



HARVARD Kennedy School
JOHN F. KENNEDY SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT

THE NEWCOMERS' GLOSSARY

A Compendium of
Acronyms, Slang, Jargon and Idioms
For:

U.S. Government/Politics/The Press
The Kennedy School
Harvard
Cambridge/Boston
and
General Culture

Office of Teaching Support
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Compiled by
Kathleen Fox
Assistant Dean for Teaching Support
With help from many others!

Office of Teaching Support
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The Newcomer's Glossary

Webster's Dictionary defines slang as "language peculiar to a particular group." If you find yourself confused by the "alphabet soup" ("alphabet soup" = lots of abbreviations) of terms at the HKS, perhaps this miscellaneous collection of idioms, acronyms, abbreviations, jargon and slang will help.

The list is somewhat arbitrary, and by no means complete. The editor has attempted to include slang, acronyms and jargon from five categories:

- The world or U.S. related to government, politics, and the press
- HKS
- Harvard
- Boston/Cambridge
- Some general American slang

Since a complete dictionary of American jargon and slang could fill many volumes, the test for its inclusion on this list is, (1) is the phrase relevant to the HKS community, and (2) is the phrase *really* common?

No doubt some of these definitions are not quite on the mark ("on the mark" = on target, accurate). The editor has made arbitrary executive decisions about how to list each entry and is relying on the HKS students, faculty and staff to correct her misconceptions and typos. ("Typo" = a keyboard mistake in typing).

Also included are a few URLs (URL = Universal Resource Locator on the Internet) useful for understanding American politics, public policy, jargon and slang. Please send your comments, edits, and suggestions for inclusion in future editions via email to Kathleen Fox

Additional Websites for Politics, Policy, and American Slang

Below are some useful web sites for finding out more about language, American jargon and slang, or about politics and government in America. There are many, many more sites, but this may help you get going:

http://hcl.harvard.edu/libraries/lamont/harvard_lingo.html

This site is maintained by the Lamont Library at Harvard, and is a compendium of "lingo" (idiomatic language) specific to Harvard University. (If you find this link does not work go to the Lamont Library website of Harvard University and search for "Harvard Lingo Revealed"

<http://dictionary.reference.com/translate/text.html>

This site translates from English into several other languages and visa versa. Watch out, though. The translations are literal. If you are looking for a translation of an idiom this can produce some very funny results!

<http://www.eslcafe.com/idioms/>

Idiom site hosted by Rice University

<http://www.jonstorm.com/glossary/>

Computer terms

<http://www.languagemonitor.com>

The Global Language Monitor

Are We Missing Something?

Have a word or phrase you think should be included in the Newcomers Glossary? Enter your submission by sending an email to Kathleen.Fox@hks.harvard.edu. We're looking for any and all acronyms, jargon, idioms, and slang having to do with US Government, Politics, The Press, HKS, Harvard, Cambridge, and Boston.

PHRASE	MEANING
101, as in "Driving 101"	Elementary and obvious information, after the way introductory level courses are often numbered as "101"
401(K)	Private retirement saving plan
41 and 43	Refers to the 41st and 43rd Presidents of the U.S.: No. 41 is Herbert Walker Bush, No. 43 is his son, George W. Bush
AA	Administrative Assistant
ABC	American Broadcasting Company
ABM	Antiballistic missile
ABS	Absent (on HKS Student Transcript of Grades)
Access	Microsoft Access, a relational database management system
Ace, to	To get a perfect score (100%)
ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union
Ad Board	Administrative Board. Addresses student disciplinary issues at the HKS
ADB	Asian Development Bank
Add/Drop Petition	Form used to add or drop a course from your course program
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
Affirmative Action	Programs to increase the number of minorities(underrepresented people)in jobs, schools
AFL-CIO	American Federation of Labor/Council of Industrial Organizations
Afro-Am	African-American studies
AFS	American Field Service (high school student exchange program)
AG	Attorney General
AG	Department of Agriculture
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AID	U.S. State Department Agency for International Development
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
Aisle	In the U.S. legislature divides the Republicans (on the right) and the Democrats (on the left)
Alphabet soup	Lots of acronyms
AMEX	American Express (charge card)
ANC	African National Congress
AOL	America on Line - Internet Service Provider
AP	Associated Press
API	Analysis of Policies and Institutions course subject area at HKS
APPAM	Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management
Apportionment	Process of changing legislative district lines after the census each decade
APSA	Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs
ASAP	As soon as possible
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AT&T	American Telephone and Telegraph Co
Athens of America	Boston
Authorizing Environment	Basis of one's authority
Axis of Evil	President George W. Bush's term for Iran, Iraq and North Korea
AY	Academic Year
B School	Harvard Business School, Harvard
B.U.	Boston University, not to be confused with Boston College
Back Bay	Boston neighborhood between the Charles River/Turnpike, and the Boston Garden/Kenmore Sq.
Back Channel	Unofficial means of communication
Backslash	The backward leaning short line (\) - used in local computer drive designations
Backup	to make a copy of your information on a floppy diskette or some other storage device
Bailout	1) financial rescue of an institution; 2) to leave abruptly

PHRASE	MEANING
Bandwagon	Popular movement
Bang for the buck	To get the most out of an expenditure
BATF	Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms
Bay Area	San Francisco, California metropolitan area
BC	Boston College (not to be confused with Boston University)
BCSIA	Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs
Beacon Hill	Very old Boston neighborhood near Statehouse; synonym for State House
Beantown	Nickname for Boston (nickname = affectionate name)
Bear Market	Term for stock market going down
Beat a dead horse	To belabor a point
Beat around the bush, to	To be indirect
Beeper	Personal electronic device for paging someone
Behind closed doors	In secret
Bells and whistles	Enhancements, embellishments, added features
Belly up	Dead
Belly up to the bar	Come stand next to the bar to get your drink
Beltway bandits	Consulting firms, individuals in the Washington DC area
Beltway, the	Highway circumventing Washington, D.C.
Benchmark, to	To compare. A "benchmark" is the accepted best standard
Between a rock and a hard place	In a bad situation where all choices are equally difficult
BGP	Business and Government Policy course subject area
Bible Belt	Geographical area in Southern U.S. with particularly strong Christian Churches
Big Apple	New York City
Big Blue	International Business Machines Company (IBM). Refers to the company logo color
Big Board	New York Stock Exchange
Big Dig	The highway project to submerge the Expressway in Boston
Big Easy	New Orleans
Bill	A piece of legislation
Bingo!	Right, correct, you've got it. From the game, "Bingo"
Black Sheep	A person in disfavor
Blacklist	A list of people who have been disapproved of, or barred from participation in something
Blog	on line diary offering opinions, observations, comment & criticism
Blogosphere	Refers to online blogs as a whole.
Blow-off	To casually choose not to do something
Blue Cross	Major health insurance company
Blue states, red states	In American politics "blue" states are thought to be predominantly Democrat and "red" states are thought to be predominately Republican
Bomb, to	To fail at something, as in an exam
Bottom Line	1) the last line of the budget, 2) a summary of the situation in general
Bounce Check, to	To write a check with no funds to cover it
Box, your	Student mailbox
Brainstorm	Generate ideas
Brass tacks, get down to	Get to the most important, basics
Break the bank,	To be expensive
Brookings Institution	A private, nonprofit, independent public policy research organization in Washington, D.C.
Brown Bag	Lunch-time discussion where you bring your own lunch
Browser	A program for accessing the Internet such as Netscape or Internet Explorer
Bruins	Boston's professional hockey team
BTW	By The Way
Bubble (stock market, housing)	Inflated price about to fall dramatically

PHRASE	MEANING
Buck Stops Here, the	Responsibility rests here (originated with Pres. Truman)
Budget Crunch	Trying to maintain a balanced budget when funds are low
Bug	A technical problem with a computer program
Bull Market	Term for stock market going up
Bully pulpit	Phrase used by Theodore Roosevelt to mean a forum, platform, for promoting political agenda
Burn the Midnight Oil	Stay up late or all night working or studying
Burnout	Exhaustion, to overwork one's self
BYO	Bring Your Own (alcohol, lunch, etc)
CA	Course Assistant
CA/TF	Course Assistant/Teaching Fellow
Call the shots	To make the decisions
Call waiting	Feature of telephone services which lets you know if someone else is calling you while you are on the telephone.
Called on the carpet	Reprimanded and required to give an explanation for behavior
Can't see the forest for the trees	Losing track of the overall objective by paying too much attention to detail
Cape, the	Cape Cod, Massachusetts
CAPPS	Computer Assisted Passenger Prescreening System: for airport security
Carballo Award	Student's award to best teacher at the HKS
Carpetbagger	An outsider, non resident who meddles in politics
Carr Center	Carr Center for Human Rights Policy
Carry the ball	Take responsibility for
Carry the water	Take responsibility for
Carry your own weight	Take your share of the burden
Cart before the horse	Getting things in the wrong sequence
Case method	Teaching method where students read & discuss studies of actual situations
Cash cow	Generous source of revenue
CBG	Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Business and Government at the HKS
CBO	Congressional budget office
CBS	Columbia Broadcasting System
CCJ	Crime and Criminal Justice course subject area
CCR	Commission on Civil rights
CD ROM	A type of optical storage device holding hundreds of Megabytes of data
CDC	Center for Disease Control
CDC	Community Development Corporation
Cell	Cellular Telephone
Celtics	Boston's professional basketball team
Celts	Celtics, Boston's basketball team
Central Artery	Highway from Interstate 93 to downtown Boston. Part of the "Big Dig"
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFIA	Center for International Affairs, Harvard
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
Chad	Fragment of paper punched through a paper voting ballot (as in 2000 Presidential election)
Chair	The person presiding over a meeting (chairperson)
Chapter 11	Businesses in "chapter 11" are in bankruptcy. Refers to a chapter in US Federal law
Checkers speech	Given by former President Nixon in 1952 election after he was accused of taking improper gifts
Chew the fat	Idle talk
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency of the U.S. Government
CID	Center for International Development, Harvard

PHRASE	MEANING
Citizen	HKS student newspaper
Clipboard	A temporary storage area in a computer program for information that you are copying from one document to another
Cloak and dagger	Espionage related
CMES	Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard
CMO	Course Materials Office
CNN	Cable News Network
COACH	College Opportunity and Career Help: project run by Prof. Chris Avery and Tom Kane
COB	Close of business
COD	Cash on Delivery
Cold call	To call on a client or a student for an answer without advance warning
Comm. Ave	Commonwealth Avenue
Common Cause	A US public interest lobbying organization
Compassionate Conservative	Republican president George W. Bush's description of his point of view
Conferees	Members of legislative conference committees
Conference Committee	Temporary committee to resolve differences between House/Senate bills
Congressional Record	The daily, printed, verbatim account of proceedings in Congress
COO	Chief Operating Officer
Coop	The Harvard Cooperative Society bookstore
Core, the	1) MPP required courses at the HKS, 2) undergraduate required courses at Harvard
CPA	Certified Public Accountant
CPB	Corporation for Public Broadcasting
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CR	Continuing Resolution: provides funds to operate federal agencies when appropriations bills have not been enacted
Crash and burn	To make a huge mistake, to completely fail
Crash, crashed	When the computer malfunctions
Cream of the crop	The best
Crimson	1) Harvard undergraduate newspaper, 2) Harvard color, 3) Harvard teams
Crimson Cash	A debit card for making purchases on the Harvard campus (HKS cafeteria)
Cross Reg Petition	Form used to register for a course at another Harvard school
CRR	Committee on Rights and Responsibilities at the HKS
Crunch numbers	To perform complex or repetitive quantitative analysis
CUE Guide	The undergraduate Course Evaluation Guide
Cursor	Flashing bar on computer screen showing insertion point for text or numbers
Cut corners	To sacrifice doing things correctly to get them done quickly
CV	Curriculum vitae
DA	District Attorney
Dark Horse	Political candidate not expected to win
DDE	Dynamic Data Exchange
DEA	Drug Enforcement Agency
Deader than a doornail	Really, really dead
Debug	To get rid of a technical problem with a computer program
Deep Throat	Secret source of secret government information (from Watergate era)
Deep weeds	Trouble
Degree App	Form submitted to graduate from the HKS
Demo	Demonstration
DEV	HKS subject area International Development
DHL	International air courier

PHRASE	MEANING
DHS	Department of Homeland Security. Coordinates information about, and response to, terrorist threats
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
Dialog box	A box appearing on the screen that prompts users for a command
Didja	Contraction of "did you"
Disk space	The amount of room on a diskette or hard disk where files can be saved
Distance Learning	Courses where teaching is delivered electronically
DIV	Divinity School, Harvard
DNC	Democratic National Committee
DOA	Dead on Arrival (originally a hospital term). Applied to things that have no chance of success
DOC	Department of Commerce
DOD	Department of Defense
DOE	Department of Energy
Dog and pony show	Routine presentation of something
Dog eat dog	Ruthless
DOI	Department of Interior
DOJ	Department of Justice
DOL	Department of Labor
Donkey	Symbol of Democratic party
DOS	A computer operating system, common before the advent of Microsoft Windows
DOS	Department of State
DOT	Department of Transportation
Dot Ave	Dorchester Avenue in Boston
Dotcom	A business on the internet
Double edged sword	Something with both positive and negative effects
Dow Jones	Composite of stocks representing a cross section of the stock market
Download	To receive electronic information
Downsizing	Actions taken by an organization to reduce the number of employees
DPA	Doctor in Public Administration
DPI	HKS subject area: Democratic Policy and Institutions
Drag and drop	Moving information on the computer screen by highlighting it, and dragging it to the new location
Draw a line in the sand	To lay down an ultimatum, take and defend a final position
DRB	Disciplinary Review Board. Addresses student discipline issues at the HKS
Dressed to play	Dressed appropriately
Dressed to the nines	Well dressed
Drive	A device for storing data on computers
Drives	Efforts to collect support, money, old clothes, etc. (food drive, blood drive etc.)
Drop the ball	To fail to follow through with something
Dubya	Pronunciation of the letter "W." Refers to current President George W. Bush
Dutch treat	Each person pays his/her own way - "going dutch"
DVD	An optical storage disc with more storage capacity than a CD rom (Digital Video Disc)
Earmark	To designate
Eastie	Someone from East Boston
Easy as pie	Very, very, easy
e-commerce	Business carried out on the internet
ED	Department of Education
Ed School	Graduate School of Education, Harvard
EDS	Episcopal Divinity School

PHRASE	MEANING
EEC	European Economic Community
EEOC	Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
Electoral College	Group of persons selected by the voters in each state that officially elect the President and Vice-President
Elephant	Symbol of the Republican party
Elevator Speech	Extremely short and concise briefing taking only as long as an elevator ride
ELF	Environmental Liberation Front: activists on environmental issues
e-mail	Electronic mail
End Run	An attempt to outmaneuver opponents or obstacles. An American football term
ENR	Environment and Natural resources course subject area
Enron	Company that went into bankruptcy (the largest in U.S. history) causing millions to lose their life's savings
EOB	(1)Executive Office Building, (2) End of Business
EOP	Executive Office of the President
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ERA	Equal Rights Amendment (to guarantee equal rights for women)
ESL	English as a Second Language
Esplanade	South bank of the Charles River in Boston
ESS	Entrepreneurship in the Social Sector
ETOB	Every Tub on Its Own Bottom (each unit is self sufficient.) Harvard phrase
EU	European Union
Every Tub on Its Own Bottom	Harvard phrase meaning each unit is self sufficient and financially independent.
Excel	Microsoft Excel, a comprehensive spreadsheet program
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FannieMae	Federal National Mortgage Association
FAQ	Frequently Asked Question
FAS	Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Harvard
Fast food	Food from chain restaurants like McDonalds, Burger King, etc. available without waiting
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FCC	Federal Communication Commission
FDA	Food and Drug Administration
FDIC	Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (for banks)
FDR	Franklin Delano Roosevelt, former President of the U.S.
FDR	Faculty Dining Room
FEC	Federal Election Commission
Fed, the	Federal Reserve Bank (Central bank of the US)
Federal Express	Federal Express mail service
Fedex	Federal Express mail service
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
Fenway	1) area of Boston, 2) Boston baseball stadium
Filibuster	Attempt by one or more Senators to prevent a vote on a bill by making long speeches to maintain control of the Senate.
FIN	Foreign Industrialized Nation
First Base, get to	To have an initial success
First Responder	Person or team trained to be first on the scene of an emergency. Phrase more prevalent since 9/11
Fish or cut bait	Make a decision
Floor	The ground level of the legislative chamber
Flunk, to	To fail, as in a course, test, or assignment
Fly, it won't	An idea that "won't fly" is not a successful idea
FNS	Food and Nutrition Service: agency of the U.S. Dept of Agriculture

PHRASE	MEANING
Foggy Bottom	U.S. State Department
Foliage	Colorful autumn leaves in New England
Footer	Section at the bottom of a page including page number and text
Fortune 500	Fortune Magazine's list of the top 500 companies in terms of their earnings
Forum	Central area of Littauer Bldg, site of speeches, cafeteria
Forward slash	on the computer keyboard, the key for the forward leaning short line (/), part of many URLs
Founding Fathers	The men given credit for forming the U.S. government and writing the U.S. Constitution
Fourth Estate	The press
Frank	A legislator's legal right to send official mail postage free under his or her signature
From the get-go	From the beginning
From the horse's mouth	Directly from the source
Frontpage	A Microsoft program for designing web pages
FSA	Field Systems Analysts at HKS provide technical support to users
FSA	Faculty Support Account at HKS
FSA	Faculty Support Assistant at HKS
FSLIC	Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation
FTC	Federal Trade Commission
FY	Fiscal Year
FYI	For Your Information
G-8	Group consisting of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, United Kingdom, United States.
GAAP	Generally accepted accounting principles
Gallup Poll	Gallup is the name of a company that does political polling and analysis
GAO	General Accounting Office
GATT	General Agreement on Tarrifs and Trade
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
Geek	Negative slang for person in love with technology for technology's sake; frequently socially inhibited
General Election	An election to fill a public office
Gerrymander	Drawing of legislative district boundaries in such a way to give an advantage to one party of special group
Get your hands dirty	To get involved in "the doing" of something
Gigabyte	Am amount of data (10 ⁹ bytes), commonly referred to as a "Gig"
Gimme	Contraction of "give me." Now used as a noun, meaning something easily achieved or won, "a gimme."
GinnyMae	Government National Mortgage Association
Glitch	A technical problem with a computer program
Globe, the	The Boston Globe, newspaper
GMAT	Graduate Management Admission Test
GNP	Gross National Product
Go for broke	To give something 100% effort
Go like a house afire	Very fast
Go to bat	Endorse or support someone
Going ballistic	Out of control
Going bananas	Out of control
Good luck to you and the Red Sox!	A way of saying "good luck" for a basically hopeless situation. Implies you really need a lot of luck. (The Red Sox are the Boston baseball team - not always successful)
Google	A tool used with a browser for searching internet sites
GOP	Grand Old Party (Republican)
GPO	Government Printing Office

PHRASE	MEANING
GPRA	Government Performance Review Act
GPS	Global Positioning System
Grab a bite	To quickly get something to eat
Grandfather Clause	In legislation, a clause that provides an exception for something that has previously taken place
Grassroots	Description of political or social movements that are organized amongst the general populations
Grassroots	n politics a campaign that starts off local, person-to-person, individual citizen involvement
GRE	Graduate Record Exam
Gresham's Law	Bad money drives out good money
Gridlock	When no resolution can be reached: in legislation (or in traffic)
Ground Zero	Site of World Trade Center before September 11, 2001 attack
GSA	General Services Administration
GSAS	Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Harvard
GSD	Graduate School of Design, Harvard
GSE	Graduate School of Education, Harvard
Guns and butter	Defense and social programs, respectively
H S A	An internet protocol (HyperText Transfer Protocol)
H.S.A.	Harvard Student Agencies
Handle with kid gloves	Be gentle
Hang out to dry, to	To leave someone defending a point of view with no support
Hanging Chad	Disputed marks on ballots in U.S. presidential election of 2004 (alpha this under "H", not chad, hanging)
Hardball, playing	Being ruthless, uncompromising
Hardware	Any piece of computer equipment (not the computer programs, which are software)
Hatch Shell	Concert stage on the south bank of the Charles River (esplanade)
Hatchet job	To end something quickly, crudely, without finesse
Hauser Center	Hauser Center for Nonprofit Institutions
HBO	Home Broadcasting Company
HBS	Harvard Business School, Harvard
HCP	Health Care Policy course subject area
Head Hunter	Employment scout. Companies hire head hunters to find them qualified employees
Head of the Charles	Annual regatta on the Charles river in October
Header	Section at the top of a page including page number and text
HEW	Department of Health, Education and Welfare (now HHS)
HHS	Department of Health and Human Services
HIID	Harvard Institute for International Development
Hill, the	U.S. Congress (on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C.)
Hit the ground running	To be really prepared for a quick beginning
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HLE	Human Resources, Labor, and Education course subject area
HLS	Harvard Law School
HMO	Health Maintenance Organization
HMS	Harvard Medical School
HOLLIS	Harvard On Line Library Information System
Hollis Plus	Harvard On-line Library Information System
Holyoke	Administrative office of Harvard University
Homeland Security	Recently formed federal department to coordinate U.S. information about, and response to, terrorist threat
Homepage	The site on the Web for an organization's or person's information
Homerun	1) a great success, 2) baseball term for a hit that allows hitter to run three bases to home plate
Honeymoon	Short, post-election period of good will for elected officials

PHRASE	MEANING
Hoover Institute	Research institute at Stanford focusing on public policy research
Hopper	Box that receives bills in the House of Representatives
Hot Water	Trouble..
Hotbot	A tool used with a browser for searching internet sites
HPPS	Harvard Printing and Publications Services
HR	Human Resources (personnel)
HRM	Human Resource Management
html	Computer programming language for designing web pages (HAS Markup Language)
Hub, the	Boston
HUD	Department of Housing and Urban Development
HUGHHP	Harvard University Group Health Plan
HUGSE	Harvard University Graduate School of Education
HUPD	Harvard University Police Department
HUT	Housing, Urban Development, and Transportation subject area
Hyperlink	An element in a document that links to another place in the document or to an entirely different document.
IBM	International Business Machines Co
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IFC	International Finance Corporation, (part of World Bank)
IG	Inspector General
IGA	HKS subject area International and Global Affairs
IIASA	International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis
IISS	International Institute for Strategy Studies
IM	Instant Message (refers to instant messaging on cell phones)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
In front of the curve	Ahead of the relevant public understanding about something
In the ballpark	Within the broad realm of something
INC	Incomplete
Info	Information
Infoseek	A tool used with a browser for searching internet sites
Input	An ingredient, or factor of production, such as knowledge
INS	Immigration and Naturalization Service
Inside the Beltway	Refers to the area around Washington DC and the political outlook of people there
Internet	A global network connecting millions of computer and databases
Internet Service Provider (ISP)	A company that sells access to the internet
Intranet	A network belonging to an organization (e.g. the HKS) accessible only by the organizations' members
IOP	Institute of Politics
IPO	Initial public offering in the stock market
Iran-Contra	Scandal in the Reagan years where arms were sold to Iran, the profits used to support the contras in Nicaragua
IRS	Internal Revenue Service
Is that your final answer?	Question by host to participants on popular quiz show "Do You Want to be a Millionaire", often shortened to simply "FA?"
ISDN	Integrated Services Digital Network
ISP	Internet Service Provider
ISP	International Security and Political Economy course subject area
IT	Information Technology
ITC	U.S. International Trade Commission
ITF	International Trade and Finance course subject area
ITS	Information Technology Services - HKS's IT department
Jaywalking	To cross the street from the middle of the block rather than at the official crosswalk

PHRASE	MEANING
JIT	Just in Time
Joint Center	Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard
JP	Jamaica Plain, a neighborhood of Boston
Jumpstart	Quick start
Kickoff	To begin or start a program (term from American football where kicking the ball starts the game)
Knee-jerk liberal	Person who, without thinking, automatically takes the liberal point of view
HKS Today	News and calendar of events at the HKS, daily, accessible via the HKS home page
KSSG	Kennedy School Student Government
L.A.	Los Angeles
LA	Legislative Assistant
Lab	Laboratory. At the HKS refers to the Computer Laboratory
Lame Duck	Person, or legislature or administration that has been defeated but still holds office for a period of time.
LAN	Local Area Network
Lay it on the line	Be straightforward and honest, even if risking embarrassment or offense
LBJ	Lyndon Baines Johnson, President from 1963-68, succeeding President Kennedy
LDC	Lesser Developed Country
Lead balloon	A bad idea:no chance of rising. Bound to fail
Leak	To disclose information to the press
Learn the ropes	Learn how a job is done
Leathernecks	Members of the U.S. Marine Corps
Left field, to come out of	To be unrelated to anything, non sequitor, unreasonable
Lemon	Defective item . Often used in reference to cars that malfunction
Let sleeping dogs lie	Don't disturb, don't cause trouble
Let the cat out of the bag	Reveal the secret
Lewinsky	Monica Lewinsky, former White House Intern involved in a sexual scandal involving President Clinton
Like a chicken with its head cut off	Being in a frenetic state (running around as a chicken does after its head is cut off)
Link	A way to retrieve information from another source into a program or document
Littauer	Main HKS building at 79 JFK Street, also the name of the building that houses the Government Dept. (north of the HKS)
Lobby	To try to influence legislation
Login	Accessing a network, server, program etc. with a username and password
Logoff	Ending your electronic connection to a network, server, program etc.
Logrolling	Bargaining strategy in which one builds support for legislation by promising to support another's legislation
Lone Ranger	Someone who works solo (from cowboy stories)
Loose cannon	Unpredictable and potentially disruptive person
Loose nukes	Nuclear armaments no longer on secure control
Lotus Notes	Refers to the computer program in use at the HKS
Low hanging fruit	The easiest, quickest thing to tackle. As low hanging fruit is the easiest to pick from a tree
Lower the boom	Deliver an ultimatum
M.I.T.	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
MAC	1)Methodological Area of Concentration at HKS, 2) Malkin Athletic Center, Harvard
MADD	Mothers Against Drunk Driving
Mailmerge	Feature used in word processing program to combine addresses with letters

PHRASE	MEANING
Make no bones about	Be direct, honest
Markup	Legislative committee meetings in which amendments to bills are proposed
Mason Program	Program for master's students from developing countries, named after former dean, Edward S. Mason
Mass Ave	Massachusetts Avenue
Mass Hall	Massachusetts Hall, office of the President of Harvard
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MBG	HKS subject area: Markets, Business & Government
MBO	Management by Objectives
MBTA	Metropolitan Boston Transit Authority (the "T")
MC/MPA	Mid Career Master in Public Administration
MCAD	Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination
MCZ	Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard
Med School	Medical School, Harvard
Megabyte	An amount of data (10 ⁶ bytes), commonly referred to as a "Meg"
Mem Hall	Memorial Hall. Built to commemorate U.S. Civil War dead; now Freshman Commons
Mem Drive	Memorial Drive, along the Charles river in Cambridge
MERCOSUR	Latin American Common Market
MFA	Museum of Fine Arts
Mickey Mouse (adjective)	Silly, unprofessional (after the cartoon)
MIS	Management Information Systems
MLD	HKS subject area: Management and Leadership
Monday morning quarterback	Someone who pronounces how something should be done after it has already happened.
Moola	Money
More bang for the buck	Better cost effectiveness
Mouse	Handheld device enabling you to point to and select things on computer screen
MPA	Master in Public Administration
MPA/ID	Master in Public Administration/International Development
MPA2	Two Year Master in Public Administration
MPP	Master in Public Policy
MUP	Master in Urban Planning
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored Persons
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Association
NAS	National Academy of Science
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NASCAR Dad	National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing; has come to describe a political demographic group of the working class
NASDAQ	National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotation stock market
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NBC	National Broadcasting Company
NCR	Not for Credit (on the HKS Student Transcript of Grades)
NEA	National Endowment for the Arts
Neocon	Politically a new conservative
Netscape	A browser program for accessing the Internet
NetWare	The network operating system used at HKS
Network	To expand your circle of personal or professional connections
Network	A group of two or more computer systems linked together
New Deal	Period under President Franklin Roosevelt during the Great Depression, when many new federal programs were initiated
New Economy, The	Refers to the influence of the internet and e-commerce on the stock market

PHRASE	MEANING
New Frontier	Slogan used by Pres. Kennedy to describe his vision for his administration's policies
NEXIS/LEXIS	Database of newspaper articles, legal material, etc. on line
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIE	1) National Intelligence Estimate, 2) Newly Industrialized Economies
NIMBY	Not In My Back Yard
Nine-eleven	Refers to attack of September 11, 2001 on World Trade Center in New York City
Nitty gritty	Basic, elemental hard work
NLRB	National Labor Relations Board
No Free Lunch	Nothing comes without a price
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Nonstarter	A bad idea that is not going to really start anything
Noodge	A bothersome person who keeps insisting on action
North End	Historic Italian neighborhood of Boston
Nose under the tent,get	To insinuate self or idea in a process
Notes	Refers to the computer program in use at the HKS: Lotus Notes
NOW	National Organization of Women
NPR	National Public Radio
NPS	Nonprofit Sector course subject area
NPV	Net Present Value
NRA	National Rifle Association: lobbying group that is anti gun control
NSC	National Security Council
NT	One of Microsoft's Operating Systems for personal computers
Number Cruncher	Someone who performs complex quantitative analysis
Nuts and Bolts	Basic operational information
NYSE	New York Stock Exchange
OAE	Organizational Exercise
OCPS	Office of Community and Public Service at the HKS
OCS	Office of Career Service at the HKS
ODA	Office of Development Assistance
Office	Microsoft Office, a software package that includes Word, Excel, and PowerPoint
Old Economy, The	Refers to the stock market before the advent of internet technologies and e-commerce
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
On a roll	Successful
On hold	Waiting: for something to happen, or for a phone call
On the bird	Via satellite
Online	Actively working on a computer connected to a network
OOP	Overseas Project Office at the HKS
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
Op-Ed	Article appearing opposite the editorial page in newspapers
Open a can of worms	Start trouble
Operating System	A program that enables a computer to read and write data
OPIC	Overseas Private Investment Corporation
Oracle	A powerful database program used for developing data systems such as Student Info System (SIS)
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
Out of the woodwork	Something that appears suddenly
Out on a limb	To take a risk
Out-of-Pocket	Paid for personally, without reimbursement
Outside the box, to think	To think in an inventive new way, unconstrained by preconceptions
Outyears	Years that follow an upcoming fiscal year
Oval Office	Room where the President of the U.S. conducts business
Over the transom	Unsolicited material (placed in an office over the transom of the door)

PHRASE	MEANING
P&L	Profit and Loss
PAC	Political Action Committee
PAC	Policy Area of Concentration at the HKS
PAE	Policy Analysis Exercise
Pagemaker	A page layout program used for designing newsletters, flyers, etc
PAL	Political Advocacy and Leadership course subject area
Palm pilot	Personal hand held electronic devise for recording schedule, telephone numbers, etc
Paper or Plastic?	Do you want your groceries in a paper bag or a plastic bag
Patriots	Boston's professional football team
Pats	Patriots, Boston's football team
PBH	Philips Brooks House, the undergraduate community service organization
PBS	Public Broadcasting System
PC	Personal Computer
PC	Politically correct
PCAST	President's Committee of Advisors on Science and Technology
PDF	A file format that captures information from applications, making it possible to send formatted documents.
PED	Political and Economic Development course subject area
PEG	Political Economy and Government Ph.D. Program
PEPG	Program on Education Policy and Governance, at the HKS
Peter Principle, the	The principle that people are promoted to their full level of incompetence
Phoner	Interview by phone
Photo op	Opportunity for media to take photographs
PI	Principle Investigator (on a research grant)
PIC	Professional Interest Council
Picture Book	Publication of pictures of all HKS students
Pie ratio	Price to earnings ratio
Piece of work	"A real piece of work"-someone who is arrogant, manipulative
Platform	Official policy positions taken by political parties
Platform	A term used to describe the type of operating system a computer uses (Windows)
Play by ear	Improvise
Play hardball	Be ruthless
Play your cards right	Use the best strategy
PMI	Presidential Management Intern
POC	Point of Contact. Student advisor at the HKS
Point of Contact	Person at the HKS available to give students advice and information
Policy Wonk	Someone who focuses on public policy position papers but has little actual experience
Political Animal	Someone who lives and breathes politics. Fascinated with politics.
POM	Production and Operations Management
Pork barrel	Wasteful government spending
POV	Point of view
Powerpoint	Microsoft Powerpoint, a program for presentations including slides and graphics
PPBS	Planning, Programming and Budgeting System
PPOL	Public Policy Ph.D. Program
PPP	Press and Public Policy course subject area
PPP	Public Private Partnerships
PR	Public Relations
Preach to the choir	Preach to the already converted, those who agree with you
Primary Election	Election before the general election in which party voters select the candidates who will run on each party's ticket. (See "ticket," below)

PHRASE	MEANING
Problem set	Homework exercises in a quantitative course
Pro-Choice	Supportive of a woman's right to have an abortion
Pro-Lifer	Someone opposed to abortion, and for the "right to life"
Pru, the	The Prudential office building in Boston
Publish or perish	Pressure for tenure track faculty to publish academic works or risk not getting tenure
Pull an all nighter	Study hard
Pull out all the stops	Proceed without reservation
Pull the plug	To end abruptly, e.g. to withdraw the financing for a program
Punt, to	Concede, give up
Push the envelope	To push the outer boundary (mathematical term; used by airplane test pilots)
Put-down	To be diminished, ridiculed
Quant Jock	Someone who enjoys and is good at quantitative methods
Quarterback	Team or group leader
Quorum	The number of persons that must be present in the house or senate for business to be officially conducted
Quorum Call	HKS student get together Friday evenings
R & D	Research and development
R&R	Reading and Research Contract at the HKS
R.T.C.	Resolution Trust Corporation: liquidates assest of failed savings and loan banks
RA	Research Assistant
Radcon	Radical conservative
Rainbow coalition	Political coalition formed by Jesse Jackson
RAM	The memory the computer uses to process data (Random Access Memory)
RAND	Private research institution focusing on public policy. (Contraction of the words "Research and Development)
Reaganomics	Term given to former President Reagan's economic proposals, based on supply-side, "trickle down" theories
Real-World	True to actual life experience
Red Herring	An action or word intended to divert from the central issue
Red Line	Main north/south line of the subway system, goes through Harvard Square.
Red Line	To draw a line around a neighborhood for political or economic reasons
Red states, blue states	In American politics "red" states are thought to be predominantly Republican and "blue " states are thought to be predominantly Democrat
Red tape	Bureaucratic procedures that make it difficult to get something done
Redneck	Rural, unrefined person with uneducated beliefs
Redsox	Boston's professional baseball team
REGO	Reinventing government
Regular coffee	Coffee with milk and sugar
Reubenstien	One of the buildings at HKS
Revolution	Boston's soccer team
RFK	Robert F. Kennedy, brother of John F. Kennedy. Senator from NY and Attorney General for JFK. Assassinated in 1968
RFP	Request for Proposal
Rich text format (rtf)	A standard developed by Microsoft for specifying formatting of documents.
Rider	An amendment unrelated or extraneous to the subject matter of a bill to which it is attached
Right off the bat	Immediately
Right to Lifer	Someone opposed to abortion, a person "pro life"
RMV	Registry of Motor Vehicles

PHRASE	MEANING
RNC	Republican National Committee
ROAR	Report Of Available Rooms at HKS
Rob Peter to pay Paul	Taking resources from one place to make available elsewhere
ROTC	Reserve Officer's Training Corps
RTC	Resolution Trust Corporation
Rubber check	Check written without funds to cover it
Rubber meets the road	Where the action takes place
Rubber stamp	Automatic approval of something
Run it up the flagpole	Announce an idea to test the response
Rundown	"Gimme the run down" = " give me the summary"
Runoff	Election subsequent to a tie in previous election
Rust Belt	Area in the Northeast and Midwest U.S. where heavy industry has declined
S&L	Savings and Loans organizations
S&L	State and Local
S&P 500	Standard and Poor's list of the top 500 stocks (in terms of capitalization)
SAE	Strategic Analysis Exercise
Sallie Mae	Student Loan Marketing Association
Salmon Runs	Stairs in HKS Forum, named after similarity to structures built for salmon swimming up stream
SASE	Self Addressed Stamped Envelope
SAT	Satisfactory (on the HKS Student Transcript of Grades)
Scarce as hen's teeth	Rare (hens don't have teeth)
Scoop,get the	Get the insider's information
Scuttlebutt	Gossip
SDI	Strategic Defense Initiative
SDI	Strengthening Democratic Institutions program at HKS
Search Engine	A tool used with a browser for searching internet sites
SEC	Securities and Exchange Commission
Server	A central computer resource that is shared with multiple workstations
Seventh inning stretch	Slow point in the action near the end of some event, program, negotiation, etc.
Shake-up	A reorganization by management that frequently leads to people losing jobs
Shock and Awe	US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's description of the initial US bombing of Iraq
Shoot the breeze	Engaging in casual, relaxed conversation. Chatting, idle talk
Shopping Days	Two days before classes start to "shop" for courses you want
Shopping Week	First week of classes at Harvard College used to choose courses at the College
Shorenstein Center	Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics, and Public Policy
Side Bar	A short note, ancillary to the story, placed in a bar shaped column
SIF	Student Internship Fund
SIS	Student Information System
Situation, to have a	An indirect way of indicating there is a problem
SKU	Stock Keeping Unit. Bar code on the price tag of most items for sale
Slush Fund	Loosely budgeted money, often used for unauthorized expenditures
Smoke and Mirrors	Intentionally unclear or misleading
Snake in the grass	Devious person
Snake Oil Salesman	Devious, deceptive person trying to sell a concept or product
Snowball effect	Something that quickly becomes larger and more complex
Soccer Mom	describes a political demographic of suburban mothers (who own SUVs, drive children to soccer practice)
Sodhexo	Name of catering company at the HKS
Soft money	Funds derived from grants

PHRASE	MEANING
Soft money	Money that may not be available again. Donation to a political party (rather than an individual)
software	Any computer program
sokay	Contraction of "it is ok"
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
Sound bite	Small segment of an interview or comment, usually 10 seconds
South End	Neighborhood of Boston, not to be confused with Southie (South Boston)
Southeast Expressway	Highway from downtown Boston South (part of "Big Dig")
Southie	Someone from South Boston
Sox	Red Sox, Boston's baseball team
SP	HKS subject area Social Policy
SPAM	Junk mail (unwanted advertising) on the internet.
Speaker	The presiding officer of the House of Representatives
SPH	School of Public Health, Harvard
Spin	To embellish something with a particular point of view
Spin Doctor	Someone who manipulates information to change perceptions about a person or event.
Spooks	Spies
Spring Exercise	First year MPP student "real life" exercise two weeks before spring vacation
Square, the	Harvard Square
SS#	Social Security number
SSA	Social Security Administration
SSN	Social Security Number
Stakeholder	Someone with a vested interest in something
Standard bearer	The leader of an organization, movement, or political party
Sticky, a	A small piece of paper with glue on the back, used for sticking notes on papers
STM	Strategic Management course subject area
Stonewall	To be intentionally uncooperative, unforthcoming
STP	Science, Technology and Public Policy course subject area
STPP	Science, Technology and Public Policy program
STR	Special Trade Representatiave
Straw Poll	Informal poll
Stump speech	Standard political campaigning speech
Sunset Provision	A provision that something ends at a particular time unless reinstated
Surf the web	Search for information on the internet
SUV	Sport Utility Vehicle: popular automobile
Tailhook	Sexual scandal involving Navy pilots
Take a hike	Leave, give up, or to be directed to leave
Take the 5th	Refuse to implicate yourself by citing the fifth amendment of the U.S. Constitution which guarantees citizens do not have to testify against themselves.
Take-away	The main point of a lesson that a student can take from the lesson
Take-home	An exam taken home, written, and returned to professor
Take-out	Prepared food that you purchase and take out of the restaurant
Talk a blue streak	Talk quickly
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TARP	Troubled Asset Relief Program
Taubman	HKS building on Eliot St. near the Charles Hotel
Taubman Center	A. Alfred Taubman Center for State and Local Government
TBA	To be announced
TBD	To be determined
T-bill	U.S. Treasury Bill, an investment mechanism
Term Bill	Students' bill from Harvard for expenses

PHRASE	MEANING
TF	Teaching Fellow
The Journal	The Wall Street Journal (newspaper)
The Post	The Washington Post (newspaper)
The T	MBTA, Metropolitan Boston Transportation Authority
The Times	The New York Times (newspaper)
Think Tank	Private research firm, such as RAND, Brookings, Heritage Foundation
Thinking out of the box	Tackling a problem by discarding constraints in thinking
Thousand Days	The length of the Kennedy administration, 1961-63
Thousand Points of Light	Former president George H.W. Bush phrase emphasizing private volunteer actions
Threat level	indication of the level of the risk of a terrorist attack
Throw a curve	Surprise someone
Throw the baby out with the bathwater	Lose the positive aspects of something while disposing of the negative aspects
THUD	Transportation, Housing & Urban Development (student professional interest council at the HKS)
Ticket	All the candidates of one party on the ballot
To be in someone's pocket	To be under someone's control
To go	Food (generally fast food) which you take out of the restaurant
To Mainline	To take directly (and quickly) into a system
TOEFL	Test of English as a foreign language
Toolbar	The row of icons at the top of the screen that show you where to go for various computer operations
Top Brass	High officers
Top gun	Best person within a group (originally pilot's jargon)
Tough row to hoe	A difficult job
Town Hall	Location of student mailboxes at HKS
Townie	A local person in a university town
Toxic Assets	Refers to bad mortgages in the 2008-09 recession
TQM	Total quality management
Triage	To separate things into categories of urgent, not urgent, and hopeless
Trickle down	Republican (party) expression for how good economic benefits move (like water) from the top to the bottom of the economic ladder
Try a different tack	Approach something from a different angle
TSA	Transportation Security Administration
Twenty-four/Seven	Something available 24 hours a day, seven days a week
Twin Cities	Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota
UAW	United Auto Workers
UC	Senate slang for Unanimous Consent
UHS	University Health Services
UMass	University of Massachusetts
Umbrella organization	Large organization which has subsidiary smaller organizations under it.
UNCF	United Negro College Fund, also known as The College Fund
Underwater Mortgages	Refers to mortgages that are higher than the value of the property (2008-09 recession)
UNDP	U.N. Development Program
UNDPKO	United Nations Division of Peace Keeping Operations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSAT	Unsatisfactory (on the HKS Student Transcript of Grades)
Update, the	HKS quarterly publication
Update, to	To make current
UPI	United Press International
Upload	To send electronic information
UPS	United Parcel Service

PHRASE	MEANING
URL	The address for a website (Universal Resource Locator)
USAID	U.S. State Department Agency for International Development
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USIA	United States Information Agency
VA	Department of Veteran's Affairs
VAT	Value Added Tax
Virus	A program deliberately inserted into another computer program with the intention of causing problems
Visions	Former Dean Nye's program on Visions of Governance for the 21st Century
Voice mail	A recorded telephone message
Voodoo Economics	Former President George H.W. Bush term for Reagan's supply side economic plan (1980 election)
W	George W. Bush, current (2006) President of the United States
W-2	Form sent by U.S. government to wage earners stating how much tax they have paid
W-4	Form individuals submit to pay federal taxes
Wannabe	Contraction of "wants to be." A person who wants to be something he/she is not
WAPP	Women and Public Policy
War chest	A pot of money available for war (original meaning), or a political campaign
Warm the bench	Take a passive role
Watergate	Scandal leading to former President Nixon's resignation.
Web	The Internet
Webmaster	The person in charge of maintaining the information on an organization's web page
Webpage	A "page" (place) on the internet containing information
Wet behind the ears	Inexperienced
Whaddya	Contraction of "what do you"
Whip, Majority	Assistant leader of the majority Party, responsible for keeping the party together on votes
Whip, Minority	Assistant leader of the minority Party, responsible for keeping the party together on votes
Whistleblower	One who informs against an organization or person
White Water	Real estate investigation involving former president Bill Clinton and Mrs. Clinton
White elephant	Something that doesn't fit the situation. Irrelevant
White House	Residence of the US President. Synonym for the seat of govt.
Whole nine yards	Everything, total, complete
WIC	a supplemental nutrition program for women, infants and children, sponsored by the Food and Nutrition Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture
Widener	The main library at Harvard
Wiener Center	Malcolm Wiener Center for Social Policy
Wi-Fi	Wireless Internet
Wild card	Something with an unknown, or arbitrarily assigned value
Window of Opportunity	Chance to get something done
Windows	Microsoft Computer Operating Systems for desktop computers
Windy City	Chicago
Wing it, to	To make up the answer as you go along, without a plan of action
Wires, the	News services like Associated Press, Reuters, etc.
Wizard	A helpful tool that makes it easy to setup computer applications
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
Wonk	Person who is totally absorbed by technical policy analysis (Policy Wonk)

PHRASE	MEANING
Woodshed, take someone to the	Reprimand someone
Word	Microsoft Word, a program for word processing
Work study	Program of financial aid for American students
Worm	A program deliberately inserted into another computer program with the intention of causing problems
WPF	World Peace Foundation
WTC	World Trade Center
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWW	World Wide Web
Wye River Agreement	1998 agreement between Israelis and Palestinians for improved peace and security in Israel
wysiwyg	What You See Is What You Get
Y2K	Year 2000 (referring to the Millenium)
Yahoo	A tool used with a browser for searching internet sites
Yard, The	Central lawn area of Harvard College where all Freshmen live
You guys	You people, (male or female)
Zero sum game	One player's loss is another players gain
Zip Drive	A type of storage device that can be used for saving large electronic files