

AUSTRALIA

AGES 10–17

PARENT GUIDE

AIRBOTIX FAMILY GUIDES

# Australian Teen Slang

**A parent's plain-English guide to abbreviations, emojis and memes**

Hear the likely tone, then decide whether to laugh, ask for context or check in.

Verified 25 August 2026 edition

Parents and carers of ages 10–17



# 01

## Start with tone, not a vocabulary test

Australian teenagers in 2026 span younger Gen Z and Gen Alpha. Words such as *rizz*, *sigma* and *skibidi* sit within newer internet culture. Words such as *reckon*, *keen* and *arvo* are everyday Australian English, not inventions of the latest generation.

Most messages fit one of five broad purposes:

- **Praise or agreement:** ate, slay, W, valid.
- **Self-mockery or a setback:** cooked, L, I'm dead.
- **Describing a vibe or person:** it's giving, aura, lore.
- **Sharing an in-group joke:** sigma, skibidi, number memes.
- **A reason to check safety:** references to self-harm, threats, leaks, blackmail or an offline conflict.

The same word can mean different things at different schools, on different platforms or between different friends. Your child is usually the best translator.

You can say: "I found two meanings for that word. Which one do you mean here?"

## 02

# One-minute guide: 12 useful expressions

| Expression  | Plain-English meaning                            | Typical tone              |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| fr          | genuinely; for real                              | emphasis                  |
| ngl         | honestly; not going to lie                       | introducing an opinion    |
| lowkey      | slightly, quietly or secretly                    | softens a statement       |
| bet         | okay; agreed                                     | casual acceptance         |
| no cap      | honestly; not exaggerating                       | emphasis                  |
| ate         | did extremely well                               | praise                    |
| cooked      | exhausted, doomed or unprepared                  | self-mockery              |
| it's giving | it has the feeling of...                         | playful comparison        |
| aura        | perceived coolness or presence                   | social status joke        |
| rizz        | romantic charm                                   | playful relationship talk |
| 💀           | "that is so funny I am dead"                     | usually not literal death |
| 😭           | laughter, overwhelm, frustration or real sadness | context matters           |

Start here. There is no need to learn every expression before talking with your child.

## 03

# Common abbreviations: the sentence skeleton

| Expression     | Full form                              | What it usually does                |
|----------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| fr / frfr      | for real / for real, for real          | confirms sincerity                  |
| ngl            | not gonna lie                          | introduces an honest opinion        |
| tbh            | to be honest                           | frames an opinion                   |
| idk / ik / ikr | I don't know / I know / I know, right? | quick response                      |
| rn             | right now                              | time marker                         |
| bc             | because                                | shortens an explanation             |
| tho            | though                                 | adds contrast                       |
| imo / imho     | in my opinion / in my humble opinion   | marks a personal view               |
| lmk            | let me know                            | asks for an update                  |
| wdym           | what do you mean?                      | question; sometimes confrontational |

ngl it was mid usually means “honestly, it was average,” not a confession that something went wrong.

## 04

# Common abbreviations: tone at the end

| Expression | Full form             | Context note                                         |
|------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| omw        | on my way             | may mean leaving soon rather than already travelling |
| brb        | be right back         | temporary pause                                      |
| dw         | don't worry           | reassurance or dismissal, depending on tone          |
| mb         | my bad                | casual apology                                       |
| istg       | I swear to God        | strong emphasis or exasperation                      |
| af         | as f***               | strong emphasis with coarse language                 |
| smh        | shaking my head       | disapproval or disbelief                             |
| iykyk      | if you know, you know | in-group reference                                   |
| hmu        | hit me up             | contact me                                           |
| irl        | in real life          | separates online and offline life                    |
| jk         | just kidding          | may soften a joke or retreat from a hurtful remark   |
| atm        | at the moment         | currently                                            |

jk does not automatically erase the impact of the sentence before it. Look at the relationship and what happened next.

## 05

# Agreement, replies and emphasis

| Expression         | Plain-English meaning        | Watch for                              |
|--------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| bet                | okay; deal                   | can also sound challenging             |
| say less           | I understand; I am in        | usually not “stop talking”             |
| valid              | understandable or reasonable | not necessarily full agreement         |
| fair               | that makes sense             | similar to fair enough                 |
| legit              | genuine or genuinely good    | casual approval                        |
| facts              | strongly agree               | emphatic reply                         |
| real               | relatable; same              | a complete one-word response           |
| deadass            | seriously                    | strong, informal emphasis              |
| period / periodt   | that settles it              | closes debate                          |
| it's not that deep | do not overthink it          | may minimise another person's feelings |

A very short reply can still carry a complete attitude.

## 06

# Praise that does not sound like “good job”

| Expression                   | Plain-English meaning              | Common target                  |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ate / ate and left no crumbs | performed exceptionally well       | performance, outfit, comment   |
| slay                         | did brilliantly                    | choice, work or look           |
| serving                      | presenting a strong look or energy | style                          |
| iconic                       | memorable or legendary             | often deliberately exaggerated |
| fire                         | excellent                          | music, food, work              |
| GOAT / goated                | greatest of all time / top-tier    | person or performance          |
| W / big W                    | a win or good outcome              | news or achievement            |
| clean                        | polished and precise               | sport, design, movement        |
| goes hard                    | striking or impressive             | outfit, music, visual work     |
| bussin                       | especially good                    | often food                     |
| face card                    | facial attractiveness              | appearance-focused praise      |

Words such as iconic, GOAT and mother are often playful hyperbole, not literal rankings.

## 07

# Failing, awkwardness and being “cooked”

| Expression   | Plain-English meaning               | Context                          |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| cooked       | exhausted, doomed or unprepared     | I'm cooked for maths             |
| washed       | past one's best or performing badly | sport and gaming                 |
| it's over    | this will not work                  | often exaggerated                |
| L            | loss, bad luck or failure           | take the L means accept the loss |
| mid          | average or unimpressive             | not always terrible              |
| buns         | bad                                 | informal criticism               |
| cringe       | painfully embarrassing              | behaviour or person              |
| ick          | sudden loss of attraction           | relationship talk                |
| flop         | failed or did not become popular    | plan or release                  |
| caught in 4K | clearly caught with evidence        | no 4K video required             |
| skill issue  | you are not good enough at this     | gaming joke or teasing           |

I'm cooked may mean “I am exhausted” or “I did not prepare for the test.” Asking which one is more reliable than guessing.

# Vibes, aura and personal “lore”

| Expression       | Plain-English meaning                    | Example or boundary         |
|------------------|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| lowkey / highkey | quietly or slightly / openly or strongly | changes intensity           |
| it's giving...   | it has the feeling of...                 | playful comparison          |
| vibe             | atmosphere or sense of compatibility     | the vibe is off             |
| aura             | perceived coolness or presence           | social-status humour        |
| aura points      | imaginary coolness points                | +1000 aura                  |
| aura loss        | an embarrassing loss of status           | joking score                |
| aura farming     | deliberately acting cool for attention   | praise or mockery           |
| main character   | acting like the centre of the story      | positive or critical        |
| NPC              | behaving like a background character     | can be demeaning            |
| lore             | background story                         | what's the lore?            |
| canon event      | an unavoidable formative experience      | often teenage embarrassment |

These words usually describe a feeling or social story, not a precise conclusion about someone.

## 09

# Friends, relationships and group-chat gossip

| Expression               | Plain-English meaning                               | Context note             |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| rizz / rizz up           | romantic charm / try to charm someone               | playful and casual       |
| delulu                   | unrealistically hopeful or delusional               | not a clinical diagnosis |
| simp                     | tries too hard for someone they like                | often mocking            |
| stan                     | devoted fan or strong supporter                     | noun or verb             |
| ship                     | hope two people become a couple                     | from relationship        |
| situationship            | romantic connection without a defined relationship  | not a formal partnership |
| talking stage            | getting to know each other before dating            | early relationship stage |
| ghosted                  | contact suddenly stopped                            | messages ignored         |
| left on read / delivered | message seen without reply / delivered but unopened | platform context matters |
| red / green / beige flag | warning / positive sign / harmless oddity           | relationship shorthand   |
| tea / spill / receipts   | gossip / tell us / screenshots or evidence          | group-chat language      |

These words can reveal the topic of a conversation, but they do not define the relationship for your child.

# Gen Alpha memes and “brain rot” language

| Expression           | Approximate meaning                                 | Parent context                    |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| sigma                | independent or impressive person                    | may be meaningless meme play      |
| skibidi              | strange, good, bad or intentionally meaningless     | context is essential              |
| brain rot / brainrot | mindless content or being fixated on it             | informal, not a medical diagnosis |
| Ohio                 | a bizarre place or event                            | from “only in Ohio” memes         |
| Fanum tax            | taking a bite of a friend's food                    | creator-origin meme               |
| gyatt                | exclamation focused on someone's body               | can sexualise or objectify        |
| mewing               | tongue-position practice linked online to jaw shape | claims are often exaggerated      |
| looksmaxxing         | trying to maximise physical appearance              | extreme forms can be risky        |
| lock in              | focus and become serious                            | study, sport or games             |
| touch grass          | get offline and return to real life                 | usually teasing                   |
| ratio                | negative replies outperform the original post       | public rejection signal           |
| nerf / buff          | weaken / strengthen                                 | borrowed from game updates        |

Young people may also use **brainrot** to make fun of their own scrolling. Treat it as informal language, not a diagnosis.

# Emojis and punctuation also carry tone

| Expression        | Common tone                                   | Boundary                          |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 💀                 | "that is so funny I am dead"                  | still read the surrounding topic  |
| 😂 / 😭😭😭           | laughter, overwhelm, affection or sadness     | repetition increases intensity    |
| 😏                 | I was foolish or got played                   | often self-mockery                |
| 😓                 | exhausted, awkward or melting under pressure  | emotional overload                |
| 😬                 | smiling on the surface, frustrated underneath | may be passive-aggressive         |
| 🧑                 | frozen in awkward silence                     | visual reaction                   |
| 👁️                | I noticed; keep talking                       | attention or gossip               |
| 👉                 | understood; I accept the task                 | serious or comic                  |
| 🗨️                | false or exaggerated                          | visual form of cap                |
| ▪                 | cold or final tone                            | depends on normal messaging style |
| ??                | confusion or challenge                        | stronger than a neutral question  |
| stretched letters | intensified emotion                           | betttt, stoppp                    |

Never use one emoji by itself to decide how a child feels.  
Combine the message, relationship and offline behaviour.

# Australian expressions teens use—but did not invent

| Expression          | Plain-English meaning                  | Example or note                                 |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| reckon              | think or believe                       | what do you reckon?                             |
| keen / not keen     | interested / not interested            | you keen?                                       |
| sweet               | okay; good                             | sweet, see ya                                   |
| cheers              | thanks                                 | not only a toast                                |
| heaps               | a lot; very                            | heaps good                                      |
| dodgy               | suspicious, unreliable or poor quality | that site looks dodgy                           |
| suss                | suspicious                             | common Australian spelling                      |
| arvo / servo        | afternoon / service station            | everyday shorthand                              |
| Maccas              | McDonald's                             | Australian nickname                             |
| devo / spewin'      | disappointed / very disappointed       | not literal vomiting                            |
| yeah nah / nah yeah | no / yes                               | usually the final word carries the answer       |
| too easy            | no problem                             | not a complaint that something lacks difficulty |

sus and suss existed before *\*Among Us\**. The game amplified the expression but did not create it.

# One abbreviation can have two meanings

| Expression | Possible meaning one                                   | Possible meaning two or boundary      |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| pmo        | pisses me off                                          | put me on; recommend something        |
| ts         | this/that shit                                         | sometimes simply “this”               |
| asl        | older: age, sex, location                              | newer: as hell; very                  |
| OP         | gaming: overpowered                                    | forum: original poster                |
| smash      | hit, break or a game action                            | may have an adult sexual meaning      |
| body count | number of deaths                                       | relationship context: sexual partners |
| rawdog     | do something without tools, preparation or distraction | originally sexual slang               |
| gyatt      | sometimes used as a general exclamation                | still commonly body-focused           |

If the literal meaning makes no sense, pause. Ask: “Does pmo mean annoyed here, or are you asking for a recommendation?”

## 14

# Ten messages translated into ordinary English

| Message                           | Likely plain-English meaning                                  |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| bro ts lowkey wild 🤪              | This is genuinely a bit ridiculous—and funny.                 |
| ngl she ate                       | Honestly, she did extremely well.                             |
| I'm cooked for the maths test     | I am badly unprepared for the maths test.                     |
| the fit is giving rich auntie     | The outfit has an extravagant, confident-auntie style.        |
| he has negative aura after that   | That was embarrassing and made him look less cool.            |
| wait what's the lore?             | What is the backstory?                                        |
| I need to lock in fr              | I genuinely need to focus now.                                |
| left me on delivered for two days | The message arrived two days ago but they have not opened it. |
| that's a massive W                | That is an excellent outcome.                                 |
| say less, I'll be there           | I understand; I will come.                                    |

Literal traps: she ate is not necessarily about food; I'm cooked is not about cooking; no cap is not about a hat.

# How to ask without turning it into an interrogation

It is usually more natural to let your child be the language expert than to suddenly imitate their slang.

- “When you say cooked, do you mean unprepared for the test or exhausted today?”
- “Is that joke common at school, or mostly online?”
- “I found two meanings. Which one fits here?”
- “I am not trying to inspect you. I want to understand what happened.”
- “Would you like me to listen, or help you think through the next step?”

Four useful principles:

- **Do not pretend to know:** honest curiosity is more credible than forced slang.
- **Do not mock the language:** messaging shorthand does not prove weak formal writing.
- **Do not diagnose from context-free words:** one expression cannot prove dating, bullying or mental ill-health.
- **Do not ignore safety signals:** references to self-harm, threats, blackmail or leaks deserve a calm check-in.

The goal is to keep conversation open when your child genuinely needs help.

# Expressions that deserve a calm safety check

| Expression            | Possible meaning                                      | Parent's next step                                |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| kms                   | kill myself                                           | ask directly and calmly whether the child is safe |
| unalive myself        | platform-avoidance language about death or suicide    | do not dismiss personal use as a meme             |
| I don't wanna be here | dislike of the situation or a possible safety concern | ask what "here" and "now" mean                    |
| end it                | end a relationship, leave a game or self-harm         | clarify the object and context                    |
| jump me               | threat of an ambush or group assault                  | identify people, place and immediate risk         |
| opp                   | rival or enemy                                        | check whether there is an offline conflict        |
| NPC                   | harmless meme or dehumanising insult                  | notice persistent dehumanisation                  |

You can ask:

**"When you wrote kms, was that exaggeration, or do you feel unsafe right now? I am not going to start by telling you off. I want to make sure you are safe."**

One word cannot complete a risk assessment, but it can open a necessary conversation. If there is immediate danger, stay with the child and contact emergency services or an appropriate health professional.

# Leaks, blackmail and cyberbullying: protect first

| Expression    | What may be happening                              | First response                               |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| doxxed        | address, school or contact details posted publicly | preserve evidence and review account privacy |
| leaked        | private information, images or video shared        | avoid blame; limit spread and seek help      |
| exposed       | publicly called out or posted about                | identify content, platform and reach         |
| blackmail     | threat to publish information or images            | do not privately pay or send more material   |
| fake account  | impersonation                                      | capture the profile and URL, then report it  |
| ratio him/her | rallying mass negative replies                     | may become group harassment                  |

The Australian eSafety Commissioner explains that cyberbullying can occur through social media, games, messaging, livestreams, images and video. Families can:

- preserve screenshots, URLs, usernames and times;
- avoid deleting all evidence immediately;
- use platform reporting and blocking tools;
- use eSafety pathways for serious threats, intimidation, harassment or humiliation involving a child;
- stay with the child and seek urgent help if there is an immediate or specific physical danger.

# Language references and verification date

This guide was checked on **25 August 2026 (AEST)** against:

- [Merriam-Webster — Slang ↗](#)
- [Merriam-Webster — rizz ↗](#)
- [Merriam-Webster — brain rot ↗](#)
- [Merriam-Webster — gyatt ↗](#)
- [Cambridge Dictionary — ngl ↗](#)
- [Dictionary.com — delulu ↗](#)
- [ABC Radio Brisbane — The Language of Gen Alpha ↗](#)
- [ABC News — what young people think about the social media ban ↗](#)

Online language changes quickly. These are common uses, not universal rules for every child, school or platform.

# Australian safety sources and limits

- [eSafety Commissioner — Parents ↗](#)
- [eSafety — help someone deal with cyberbullying ↗](#)
- [eSafety — the manosphere: what parents and carers need to know ↗](#)

This guide provides general language and online-safety information. It does not diagnose risk, replace a conversation with your child or replace advice from a school, counsellor, health professional, police or emergency service. Meanings can change rapidly and may differ inside a particular friendship group.

# About Airbotix Family Guides

Airbotix Family Guides organise practical questions Australian families face—from early years and school choices to online life and future skills.

Airbotix courses help children turn interests into visible projects and explain their thinking. That educational role is separate from online-safety reporting, mental-health care and school discipline.

Explore more resources at [airbotix.ai/resources](https://airbotix.ai/resources) ↗.

## NEXT STEP

# Understand the tone before choosing the next step

Website opens more Airbotix Family Guides; Rain helps with courses, activities and partnerships; Source opens Australian eSafety guidance.

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### WEBSITE

#### Airbotix Family Guides

Read this guide online and explore more Australian family resources.



[airbotix.ai/resources/australia-teen-slang-parent-guide-en](https://airbotix.ai/resources/australia-teen-slang-parent-guide-en) ↗

### SALES

#### Contact Rain

Ask about Airbotix courses, activities and school partnerships. This is not a psychological, legal or school-discipline service.



[Rain · Sales WeChat](#) ↗

### SOURCE

#### eSafety Parents

Open Australian guidance on online safety, cyberbullying and getting help.



[esafety.gov.au/parents](https://esafety.gov.au/parents) ↗