

1950's Slang

**Host A
Mystery
Party**

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A guide to the casual language of
The Fabulous Fifties.

-A-

Actor - Show-off

Agitate the Gravel - To leave (hot-rodders)

Ankle-biter - A child

Ape Used with go - to explode or be really mad

Are you writing a book? - You're asking too many questions

-B-

Back seat bingo - Necking in a car

Bad news - Depressing person

Bash - Great party

Bent eight - a V-8 engine (hot-rodders)

Big Daddy - An older person

Big tickle - Really funny

Bit - An act

Blast - A good time

Blow off - To defeat in a race (hot-rodders)

Bobbed - Shortened

Boss - Great

Bread - Money

Bug - "You bug me" - to bother

Burn rubber - To accelerate hard and fast (hot-rodders)

-C-

Cast an eyeball - To look

Cat - A hip person (Beats)

Chariot - Car (Beats)

Cherry - Originally, an unaltered car. Later, anything attractive (hot-rodders, originally)

Chrome-plated - Dressed up (hot-rodders, originally)

Circled - Married

Classy chassis - Great body

Cloud 9 - Really happy

Clutched - Rejected

Clyde - Term of address, usually for a normal person (Beats)

Cook, cookin' - Doing it well

Cool - Indefinable quality that makes something or someone extraordinary

Cool it - Relax, settle down

Cooties - Imaginary infestations of the truly un-cool

Cranked - Excited (Beats)

Crazy - "Like crazy,man" Implies an especially good thing

Cream - Originally, to dent a car. Later, to badly damage (hot-rodders, originally)

Cruisin' for a bruise - Looking for trouble

Cube - A normal person

Cut the gas - Be quiet!

Cut out - Leave

-D-

Daddy-O - Term of address (Beats)

D.D.T. - (Drop Dead Twice) Response: What, and look like you?

Deuce - A 1932 Ford (hot-rodders)

Dibs - A claim - as in "got dibs" on that seat

Dig - To understand; to approve

Dolly - Cute girl

Don't have a cow - Don't get so excited

Drag (hot-rodders) - A short car race; (Beats) A bore

Duck Butt or D.A. - Hairstyle of greasers where hair in back is combed to the middle, then with end of comb, make a middle part.

-E-

Earthbound - Reliable

Epistle - Letter

Eyeball - Look around

-F-

Fake Out - A bad date

Fast - Someone who was promiscuous

Fat City - A great thing or place; Happy

Fire Up - Start your engine (hot-rodders)

Flat out - Fast as you can

Flat-top - Men's hairstyle. A crewcut which is flat across the top

Flick - A movie

Flip - To get very excited

Flip-top - A convertible car

Floor it - Push the accelerator to the floor (hot-rodders)

Fracture - To amuse

Fream - Someone who doesn't fit in

Frosted - Angry

-G-

Get Bent! - Disparaging remark as in "drop dead"

Get with it - Understand

Gig - Work, job (Beats)

Go ape - Get very excited

Go for pinks - A drag race where the stakes are the car's pink slip (hot-rodders)

Goof - Someone who makes mistakes

Goopy - Messy

Goose it - Accelerate the car fully (hot-rodders)

Greaser - A guy with tons of grease in his hair, which later came to describe an entire group of people. Yes, John Travolta in Grease.

Grody - Sloppy, messy or dirty

-H-

Hang - As in "hang out" which means to do very little

Heat - Police (Beats)

Hep - With it, cool. Someone who knows the situation.

Hip - Someone who is cool, in the know. Very good.

Hipster - Same as above

Hopped up - A car modified for speed (hot-rodders)

Horn - Telephone

Hottie - A very fast car (hot-rodders)

-I-

Illuminations - Good ideas, thoughts

In orbit - In the know

-J-

Jacked Up - Car with raised rear end. (hot-rodders)

Jacketed - Going steady

Jelly Roll - Men's hair combed up and forward on both sides, brought together in the middle of the forehead.

Jets - Smarts, brains

-K-

Kick - A fun or good thing; Also, a fad

Kill - To really impress

Knuckle sandwich - A fist in the face

Kookie - Nuts, in the nicest possible way

-L-

Later - Also later, gator Goodbye. See ya later, alligator. Response: after while crocodile.

Lay a patch To - accelerate so rapidly that you leave a patch of rubber on the road.

Lay on - To give (Beats)

Lighter - A crew cut

Like crazy; like wow - Really good, better than cool

-M-

Machine - A car (hot-rodders)

Made in the shade - Success guaranteed

Make out - A kissing session

Make the scene - To attend an event or activity

Meanwhile, back at the ranch - From TV Westerns. Usually used to get a storyteller back on track.

Mirror warmer - A piece of pastel fabric (often cashmere) tied around the rear view mirror. A 50s version of the Medieval wearing your lady's colors.

Most - A in "the most" - high praise usually of the opposite sex

-N-

Nerd - Same as now. Bill Gates without the money.

Nest - A hair-do

Nod - Drift off to sleep

Nosebleed - As in hey, nosebleed - hey, stupid. Not a compliment!

No sweat - No problem

Nowhere - Opposite of cool. Nowheresville was a boring, bad place to be. (Beats)

Nuggets - Loose change

-O-

Odd ball - Someone a bit off the norm

Off the line - Start of a drag race (hot-rodders)

On the stick - Pulled together. Bright, prepared...

-P-

Pad - Home

Paper shaker - Cheerleader or Pom Pom girl

Party pooper - No fun at all

Passion Pit - Drive-in movie theatre

Peepers - Glasses

Pile up Z's - Get some sleep

Pooper - No fun at all

Pop the Clutch - Release the clutch pedal quickly so as to get a fast start

Pound - Beat up

Punch it - Step on the gas (hot-rodders)

Put down - To say bad things about someone

-R-

Radioactive - Very popular

Rag Top - A convertible car

Rap - To tattle on someone (Beats)

Rattle your cage - Get upset

Raunchy - Messy or gross in some other way

Razz my berries - Excite or impress me

Real gone - Very much in love. Also unstable. Hmm, there's a difference?

Reds - The Communists

Righto - Okay

Rock - A diamond

Rocket - A car (hot-rodders)

Rod - A car (hot-rodders)

Royal shaft - Badly or unfairly treated

-S-

Scream - Go fast

Screamer - A hot rod

Shot down - Failed

Shuck, shuckster - A deceiver, liar or cheat

Sides - Vinyl records

Sing - To tattle or inform on someone (Beats)

Sounds - Music

Souped up - A car modified to go fast

Spaz - Someone who is uncoordinated. A clutz.

Split - Leave

Square - A regular, normal person. A conformist.

Stacked - A woman with large er, ah...you know, well endowed.

Stack up - To wreck a car (hotrodder)

Submarine races - While waiting for the submarines to race, which might take quite awhile :>) couples found creative ways of killing the time.

Subterranean - A hipster. Used by both Ginsberg and Kerouac. (Beats)

-T-

Tank - A large sedan (usually driven by parents)

Tear ass - Drive (or go) very fast

That's close - Something wrong or not true

Think Fast - Usually said right before someone threw something at you

Threads - Clothes

Tight - Good friends

Total - To completely destroy, most often in reference to a car

-U-

Unreal - Exceptional

-W-

Wail - Go fast

Wazoo - Your rear end

Weed - A cigarette

Wet rag - Someone who's just no fun

Word from the bird - The truth (Beats)

What's buzzin, cuzzin - What's new?

What's you tale, nightingale - What's the story?

Wheelie - Left the car's front wheels off the ground by rapid acceleration