

## It's not as bad as it sounds

Written by 'Grammar Guy' By Curtis Honeycutt Guest Columnist  
Friday, 13 January 2023 00:56

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I've been accused of acting my shoe size more times than I can count. I'm OK with that. Why is that, you ask? Kids have way more fun.

If we take ourselves too seriously, we'll turn into gargoyles — stiffly observing the world around us from our lofty perches. No thanks.

With that in mind, here are some words I've collected that only sound bad — they're actually completely innocent words (I promise!).

Let's start with the word you know about: masticate. All masticate means is to chew. There's no need to have your mind in the gutter when someone utters "masticate."

Have you ever seen an aholehole? Before you ask me if I kiss my mother with that mouth, let me assure you that an aholehole can be found swimming around the Hawaiian Islands. In fact, an aholehole is a species of flagtail fish. Aholeholes are silver and have big tails that kind of look like flags.

Speaking of fish, have you ever heard of a lumpsucker? Don't worry — you don't have to shield your children's eyes. In fact, a lumpsucker is another name for a lumpfish. These fish, which come in a few lumpy, frumpy varieties, can be found in an ocean near you.

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Fun fact: lumpsuckers have pelvic fins that act as suction discs, allowing them to attach themselves to other objects.

While those words were admittedly fishy, the next word will make you blush. In fact, it may replace “moist” as your new least-favorite word. The word is “invagination.”

Before you cancel your subscription, let me assure you that “invagination” is the act of putting a sword into its sheath. When you “invaginate” something, you put an object into a sheath or pocket. Don't look at me — I didn't make it up.

Have you ever experienced a fartlek? If you think this word doesn't pass the sniff test, then think again! Fartlek is a Swedish method of long-distance running training that involves variations in speed and intensity. A good fartlek allows you to get your second wind, so to speak.

If you're from the South, you've probably had a hoecake. And — no — hoecake isn't an insulting name; a hoecake is a thick cornmeal pancake! Also called johnnycakes, hoecakes are called “hoecakes” because they were originally made over campfires on the back of hoes.

Believe me in knowing there are plenty of words I wasn't able to tackle today, including “titter,” “diphthong,” “haboob” and “peniaphobia.” If you want to find out these definitions yourself, I suggest deleting your internet search history afterward.

***Curtis Honeycutt is an award-winning syndicated humor columnist and author. Connect with him at [curtishoneycutt.com](http://curtishoneycutt.com).***

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