《牛津词典》：2020年度词汇？太难选了

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**Oxford’s 2020 Word of the Year? It’s Too Hard to Isolate**

**牛津2020年度词汇？太难选了**

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This year, Oxford Languages, the publisher of the Oxford English Dictionary, has forgone the selection of a single word in favor of highlighting the coronavirus pandemic’s swift and sudden linguistic impact on English.

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The Word of the Year is based on usage evidence drawn from Oxford’s continually updated corpus of more than eleven billion words. The selection is meant “to reflect the ethos, mood or preoccupations” of the preceding year, while also having “lasting potential as a term of cultural significance.”

The 2020 report does highlight some zippy new coinages, like “Blursday”, “covidiots” and “doomscrolling”. But mostly, it underlines how the pandemic has utterly dominated public conversation, and given us a new collective vocabulary almost overnight.

译文：

牛津语言公司选出的年度词汇，通常是向英语千变万化的创新性，以及语言不断变迁的现实致敬，它会把目光聚焦于能彰显时代风貌的新词，例如“selfie（自拍）”、“vape（吸电子烟）”和“unfriend（解除好友关系）”。

今年，《牛津英语词典》的出版方——牛津语言公司，没有挑选单个词汇，而是着眼于新冠疫情给英语语言学带来的突如其来的快速冲击。

该公司的产品负责人凯瑟琳·康纳·马丁在一次采访中表示：“2020年，语言变化的程度之深、范围之广让我们团队非常震惊。新冠疫情这个大事件席卷全球，它从本质上改变了我们对今年发生的所有事情的语言表达。”

通过从牛津语料库获取的词汇真实使用情况，筛选出年度词汇，该语料库包含超过110亿单词，并仍在持续更新。选出的词汇旨在“反映该年度的社会风貌、社会氛围以及焦点事件”，还要具有“能产生持久文化影响力的潜力”。

2020年度报告中的确强调了一些活泼的候选新词，例如“Blursday（浑浑噩噩的一天）”、 “covidiots（新冠白痴）”和 “doomscrolling（末日恐慌者）”。但最关键的是，这份报告着重强调了，疫情多么彻底地占据了我们公共谈话的方方面面，并总能在一夜之间，就炮制出一系列的新词。

生词好句

1.isolate

英 [ˈaɪsəleɪt] 美 [ˈaɪsəleɪt]

vt. 使分离，剥离；隔离，孤立

2.Oxford Languages

牛津语言（牛津大学出版社旗下的一个品牌）

3.annual

英 [ˈænjuəl] 美 [ˈænjuəl]

adj. 一年一度的（occurring once every year）

拓展:

annual event 年度事件

4.A is a tribute to B

A是对B的致敬

拓展:

tribute UK /ˈtrɪbjuːt/ US /ˈtrɪbjuːt/

n. 爱意，敬意（something that you say, do or give in order to express your respect or admiration for someone）；（尤指旧时给其他部落的）贡品

Messi pays tribute to Maradona by wearing his old shirt.

梅西穿上马拉多纳的旧球衣向他致敬。

5.protean

英 [ˈprəʊtiːən, prəʊˈt-] 美 [ˈproʊtiən, proʊˈt-]

adj. 变化多端的；多才多艺的（able to keep changing or do many things ）

拓展:

源自proteus词，Proteus是古希腊的一位海神，普罗透斯。普罗透斯可以变化成各种各样的形状。

6.linguistic

英 [lɪŋˈɡwɪstɪk] 美 [lɪŋˈɡwɪstɪk]

adj. 语言的；语言学的

7.throw a spotlight on sth.

把聚光灯打到……上，凸显……

拓展:

spotlight UK /ˈspɒtlaɪt/ US /ˈspɑːtlaɪt/

n. 聚光灯

8.zeitgeisty

英 [ˈzaɪtˌɡaɪstɪ] 美 [ˈzaɪtˌɡaɪstɪ]

adj. 有特定历史时期特色的

拓展:

zeitgeisty films 有年代感的电影

源自德语zeitgeist一词，zeit表示时间，geist表示精神（spirit），所以指时代精神，时代风貌

9.neologism

英 [niˈɒlədʒɪzəm] 美 [niˈɑːlədʒɪzəm]

n. 新词，新表达（a new word or expression）；旧词新意

拓展:

词缀neo-表示新的（new）

logos在希腊语中表示词（word）

10.vape

英 [veɪp] 美 [veɪp]

vi. 吸电子烟

11.unfriend

英 [ʌnˈfrend] 美 [ʌnˈfrend]

vt. （社交媒体上）解除好友关系

12.forgo(forego)

英 [fɔːˈɡəʊ] 美 [fɔːrˈɡoʊ]

vt. 放弃，抛弃（go without）

拓展:

I had to forgo lunch.

我就不吃午饭了。

13.in favor of (doing) sth.

倾向于某事

14.highlight

英 [ˈhaɪlaɪt] 美 [ˈhaɪlaɪt]

vt. 强调，凸显

15.the impact on sth.

对……的冲击

16.what strikes someone as most distinctive is……

令某人非常震惊的是……

拓展:

What struck me as the most delicious of the dinner was......

那天晚上最让我惊讶的美食是......

strike vt. 震惊

distinctive UK /dɪˈstɪŋktɪv/ US /dɪˈstɪŋktɪv/

adj. 有特色的（having a special quality, character or appearance that is different and easy to recognize）

a distinctive voice 独特的嗓音

17.sheer

英 [ʃɪə] 美 [ʃɪr]

adj.（用于强调）完全的，十足的（nothing other than）

18.scale and scope of sth.

某物的深度和广度

拓展:

scale n. 程度（degree）

scope n. 范围（the extent of the area）

19.by its nature

本质上

20.usage evidence

使用例证，使用实例

21.corpus

英 [ˈkɔːpəs] 美 [ˈkɔːrpəs]

n. 语料库（a collection of written or spoken material in machine-readable form, assembled for the purpose of studying linguistic structures, frequencies, etc.）

22.sth. is meant to do sth.

……意在，做……的意图是

23.ethos

英 [ˈiːθɒs] 美 [ˈiːθɑːs, ˈiθoʊs]

n. （某种文化、时代、社会的）精神特质（the characteristic spirit of a culture, era, or community as manifested in its attitudes and aspirations）

24.mood

英 [muːd] 美 [muːd]

n. 情绪；社会情绪基调

25.preoccupation

英 [priːˌɒkjuˈpeɪʃn] 美 [priːˌɑːkjuˈpeɪʃn]

n. 全神贯注；使人全神贯注的事物

拓展:

main/chief/central preoccupation 主要关注的事物

His main preoccupation was how to feed his family.

他最关注的事是如何养活一大家子人。

26.lasting potential

持续的潜力

27.zippy

英 [ˈzɪpi] 美 [ˈzɪpi]

adj. 活跃的，活泼的（lively or fresh）

28.coinage

英 [ˈkɔɪnɪdʒ] 美 [ˈkɔɪnɪdʒ]

n. 新词（a newly invented word or phrase）

29.Blursday

英 [blɜːzdeɪ] 美 [blɜːrzdeɪ]

n. 浑浑噩噩的一天

拓展:

blur adj. 模糊不清的

30.covidiot

英 [kəʊˈvɪdiət] 美 [koʊˈvɪdiət]

n. 新冠白痴（指新冠肺炎疫情中到处走动散播病毒或过度囤货的人）

拓展:

为covid和idiot的复合词

31.doomscrolling

英 [du:m 'skrəʊlɪŋ] 美 [du:m 'skroʊlɪŋ]

n. 末日刷（一直在网上刷负面新闻，积累悲观情绪）

拓展:

doom n. 毁灭，世界末日

scrolling n. （在智能手机上）翻页

32.utterly

英 [ˈʌtəli] 美 [ˈʌtərli]

adv. 完全地（completely）

33.public conversation

公共话语

34.collective

英 [kəˈlektɪv] 美 [kəˈlektɪv]

adj. 集体的

原文：

Oxford’s 2020 Word of the Year? It’s Too Hard to Isolate

By Jennifer Schuessler

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Oxford Languages’s annual Word of the Year is usually a tribute to the protean creativity of English and the reality of constant linguistic change, throwing a spotlight on zeitgeisty neologisms like “selfie,” “vape” and “unfriend.”

Sure, it isn’t all lexicographic fun and frolic. 2017 saw the triumph of “toxic.” Last year, the winner was “climate emergency.”

But then came 2020, and you-know-what.

This year, Oxford Languages, the publisher of the Oxford English Dictionary, has forgone the selection of a single word in favor of highlighting the coronavirus pandemic’s swift and sudden linguistic impact on English.

“What struck the team as most distinctive in 2020 was the sheer scale and scope of change,” Katherine Connor Martin, the company’s head of product, said in an interview. “This event was experienced globally and by its nature changed the way we express every other thing that happened this year.”

The Word of the Year is based on usage evidence drawn from Oxford’s continually updated corpus of more than 11 billion words, gathered from news sources across the English-speaking world. The selection is meant “to reflect the ethos, mood or preoccupations” of the preceding year, while also having “lasting potential as a term of cultural significance.”

The 2020 report does highlight some zippy new coinages, like “Blursday” (which captures the way the week blends together), “covidiots” (you know who you are) and “doomscrolling” (who, me?). But mostly, it underlines how the pandemic has utterly dominated public conversation, and given us a new collective vocabulary almost overnight.

Take, for starters, “pandemic”: Use of the term increased more than 57,000 percent since last year. “Coronavirus” — a word coined in 1968, but until this year little used outside medical contexts — also surged, breaking away from run-of-the-mill topical words.

Back in January, it was neck-and-neck with “impeachment,” then surging because of the proceedings against President Trump. But by April, “coronavirus” had become one of the most common nouns in English, overtaking even stalwarts like “time.”

And that, Ms. Martin said, is highly unusual, perhaps even unprecedented (another word, by the way, whose usage soared, according to the report). Usually, when a topical word surges, she said, “it becomes more common relative to other topical words, but not relative to words we all say in English all the time.”

The Oxford report also highlights words and phrases relating to social justice, including “Black Lives Matter,” “Juneteenth,” “decolonize,” and “allyship,” some of which surged dramatically starting in late May, amid the protests following the killing of George Floyd in police custody. But those increases, while notable, were nowhere near those of pandemic-related terms.

And the pandemic may have actually reduced the frequency of other topical words. Last year, Oxford released an all-climate related short list, topped by “climate emergency.” But in March, as the pandemic took hold, the frequency of the word “climate” itself abruptly plunged by almost 50 percent.

(Usage has since rebounded a bit, and the report also flagged the emergence of some new climate-related terms, like “anthropause,” proposed in an article in the journal Nature in June to describe the sudden drastic reduction in human mobility, and its impact on the natural world.)

The pandemic turned once-obscure public-health terminology like “social distancing” or “flatten the curve” into household terms, and made words and phrases like “lockdown” and “stay-at-home” common. More subtly, it also altered usage patterns for ho-hum words like “remote” and “remotely.”

Previously, the most common collocates (as lexicographers call words that appear most frequently together) of “remote” were “village,” “island” and “control.” This year, Ms. Martin said, they were “learning,” “working” and “work force.”

The Oxford report also highlights increased use of “in-person,” often in retronyms, as lexicographers refer to a new term for an existing thing that distinguishes the original from a new variant. (For example: “land line” or “cloth diaper.”) In 2020, it became increasingly necessary to specify “in-person” voting, learning, worship and so on.

Most years, a lot of the fun of Oxford’s short list comes from portmanteaus, or blend words, like “mansplain” or “broflake.” But this year, even the neologisms were a bit downbeat. For every “covidiot” and “Blursday,” there was a “twindemic” (the concurrence of two epidemics) and an “infodemic” (an anxiety-arousing explosion of pandemic-related information).

So … is it fair to say that in 2020, even the words were, well, kind of terrible?

Ms. Martin declined to be so negative. But she confessed to some nostalgia for the days of playful, dare-you-to-put-it-in-the-dictionary coinages like “lumbersexual,” from Oxford’s 2015 shortlist.

She said she hoped 2021 would bring more “fun, positive words that didn’t seem to hold the weight of the world on their shoulders.”

2020The New York Times