



English Language Teachers’ Summer Seminar 2026

Week 2: 3 – 8 August

Teaching a Changing Language: Aspects of Contemporary English

Tutor: Jon Hird

English today is evolving faster than ever before. From new grammar patterns and repurposed vocabulary to the influence of online culture, teen slang, and shifting social dynamics, the language is constantly being reshaped. For teachers, staying aware of these changes is not only fascinating but also essential for keeping classroom practice relevant and engaging.

This practical workshop explores the living, changing nature of contemporary English. Together, we will examine recent developments in grammar, discover how new words enter the language, and consider how online communication and cultural trends are transforming the ways English is used. At every stage, the focus will be on how teachers can integrate these insights into their practice—refreshing their own English, enhancing language awareness, and designing lessons that connect with learners’ real-world use of the language.

By the end of the week, you will not only feel more confident in navigating contemporary English but also have a toolkit of practical strategies for bringing today’s English into your classroom.

During this workshop you will:

- Explore key aspects of contemporary English and language change.
- Reflect on ways of integrating these changes into your teaching.
- Update your English and sharpen your language awareness.

<p>Session 1 Monday</p>	<p>Contemporary Grammar I</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent and ongoing changes in grammar. • A look at the notion of non-standard grammar and approaches to dealing with it in our teaching.
<p>Session 2 Tuesday</p>	<p>New Words and Vocabulary I</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The various sources of and trends in new and repurposed words in the English language. • A look at ideas for lessons and classroom activities for teaching new words and vocabulary.
<p>Session 3 Wednesday</p>	<p>Contemporary Grammar II</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A continuation of ‘Contemporary and non-standard grammar 1 • A look at other recent trends in grammar such as verbing and portmanteau-ing, the increasing use of the continuous aspect, the rise of the affix and at other variety and variation in grammar.
<p>Session 4 Thursday</p>	<p>New Words and Vocabulary II</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A continuation of ‘New words and vocabulary 1’. • A focus on teen-speak, buzz-speak and how gender and other issues are shaping the language.
<p>Session 5 Friday</p>	<p>Online-speak ☺</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the internet and social networking is changing the English we use. • Key features of online English and ideas for introducing them into our teaching.

Please note: This course schedule is intended to give an overview of the topics to be covered in each session; however, it may be liable to change at the tutor’s discretion.

SUGGESTED READING

There is no required preparatory reading for this course. However, you may wish to consult:

- Crystal, David, Numerous works on the *history of English, internet English, texting, slang, etc.*
- Leech, G., Hundt, M., Mair, C. and Smith N. (2009). *Change in Contemporary English: A Grammatical Study*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Hird, J. (2025). *Spoken Grammar*. Pavilion ELT.