Dictionary.com names ‘maxxing’ for 2026

LEVEL B2

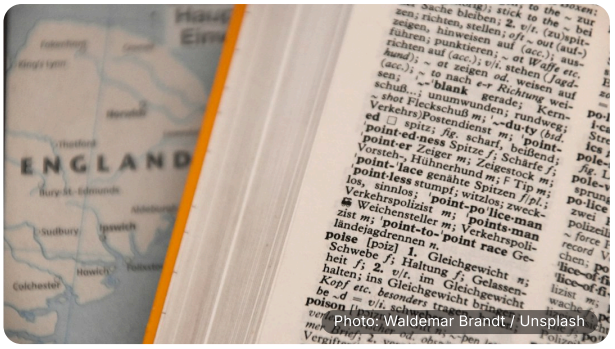


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I. WARM-UP

1. What recent slang word have you noticed online?
2. How do social media trends change your language, if at all?
3. Do you try to optimise parts of your life? Which ones?

II. KEY VOCABULARY

suffix
A group of letters added to the end of a word to change its meaning.

optimise
To make something as good, effective, or useful as possible.

trend
A general direction in which something is developing or changing.

lexicography
The work of making dictionaries and studying how words are used.

influencer
A person who affects what others buy, do, or think, especially online.

criteria
The standards or rules used to judge or choose something.

ironically
In a way that shows the opposite meaning for humour or effect.

affordability
How easy it is for people to pay for something without too much cost.

III. READING

Dictionary.com has chosen “maxxing” as its 2026 Word of the Year. Short for maximising, the suffix can stand alone or attach to other words to mean doing something to the fullest, or trying to optimise it.

The site said digital media used the term nearly 19 times more in August 2026 than the 2025 monthly average, reflecting a trend towards squeezing more from everything. Steve Johnson, the group’s director of lexicography, linked the rise of maxxing to a culture focused on results.

Gen Z influencers promote “proteinmaxxing”, “sleepmaxxing” and even extreme “looksmaxxing”. One creator, Clavicular, tracks routines aimed at criteria such as jawline, eyes and physique. Others use the word ironically, or to laugh at the pressure to improve.

The choice marks a shift from recent picks: “demure” two years ago and “67” last year. Other candidates included affordability, data centre, odyssey and the shortened “unc”. People have played with the idea for decades; in the 1990s, The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air rapped: “Chillin’ out, maxin’, relaxin’ all cool.”

Reading text adapted from reporting by **BBC News***: “‘Maxxing’ selected as Dictionary.com word of...”. Original article linked at theenglishwire.com.*

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Who selected "maxxing" as the 2026 Word of the Year?
2. What does adding the suffix "maxxing" to a word suggest?
3. How did usage of "maxxing" change in August 2026?
4. Give one example of a "maxxing" term used by influencers.
5. What other candidates were considered for the title?

V. DISCUSSION

1. Is maxxing positive, negative, or both? Why?
2. Which areas of life do people over-optimise today?
3. How fast do slang terms in your language rise and fade?
4. Which word would you choose as Word of the Year, and why?

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Future perfect continuous

Use this tense for an action continuing up to a future point: will have been + verb-ing. Common with by + time and for/since to show duration.

"By next year, influencers **will have been promoting** *'sleepmaxxing'."*

"By then, people **will have been joking** *about 'maxxing' for years."*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete each sentence with the future perfect continuous form.

1. Next year, Gen Z (discuss) ___ 'proteinmaxxing' for months. _____
2. In a few weeks, creators (coin) ___ 'maxxing' tags for months. _____
3. By then, one influencer (track) ___ routines daily for a year. _____
4. By next August, digital media (use) ___ the term for months. _____
5. By that point, platforms (feature) ___ 'maxxing' posts for months. _____

Teacher's Notes

TEACHERS ONLY

These notes are designed to help you get the most out of this lesson. Please do not share this page with students.

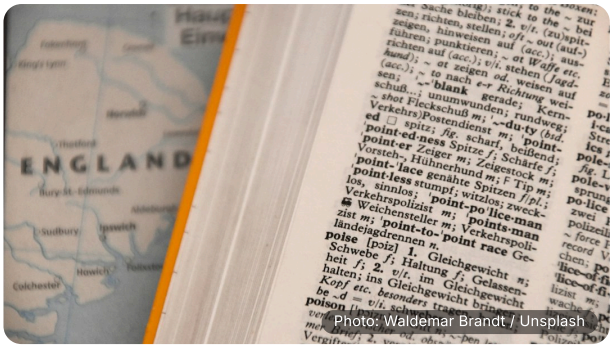


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I. LESSON GUIDE

- Timing: 8–10 minutes warm-up, 8–10 minutes vocabulary, 12–15 minutes reading and comprehension, 8–10 minutes grammar, 10 minutes discussion.
- Pre-teach or check suffix, optimise, influencer, lexicography, criteria, ironically, affordability, trend. Highlight British spelling (optimise).
- Run a jigsaw reading: in pairs, students underline examples, numbers, and names, then regroup to compare. No sensitive content is expected, but invite students to discuss the trend rather than judging individuals.
- Differentiate: stronger students research one extra example of a maxxing term after class; others match examples to meanings from the text before answering questions.

II. DISCUSSION FACILITATION TIPS

1. Expect many to say "both". After a quick show of hands, pair opposites and ask each pair for one concrete benefit and one risk, using examples from fitness, sleep or looks.
2. List three domains on the board (health, work/study, social). Put students in trios; each must give one upside and one downside for a different domain.
3. Have students name one slang term and estimate how long it stayed popular. If answers stall, prompt with local examples and ask what killed the trend.
4. Give two minutes to choose a word, write a one-line definition and a sample sentence. Then run a quick class vote and ask the winner to explain their choice.

III. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Writing: Write a 70–80 word explainer for a school blog: define "maxxing" and include two examples from the text.

Debate: In groups as Dictionary.com's panel, choose a Word of the Year from the shortlist and present a 60-second defence.

IV. ANSWER KEY OVERVIEW

Comprehension questions: short factual answers from the text.

Grammar exercise: Future perfect continuous

Discussion: open-ended. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

Answer Key

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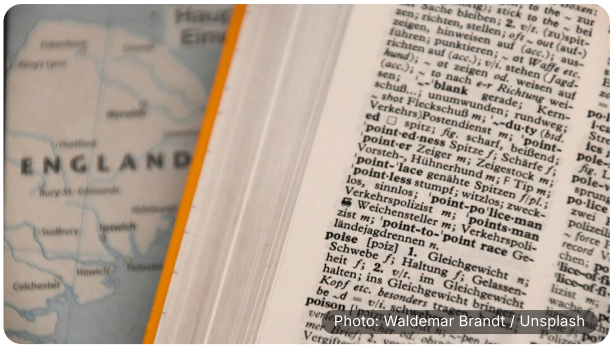


Photo: Waldemar Brandt / Unsplash

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Who selected "maxxing" as the 2026 Word of the Year?
   Dictionary.com.
2. What does adding the suffix "maxxing" to a word suggest?
   That someone is doing or optimising something to the fullest.
3. How did usage of "maxxing" change in August 2026?
   It was used nearly 19 times more than the 2025 monthly average.
4. Give one example of a "maxxing" term used by influencers.
   Proteinmaxxing, sleepmaxxing or looksmaxxing.
5. What other candidates were considered for the title?
   Affordability, data centre, odyssey and the shortened "unc".

V. DISCUSSION

Open answers. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete each sentence with the future perfect continuous form.

1. Next year, Gen Z ___ 'proteinmaxxing' for months. **will have been discussing**
2. In a few weeks, creators ___ 'maxxing' tags for months. **will have been coining**
3. By then, one influencer ___ routines daily for a year. **will have been tracking**
4. By next August, digital media ___ the term for months. **will have been using**
5. By that point, platforms ___ 'maxxing' posts for months. **will have been featuring**

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Key point: Use this tense for an action continuing up to a future point: will have been + verb-ing. Common with by + time and for/since to show duration. (Examples constructed.)

"By next year, influencers **will have been promoting** *'sleepmaxxing'."*

"By then, people **will have been joking** *about 'maxxing' for years."*