

TED TALKS TUESDAY



“Go Ahead, Make Up New Words!” by Erin McKean

Sample Outline:

Goal of Talk: Explain the ways new words are created and added to language

The Speaker

- Lexicographer = makes dictionaries
- Believes everyone should be creative with making new words!

Grammar

- Type 1: It's a rule you just know.
 - Like a law of nature (ex: law of gravity)
 - 1 wug, 2 wugs
- Type 2: Rules for manners
 - Like you don't wear hats inside

How to Make New Words

- 1. Steal from other languages (ex: ninja)
- 2. Compound: Put 2 words together (ex: bookworm)
- 3. Blend 2 words (ex: brunch = breakfast + lunch)
- 4. Functional shift (ex: friend as a noun, friend as a verb)
- 5. Back formation (ex: “editor” was used to create “edit”)
- 6. Use the 1st letters of something to become a word (ex: NASA)

Challenge: Create new words! New words get your meaning across, and anyone can do it!

TED TALKS TUESDAY



“Go Ahead, Make Up New Words!” by Erin McKean

Comprehension Questions:

Yes/No

1. Is the speaker an editor? (no)
2. Does the speaker say anyone who speaks English decides what a word means? (yes)
3. Does the speaker explain a type of grammar that has rules for manners? (yes)
4. Did the speaker use “bookworm” as an example of a word taken from another language? (no)
5. Did the speaker say that turning a noun into a verb is a way to create a new word? (yes)

Open-Ended

1. What is a lexicographer?
2. How many types of grammar does the speaker describe?
3. How many ways of creating new words does the speaker describe?
4. Can you give an example of a compound word?
5. Why does the author think new words should be created?