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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute English

### Hanger



*This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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**Neil**

Hello. I'm Neil.

**Dan**

Hello. I'm Dan. Neil, aren't you going to say the 'welcome to 6 Minute English' bit?

**Neil**

Hmmm maybe. How's your mood today, Dan? Feeling happy?

**Dan**

Oh yes, very happy. I've just had lunch. What about you?

**Neil**

Well to be honest, I haven't had the chance to eat yet and it's making me a bit grumpy.

**Dan**

Why haven't you eaten?

**Neil**

Well, I was doing some research for today's topic which is all about feeling angry when you are hungry. You know what I'm talking about?

**Dan**

Oh yes, we're talking about being '**hangry**'. It's quite a new word, isn't it? A combination of hungry and angry.

**Neil**

Yes, hangry is our topic. But before we learn more about it, here's today's quiz. English has quite a few words which are made by joining two different words together like 'hangry', for example: brunch, motel, Brexit. What do we call these words? Are they...

- a) Suitcase words
- b) Portmanteau words, or
- c) Backpack words

**Dan**

Well, I think I know this one, so I'll keep the answer to myself - don't want to give away any spoilers. What I do want to know is if **hanger** is a real thing – or is it just something that's been made up by grumpy people, like you?

**Neil**

Let's hear from Sophie Medlin, who is a lecturer in nutrition and dietetics at King's College London. Is hanger a real thing and where does the word come from?

**Sophie Medlin, lecturer in nutrition and dietetics, King's College London**

We've long recognised that hunger leads to **irritability** - in science. But the wonderful world of social media has **merged** the two words for us and now we know it as **hanger**.

**Neil**

So, is **hanger** a real thing and where does she say the word comes from?

**Dan**

According to Medlin it is a real thing. She says that science has recognised that hunger leads to **irritability**. **Irritability** is a noun which means being easily annoyed, not in a good mood.

**Neil**

And she says that it was the wonderful world of social media that joined the two words together. She used the verb **merge**. **Merge**, meaning join together.

**Dan**

I know social media is responsible for many things, but the word **hangry** actually appeared in the 1990s – so a little before the arrival of social media. But it's certainly true that social media has made it more prominent.

**Neil**

Me, right now, hashtag hangry! Let's listen to that clip again.

**Sophie Medlin**

We've long recognised that hunger leads to **irritability** - in science. But the wonderful world of social media has **merged** the two words for us and now we know it as **hanger**.

**Neil**

So now we know that **hanger** is a real thing, let's learn a bit more about it. Why does it happen? Why do we get angry when we are hungry? Here's Sophie Medlin again.

**Sophie Medlin**

As the blood sugars drop, we increase our cortisol and adrenalin – so our kind of **fight or flight hormones** – and those have an impact on our brain and the neuropeptides – the things that control our brain, the chemicals in our brain, the ones that trigger for hunger are the same ones that

trigger for anger and also for **rage** and **impulsive** type behaviours. So that's why you get that sort of same response.

**Neil**

So it's all to do with blood sugar, isn't it?

**Dan**

Yes, it seems so. When we are hungry the level of sugar in our blood is lower and this causes an increase in particular **hormones**. **Hormones** are the chemicals we make in our bodies that control certain biological and psychological functions.

**Neil**

The hormones released when we are hungry are the same as our **fight or flight hormones**. They are the **hormones** that the body uses to prepare us to either fight or run away from a dangerous situation.

**Dan**

When these hormones are increased, it can cause anger and **rage**. **Rage** is another word for being very angry.

**Neil**

And when we are angry we can behave **impulsively**. **Impulsive** behaviour is when we do things without thinking, without considering the consequences.

**Dan**

So when we are hungry, the same emotions can run through us. We can be angry and make poor decisions. And that is **hanger**.

**Neil**

Which brings us nicely to our quiz question. What do we call words, like **hanger**, that are made by joining two different words together? Now you said you knew the answer Dan?

**Dan**

I did!

**Neil**

What was it?

**Dan**

Portmanteau words.

**Neil**

And you are absolutely correct. The answer is portmanteau words. Congratulations if you knew that.

**Dan**

I did.

**Neil**

Alright then smarty pants. No need to boast!

**Dan**

I can see that you're still a bit hangry Neil.

**Neil**

Yes, I'm hungry and that is making me angry! But I think I can hold on to get through a review of the rest of today's vocabulary.

**Dan**

Well, we also had the noun **irritability**, meaning getting annoyed very easily, just like...

**Neil**

Don't, just don't. Or I might just **merge** my fist with your face.

**Dan**

Ouch. Yes, **merge** meaning join different things together. I can see your **fight or flight hormones** are kicking in. Those chemicals in the body that prepare us for aggression or escape.

**Neil**

I haven't quite reached **rage** yet. This was another of our words, **rage**, and it means a state of being very, very angry.

**Dan**

Our last word was **impulsive**. This is an adjective to describe when we do things without really thinking about them. We just do them without any control and without thinking about the consequences.

**Neil**

Now I'm off, I'm starving. I've got to eat before I do something impulsive. That is it for this programme. For more, find us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and our YouTube pages, and of course our website [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com), where you can find all kinds of other programmes and videos and activities to help you improve your English. Thank you for joining us and goodbye.

**Dan**

Bye!