

# STAYING RELEVANT: 6 TERMS FROM MILLENNIALS AND GEN Z TO KNOW

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## FAMILY & FRIENDS

# STAYING RELEVANT: 6 TERMS FROM MILLENNIALS AND GEN Z TO KNOW



[Carsen Russell](#) | ⌚ Wed Nov 20

Confession: Even as a millennial I do not always understand a lot of millennials and gen z culture. That's because the culture of teens, twenty-somethings and even the older millennials is subtle, weird and hard. Steeped in subculture and memes, it moves as fast as the internet. Trends come and go as quickly as influencers and celebrities get "canceled."



So I can imagine someone who is not surrounded by these cultural phenomenons would be confused. What is TikTok? Why does gen z keep saying vibe check? How do you say VSCO girl? Veesco? V-S-C-O? Visco? We have the answers to these questions and more so that this holiday season you don't have to feel left out or worse, outdated when talking to your millennial and gen z friends and family.

## Canceled Culture

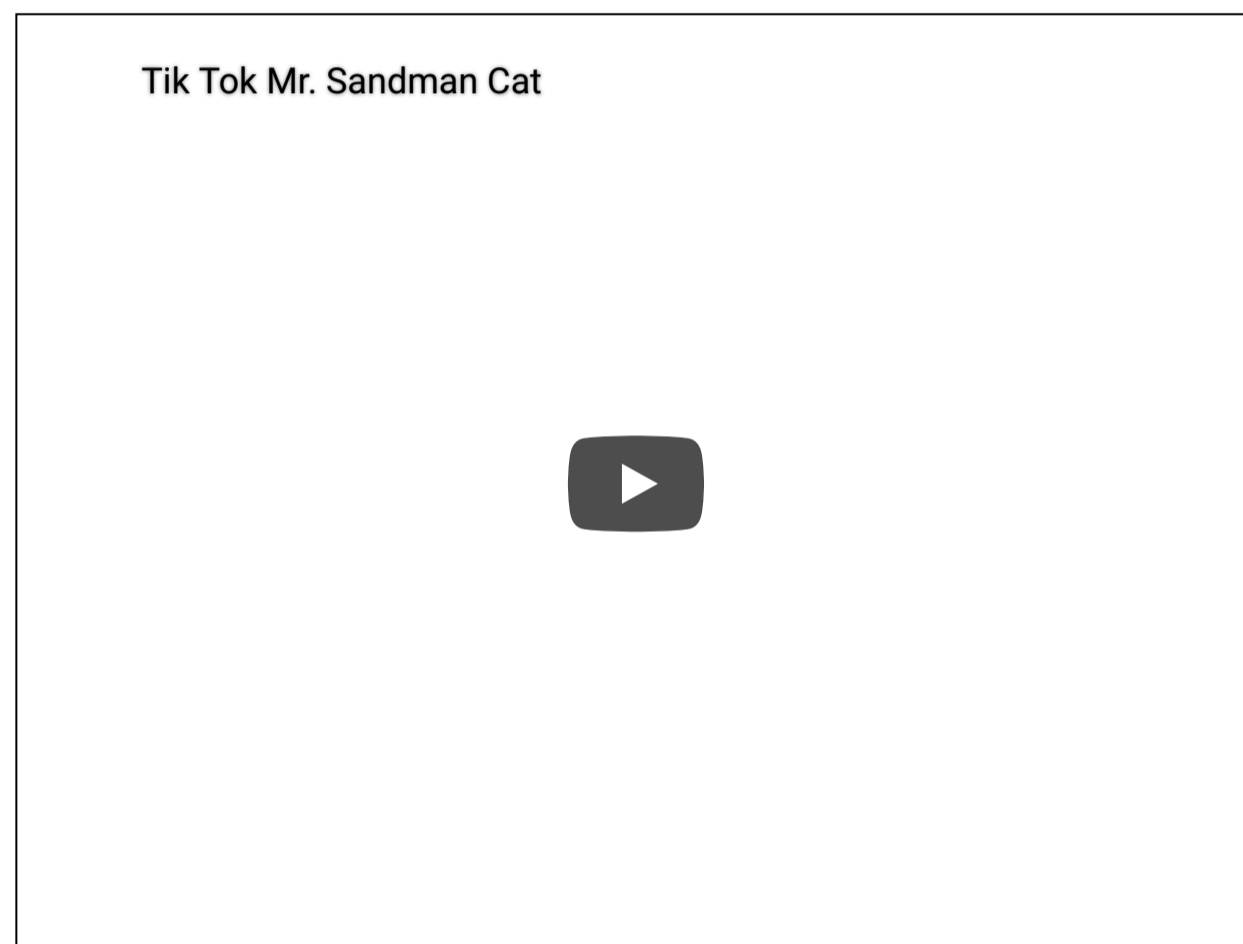
Canceled culture is big right now. There are many think pieces on the merits and losses caused by canceling someone. But what is it? **Someone, or something, can be canceled. Happening online quickly, something is done by a person, brand or thing and the public reacts.** Online commenters on Instagram, Twitter and other social media sites will flood newsfeeds with comments saying the person or thing is canceled. They'll get hashtags trending with the same information. People will unfollow the canceled person en masse.

An example of canceled culture this year includes [Tati Westbrook and James Charles](#) (two beauty YouTubers) who were friends and had a mentor/mentee relationship. Charles posted photos of a product that was a competitor to Westbrook on Instagram. Fans quickly jumped to Westbrook's defense and were insulted on her behalf. They "canceled" Charles and for weeks the two YouTubers posted videos defending themselves and laying blame on the other. **Long story short: it was a mess.** Both Youtubers lost (then gained, then lost) millions of followers and have had to lay low to not risk any more bad press. Canceled culture is often messy, and because it's driven by fans there can be a lot of misinformation.

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## TikTok

TikTok is the newest social media craze. **It is an app where users can post short videos.** Some people post about their life while others make humorous videos and others partake in viral memes. The platform has given rise to its own trends, [like egirls](#), and created influencers who are only on TikTok. Mostly used by gen z, Reese Witherspoon recently made waves when she joined the platform (thanks to her gen z son).



*A viral and delightful TikTok from this year featured a cat dancing to 1954 song "Mr. Sandman" by The Chordettes.*

## Vibe Check

You may hear younger millennials and gen z say "vibe check" this holiday season. As you may remember from the 70s, a vibe is the energy someone or something is putting out. A popular phrase with youth is "good vibes only," meaning they only want to be in spaces and around people who have positive energy. "Vibe check" is a sort-of catch-all term. It could mean they are checking the vibe in the room, or they don't like the vibe in the room or even as a bit of meme-fueled nonsense. **What you do need to know is that when someone says vibe check it does not need a response.** Just let someone vibe check and continue on with the conversation!

## VSCO Girl



Photo from Instagram user vsco.\_girl1212

Any chance you remember “basic girls” from the early aughts, who loved fall, pumpkin spice lattes, and ugg boots? The VSCO Girl is 2019’s answer to her. Known for being environmentally conscious they go everywhere with a [metal straw](#) and [hydro flask](#). Her preferred accessories are [hair scrunchies](#) and [Birkenstocks](#). They don’t wear makeup. This trendy it girl started on Instagram and earned the name from using a popular photo editing app (VSCO). They caption their Instagram posts with the phrase ‘sksksksk.’ This means anything from a frustrated keyboard smash to LOL. Knowing it’s pronounced ‘vis-co’ will get you extra brownie points with millennials and gen z.

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## OK Boomer

Meant to be dismissive of someone who is out of touch, “ok boomer” is a creation of gen z. It started as a way to acknowledge opinions online zoomers found to be frustrating — without starting an argument. It quickly went viral. A 25-year-old politician from New Zealand even used it as a retort when she was heckled by an older politician during a climate crisis speech. Hopefully, this does not come up during your holidays! If it does instead of getting upset try and start a conversation. You have years of experience and knowledge and it is short-sighted to dismiss this. But millennials and gen z often feel dismissed themselves. By listening instead of arguing or writing one another off you can start a productive dialogue.

## That’s the Tea, Sis



**The tea is gossip.** If someone tells you they have tea to spill, or asks you to spill the tea, they want to talk about the latest scandal. If the tea is hot then it is especially scandalous. This phrase is popular among YouTubers and beauty influencers. **Also popular with these crowds is wig snatching.** As in, “my wig was snatched.” This just means someone was shocked in the moment. Same if someone is shook. They’re just surprised.

## Bonus: Music and TV Popular with Millennials and Gen Z

What’s popular will differ from person to person but these are just some of the big-name artists, movies and TV shows millennials and gen z may be talking about this holiday season.

### Music

[Lizzo](#) is one of the most popular artists of this year. She had an astronomical rise to fame with hits like ‘[Juice](#).’ And her two-year-old song ‘[Truth Hurts](#)’ topped Billboard charts for the first time this year. Lil Nas X released ‘[Old Town Road](#),’ and took the song from viral hit to song of the year. Remixed with Billy Ray Cyrus, this rap and country cross-over hit won Musical Event of the Year at the Country Music Awards. Lil Nas X made history as the first openly gay black man to win a major award at the CMAs. (One teen says Lil Nas X is no longer popular... So use with caution.) Other popular musicians from this year include [Ariana Grande](#), [Post Malone](#), [Billie Eilish](#), and Taylor Swift returned with her 7th studio album, [Lover](#).



[Taylor Swift's 7th Studio Album, Lover, \\$11.79](#)

## TV and Movies

Disney+ was just released and millennials and gen z are raving about its offerings. One of the most popular releases is *The Mandalorian*, a Star Wars tv series. People are especially excited by the [baby Yoda character](#) (it's already a viral meme). Also on Disney+ are Marvel offerings, including [Avengers Endgame](#). This was the movie event of the year for a generation of people who had grown up on superheroes. [Midsommar](#), a horror film set in idyllic Sweden, was the breakout hit of the summer, and the recent [Joker](#) movie has also been popular. Popular tv shows include Phoebe Waller-Bridge's [Fleabag](#), the feel-good sitcom [The Good Place](#) and [Succession](#).

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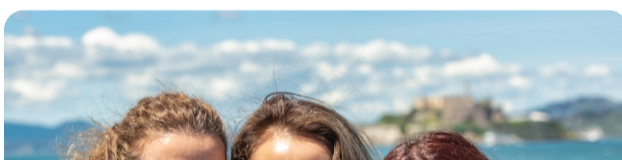
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