OVERVIEW

WHAT UP? Nobody says awesome anymore—except for, like 'RENTS and YOUNG'UNS. What used to be awesome BACK IN THE DAY is now PHAT. Nobody gets stoned on pot, either. They get LIT on ISM. Then they HOOK UP with a PLAYAH who SWEATS them and maybe they end up HITTIN'IT or WHATEVER. If they can’t GET NICE, they say LATER and they’re AUDI2000.

Language stand first among cultural characteristics. Of course, the youth subculture needs a language...and its slang will vary according to particular subcultures (surfers, punks, alternatives) as well as different locales (urban, suburban, West Coast, New York, mid-West, South, etc.). This article was written after some "research" of "adolese" spoken in Boston high school cafeterias and corridors.

- ah-ight (or: iiiiigh): All right. If: Yeah, ah-ight (with rolling eyes): Hell, no all about that: to favor. "Third Eye Blind? Yeah, I’m all about that."
- anyway: (with dismissive wave of the hand): No more on this subject. also: yeah, bye
- back in the day: prior to 1995 or whenever. also: old school
- beats: music. "What beats you got?" also: tunes
- benjamins: dollars, also change, chedda, ducats, flow, loot. "It’s all about the benjamins, yo."
- bitch out: yell at. also: scorch
- bombs: breasts. also cannons, tanks
- buggin’ out: overstressed
- butt: ugly. also busted (f female) booty, rugged
- chick flick: any movie dealing with feelings (i.e., "Titanic," "City of Angels," "Object of My Affection")
- chill: to relax. as adjective, comfortable. "I’m chill with that."
- chunk: fat person
- crib: house
- dawg: loyal friend. also: on dawgs: I swear to God.
- dick: unfair. "That was so dick." also: tight
- digits: phone number
- dip: (or honeydip): girlfriend. also Shorty, wiz. but as a verb: to skip school
- DL: short for down low: low-key, secret. "Keep this DL, OK?"
- dope: excellent. also: fly, killer, lethal
- drizzed: drunk. Also: gone, hammered, wasted
- 40s: 40-ounce bottles of malt liquor or beer
- 5-0: police. also: popo
- gank: steal. also: feef, gaffle, snaggle
- get play: see hook up
- gettin’ nice: something short of hard-core hook up. "I saw you gettin’ nice
with that shank at the all-night party."
- ghetto: low-class. "Those dudes are ghetto."
- grille: face. "This dork was gettin’ all up in my grille. I’m, like, be out!"
- grub: food. also: grubbin’: eating.
- hardcore: extreme. if sex: intercourse
- heated: angry. also: bent, salty
- hittin’ it: having sex. also: rukin’, slammin’, blessin’ it, stylin’ it, taggin’ it
- ‘hood rats: scrubs who drive hoopdees (a serious putdown). also: ruffnecks, scrappers, thugs
- hook up: to engage in semiserious foreplay. also: to provide with. "Could
you hook me up with lunch?"
- hoopdee: junky car. also: piece
- hot box: stolen car
- iled on: cursed out. also: humiliated in a sport, especially in basketball
- ism: marijuana. also: bud, Buddha, chronic, herbals, ish, nuggets, smoke, trees
- issues: personal problems. "Did you see that girl sketch out on me? She’s
got issues."
- it’s all good: that’s cool—it doesn’t matter. "Mickey D’s, Papa Gino’s,
BK...it’s all good."
- jacked: muscular. also: buff, cut, diesel, deeze, ripped. if female: manly
(or well-endowed)
- jet. leave. also: bounce, flex, outee, Audi 2000, "I’m ghost"
- kiss-up: brown-noser
- L: liquor store. "Who’s makin’ a run to the L?"
- later: goodbye. also: peace, out
- lit: stoned. also: baked, blazed, blitted, blunted, fried, lifted
- loser: nerd also: dork, waggle
- lynched: falsely blamed
- mad: very, much. "He’s making mad loot in that job."
- minute: a long while. "Where you been? I haven’t seen you in a minute."
- nasty: unattractive (in appearance or taste). "That chick is nasty, man."
- impressive (in performance). "That was a nasty dunk."
- out: gone. "I’m out." also: Be out: Get lost.
- Pced: turned over to parents by police (i.e., parental custody)
- peeps: group of friends, people. also: crew
- phat: superb, sublime also: sweet, nice, ill
- playah: promiscuous male; if female: shank
played: used, dumped. "You really got played by her, man."
point two (.2): quickly. "I’ll be back in point two."
props: respect. "You get mad props for that." also: stripes
puppies: beers. also: ponies, bombs, groggies
ragging: lying
random: odd. "They were some random kids at that party," or "That was a random comment."
’rents: parents
rubberneck: to eavesdrop
run: to buy liquor
scrub: ill-mannered, slovenly person. "He’s such a scrub."
shotgun: front passenger seat. also: shottie
skeev: nasty (East Boston only)
sketchy: weird, shady. also: sketch out: to act strangely
stain: useless, annoying person
step to: challenge. also: confront
stoners: druggies
sweat: to desire. "See that fly girl over there? She sweats me."
tool: someone who tries too hard to belong
tooled on: roughed up. also: dealt wit’, beaten down
24/7: all the time. "If I was him, I’d be taggin that 24/7."
whack: screwed up. autonym of dope
whassup?: hello. also: What up? and ’sup? can also mean: Excuse me? I didn’t understand you.
whatever: whatever
whip: car. "That Jeep is a phat whip." also: ride
word: the truth. word?: really "You were baked at the semi-formal? Word?
young’uns: middle-schoolers and other children

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. Do you agree that language is a key characteristic of culture and to subcultures?
2. Does communication to teenagers involve cross-cultural communication?
3. Does the lexicon above correspond any to the language spoken by young people you know?
4. How have you and other leaders responded to the special language of kids? What do young people want or expect leaders to do with their special language? What would be objectionable to them in terms of adult use of the terms?

IMPLICATIONS
1. Language, fashions, tattoos and piercings, music, and mores, are all sensitive parts of youthful subcultures. We need time and relationships, informants, sensitivity and cultural awareness, to understand and to respond appropriately.

2. Language and other subcultural manifestations are important signs showing us what is going on in the subculture and in people of that culture.

3. This reporter has done the kind of research youth workers must do in order to make our work relevant and effective.

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