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59 Quick Slang Phrases From The 1920s We Should Start Using Again

By [Nico Lang](#), September 25th 2013

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Get ready to “know your onions,” readers. If you’ve ever wanted to talk like characters from an old movie or the folks from *The Great Gatsby*, now’s your chance. For the twenties lovers among us, here are 59 of the era’s best slang phrases. Now you just have to practice talking really, really fast.



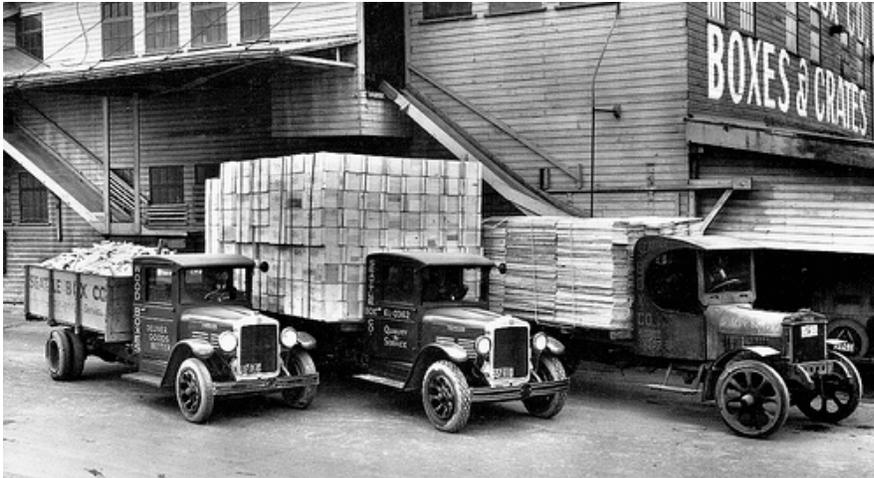
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1. **Ankle:** to walk
2. **“Applesauce!”:** “Horsefeathers!”
3. **“Bank’s closed!”:** what you tell someone to stop making out
4. **Bearcat:** a lively, spirited woman, possibly with a fiery streak
5. **Berries:** like “bee’s knees,” denotes that something is good, desirable or pleasing. “That sounds like berries to me!”



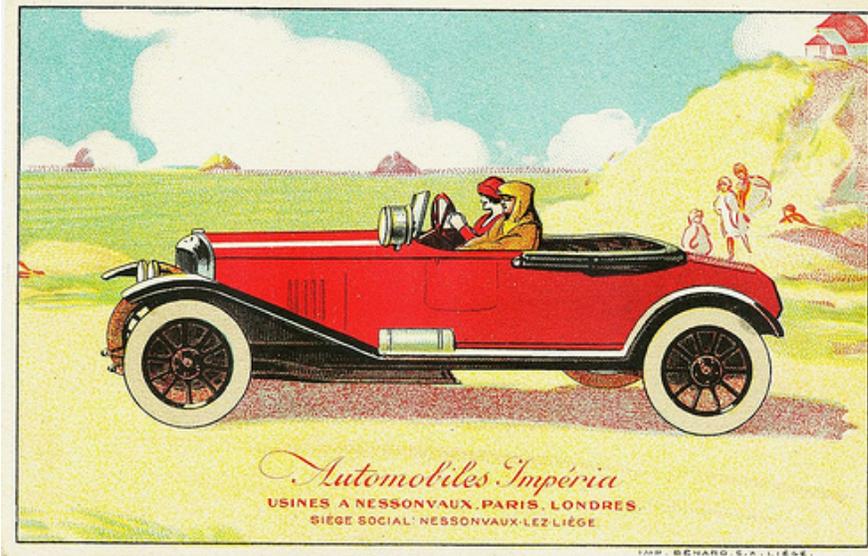
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6. **Bimbo**: refers to a macho man
7. **Bluenose**: term for a prude or individual deemed to be a killjoy
8. **Bubs**: a woman's boobs
9. **"Bushwa!"**: "Bullshit!"
10. **"Butt me!"**: "I would like a cigarette."
11. **Cancelled stamp**: a shy, lonely female, the type one would describe as a "wallflower"
12. **Cash**: a smooch
13. **Cake-eater**: in the 1920's refers to a "ladies' man"; later, slang for homosexual
14. **Cheaters**: Glasses or bifocals
15. **Choice bit of calico**: a desirable woman



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16. **Darb**: something deemed wonderful or splendid, similar to “berries”
17. **Dewdropper**: like lollygagger, a slacker who sits around all day and does nothing, often unemployed
18. **“Don’t take any wooden nickels!”**: “Don’t do anything dumb!”
19. **Dumb Dora**: an unintelligent woman
20. **Egg**: a person who leads an absurdly wealthy, extravagant lifestyle (see: Gatsby’s “West Egg”)
21. **Four-flusher**: someone who mooches off the money of others in order to feign wealth
22. **Gasper**: cigarette, “fag” (also of the 1920s)
23. **Giggle water**: liquor, alcoholic beverage
24. **“Go chase yourself!”**: “Get out of here!”
25. **Handcuff**: engagement ring
26. **Half-seas over**: shitfaced
27. **Hayburner**: a car with poor gas-mileage, a guzzler
28. **Hotsy-totsy**: attractive, pleasing to the eye
29. **Icy mitt**: rejection from the object of one’s affection, as in: “He got the icy mitt.”
30. **Iron one’s shoelaces**: to excuse oneself for the restroom



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31. **Jake:** okay, fine, as in “Don’t worry, everything’s jake.”
32. **Jorum of skee:** a swig of alcohol, particularly hard liquor
33. **Know your onions:** to know what’s up or what’s going on
34. **“Let’s blouse!”:** “Let’s blow this popsicle stand!”
35. **Manacle:** Wedding ring



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36. **Mazuma:** Dollar bills, cash, money
37. **Mrs. Grundy:** an uptight or very straight-laced individual
38. **Noodle juice:** tea.

39. **“Now you’re on the trolley!”**: “Now you’ve gotten it right!”

40. **Oliver Twist**: an extremely good dancer.



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41. **On a toot**: on a bender

42. **Ossified**: drunk

43. **Quilt**: an alcoholic beverage that keeps you warm

44. **Panther piss**: whiskey, particularly homemade whiskey

45. **Petting pantry**: a cinema or movie theatre

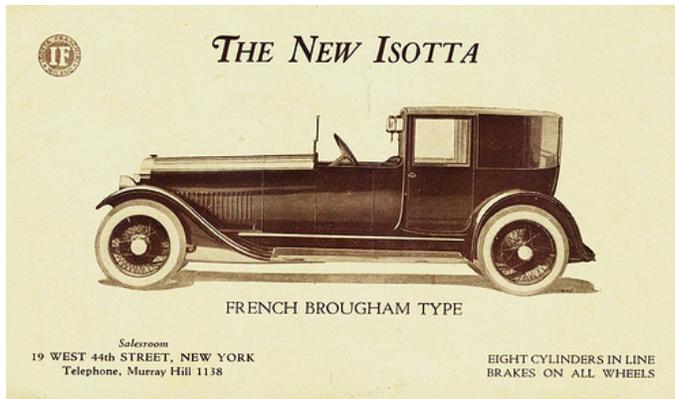
46. **“Phonus balonus!”**: “That’s nonsense!” or “That’s horseshit!”

47. **Pull a Daniel Boone**: to upchuck

48. **Reuben**: a hick or redneck

49. **Rub**: a dance party for college or high school students

50. **Sheba** – someone’s girlfriend; or a sexually desirable woman



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51. **Sinker**: a doughnut

52. **Sockdollager**: an event or action of great importance

53. **Spifflicated**: inebriated

54. **“Tell it to Sweeney!”**: what you say when you believe something to be untrue; “Tell it to someone who would buy that!”

55. **Tomato**: a woman



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56. **Upstage**: arrogant, snobby

57. **Whoopee**: to have a good time, “make whoopee”

58. **Wurp**: wet blanket or person seen as a buzzkill (see: Debbie Downer)

59. **Zozzled**: shitfaced