

The Invitational Week 125: Our last gasp for 'air quotes'

For the ninth and final time, our inside-the-word game. Plus new meanings for old abbreviations.

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Hello. All good things must come to an end, particularly “air quotes,” which, by their very nature, come to an end. They start upside down, and end right side up. Air quotes have been one of our favorite contests because of their elegance and simplicity: Take any word or expression, place a portion of it in “air quotes,” and reinterpret it. We’ve been doing it for nearly 20 years.

Like this one, just suggested by Loser Jon Gearhart:

Honey“moo”n: The honey“moo”n was over when Frank said, “I guess it wasn’t just the too-tight wedding dress.”

Or this classic by Brendan Beary:

Su“perv”isor: The boss who believes too strongly in “hands-on management.”

Or this, by Jeff Shirley: **Cont“race”ption:** The rush to get the condom package open before the mood wilts.

We are officially retiring this contest because unlike other Invitational staples, it tends to be slowly, inexorably suicidal. When we invite you to [“breed” two racehorse names](#) every year to name a foal, we’re using a different crop of 3-year-olds every spring. Same thing when we ask you over and over to [reinterpret headlines](#) from that week’s news. But the air quotes, we’re asking you to do *the same thing* over and over — eight times already — and of course we don’t want to reuse the jokes that have already been made. Hundreds and hundreds of them.

We figure it’s got one more shot at being great. We weep at its demise but only in the sense that we wept when Betty White died. She lived a long, brilliant life and gave us much joy, including this magnificent commercial.

For Invitational Week 125: Highlight part of a word, name or short phrase in “air quotes” to give the word a new meaning or description, as in the examples above and the many links below. You can’t change the spelling of the original but may tinker with capitalization, punctuation, and spacing.

For further Guidance & Inspiration™, here are links to text files (no paywall) of our past results, at least the ones we could find in the Losers’ own [absurdly comprehensive archives](#). At each link, scroll down past that week’s new contest.

Results of Week 336, spread over two weeks: [Here](#) and [here](#)
[Week 405](#), 2001

[Week 826](#), 2009 (more winners [here](#))

[Week 1134](#), 2015

[Week 1280](#), 2018

[Week 1355](#), 2019

[Week 1359](#), 2019 (a variation where the air quote had to span two words)

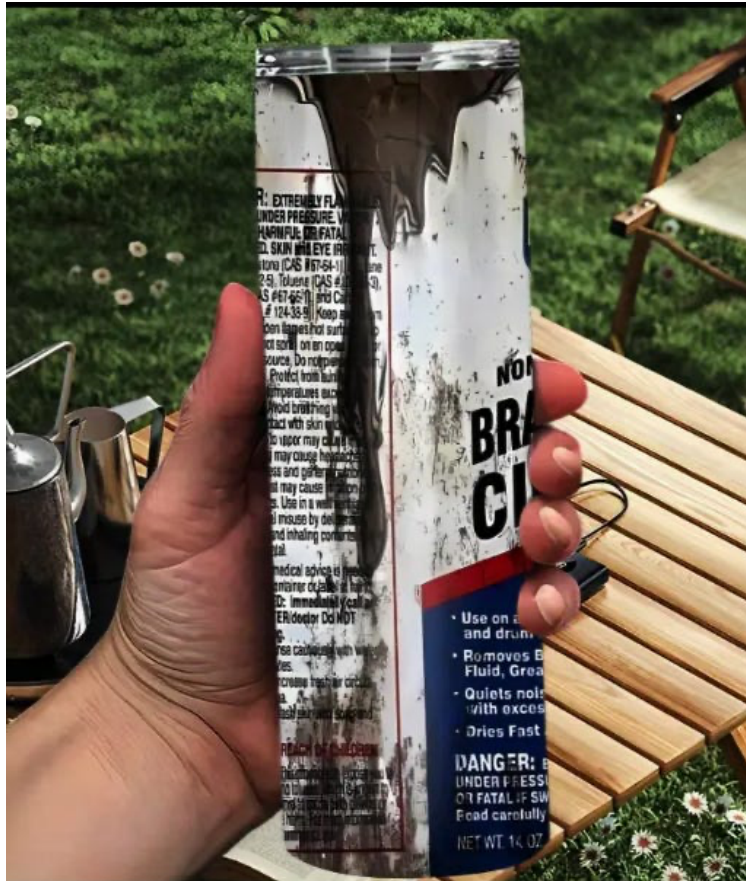
[Week 1511](#), 2022

Formatting this week: Standard drill — begin each entry with your word, and include quotation marks around the “inside word.” And as usual, write each of your entries as a separate single line; i.e., don’t push Enter until the end of each entry.

[Click here for this week’s entry form](#), or go to tinyURL.com/inv-form-125. As usual, you may submit up to 25 entries for this week’s contest, preferably all on the same form.

Deadline is Saturday, May 31, at 9 p.m. ET. Results will run here in The Gene Pool on Thursday, June 5.

The winner gets a **nifty 20-ounce travel mug disguised as a dirty can of auto brake cleaning fluid**. When you’re getting your car’s oil changed, be sure to sip conspicuously from it, making slurpy yum-yum sounds.



You'll run like a charm: This week's prize mug, complete with pull-out straw.

This Sunday: Remote surveillance of Losers!

The 29th (!!) annual Flushies “banquet”/awards/songfest presented by Invitational Losers and Hangers-On will go down Sunday afternoon, May 25, at Mount Vermin, home of the Empress. And around 2 p.m. ET, they'll turn on a Zoom feed for the awards and song parody singalong. [Here's the Zoom link.](#)

Laugh Is Short: Re-translated abbreviations from Week 123

In [Week 123](#) we challenged you to create a new meaning for an existing acronym or initialism. If you don't know what an abbreviation below really means, click on the link provided for each entry.

Third runner-up:

HTTP: Hyper-thin TP, the one-ply. “We asked him to get the Charmin, but cheapo Dad got the HTTP again.” (*Jesse Frankovich, Laingsburg, Mich.*)

Second runner-up:

D.C.: Democracy’s Crypt (*Sam Mertens, Silver Spring, Md.*)

First runner-up:

CPAC: Caucasians Planning a Coup. (*Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore*)

And the winner of the Shakespeare finger puppet/magnet:

FUBAR: The exam you have to pass to become a divorce lawyer. (*Jesse Frankovich*)

Letter Bombs: Honorable mentions

AARP: Agreeing to Accept Rectal Probes. (Getting older isn’t always glamorous.) (*Leif Picoult, Rockville, Md., who fairly recently turned Colonoscopy years old*)

ASAP: Anytime, Sometime, Absolutely, Perhaps (*Roy Ashley, Washington, D.C.*)

ATC: Air Telepathic Control — recently implemented at Newark. (*Steve Smith, Potomac, Md.*)

CAPTCHA (*Completely Automated Public Turing test to tell Computers and Humans Apart*): Can A Person Tell Cars and Houses Apart? (*Jonathan Jensen*)

CBP: Catching Brown People (*Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.*)

DACA: Decisions Accelerated for Caucasian Afrikaners (*Steve Smith, Potomac, Md.*)

DEI: Donald Ended It (*Neil Kurland, Elkridge, Md.*)

DIY: Done Incorrectly? Yes. (*Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.*)

DOGE: Degrading Our General Effectiveness (*Duncan Stevens*)

DOGE: Destroying Our Government Everywhere (*Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.*)

DOGE: Doofuses Overseeing Government Enshittification (*Chris Doyle*)

EFT: Emoluments For Trump. “Please specify ‘EFT’ on your tax payment.” (*Kevin Dopart, Naxos, Greece*)

FAFSA: Frustrating As Fuck. Sheer Agony! (*Jonathan Jensen*)

FEMA: Former Emergency Management Agency (*Jonathan Jensen*)

FTE: Federally Terminated Expertise (*Kevin Dopart*)

FUBAR: Fucked Up by a Republican (*Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.*)

HBCU: Habeas Corpus Undone. “HBCU: A cause the Administration supports fervently.” (*Stephen Dudzik, Olney, Md.*)

HHS: Hastening Human Sickness (*Mark Raffman*)

IRS: Invasive Rectal Strip-search. “You can count on the IRS to find that hidden cash.” (*Jon Gearhart, Des Moines*)

MAHA: Measles Are Here Again! (*Chris Doyle*)

NSAID (*Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs*): Ninety-nine Side-effects Ascertained (Including Death). “If you experience death, stop taking this medication and contact your physician.” (*Jon Gearhart*)

OPS (*On-base plus slugging*): Obnoxiously Pedantic Statistic (*Jon Ketzner, Cumberland, Md.*)

RFK Jr.: Road-Fucking-Kill!? Jesus, really? (*Sam Mertens*)

RIF: Random Idiotic Firings (*Duncan Stevens*)

ROFL: Rule of Law. “Mr. President, are you going to fairly and consistently uphold the ROFL?” *ROFL* (*Jesse Frankovich*)

SCIF (*sensitive compartmented information facility*): Signal Chat Is Fine (*Stephen Dudzik*)

SCOTUS: Selling Country Out To Ugly-ass Sovereign (*Jon Gearhart*)

SMH: Shit My Hanes (*Sam Mertens*)

TTYL: Talk To Yourself, Lardass (*Frank Osen*)

UFO: Up-Fanny Object. “My proctologist says he’s seen some pretty unbelievable UFOs.” (*Jesse Frankovich*)

WYSIWYG: Wash Your Strawberries — I Whizzed in Your Garden (*Jon Gearhart*)

The headline “Laugh Is Short” is by Jesse Frankovich; Jesse also wrote the honorable-mentions subhead.

Still running — deadline Saturday, May 24, at 9 p.m. ET: Our “what if” contest. Click below for details.