words and phrases strongly affect our everyday life.

To nominate a word or phrase for the 2026 Banished Words List, or to learn more about the tradition, visit [lssu.edu/traditions/banishedwords](https://lssu.edu/traditions/banishedwords).

**About Lake Superior State University:** The rich history of LSSU dates to 1946, when the university was founded in Sault Ste. Marie, the oldest city in Michigan (1668). On the site of the former U.S. Army’s Fort Brady, LSSU has grown to offer 1 graduate program, 35 bachelor's degree programs, 21 associate degree programs, and 10 certificate programs. Situated amidst the stunning backdrop of three Great Lakes, LSSU offers an exceptional environment for research, innovation, and real-world experiences. As one of Michigan's most affordable public universities, LSSU ensures accessibility to education, with 90 percent of full-time students receiving financial aid. LSSU actively participates in collegiate sports, competing in 11 NCAA Division II sports and Division I for men's hockey. The university has an undergraduate student body of approximately 1,600, with 82 percent hailing from Michigan, representing every county in the state. Notably, LSSU adopts a one-rate tuition system, regardless of the student's state or country of origin.

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