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## **«BRAT» CROWNED COLLINS DICTIONARY 2024 WORD OF THE YEAR – NEW WORD OR CULTURAL PHENOMENON**

Many of the words on Collins Dictionary's 2024 shortlist are not exactly new but have experienced a notable resurgence, becoming central to cultural conversations for reasons that may not always be immediately clear. Among these is the 2024 Word of the Year: «brat». First recorded around 1500, the term has seen a remarkable revival, making appearances across various contexts [1].

The term «brat» has evolved into a cultural phenomenon, transcending its traditional use to describe a misbehaving child. While the word has roots that date back centuries, its contemporary usage has transformed it into a symbol of confidence, independence, and a hedonistic lifestyle particularly within youth culture. Pop culture, social media, and the broader societal embrace of self-expression, rebellion, and unapologetic living have notably influenced such a cultural shift [2].

Historically, «brat» referred to an unruly, impudent child, often characterized by misbehaviour and a lack of respect for authority. The word carried a negative connotation, pointing to someone who was difficult to manage or control. However, in recent years, especially with the rise of social media and cultural shifts towards more individualized expressions of identity, the meaning of «brat» has evolved to represent a bold, confident, and hedonistic approach to life [3].

Pop star Charli XCX played a significant role in this transformation. In 2024, she released an album titled *Brat*, which resonated with a new generation looking to express themselves more freely and confidently. The album, alongside the broader «brat» movement, sparked a cultural phenomenon that embraced boldness, self-acceptance, and an audacious rejection of societal norms.

The «brat» identity is centred on a carefree, confident, and pleasure-driven existence. It is about embracing one's flaws, living for the moment, and rejecting the pressure to conform. Rather than a simple act of rebellion, being a «brat» has become a lifestyle namely a declaration of independence and self-assurance that aligns with the desire to live authentically and unapologetically.

For many, being a «brat» is about the refusal to be subdued by the expectations placed on them by society. It is an attitude that challenges traditional ideas of politeness, respectability, and responsibility. The cultural embrace of «brat» is often intertwined with hedonism, where seeking joy and personal satisfaction becomes a key goal of life. The idea is to pursue pleasure without guilt or fear of judgment, much like the carefree spirit of a child who lives purely in the moment.

Charli XCX's influence in popularizing the «brat» identity cannot be overstated. Her album *Brat*, released in June 2024, became the soundtrack for what was dubbed «brat summer». This cultural moment saw an explosion of self-confidence and rebellion, especially among younger generations. Charli describes the «brat» person as someone who is imperfect, blunt, and messy, yet still embraces his or her individuality with pride. She refers to a «brat» as someone who may have emotional breakdowns but continues to party through it. «Brat» is someone who is honest, direct, and unashamed of his or her imperfections.

The «brat» concept is not just about individualism; it also speaks to a broader cultural push for authenticity. It is about being real and unapologetic, especially in a world where social media often promotes curated perfection. In embracing the «brat» mentality, individuals are encouraged to embrace their flaws, enjoy life's pleasures, and assert their independence without fear of judgment. The «brat» phenomenon has had a ripple effect across various aspects of culture, from music to fashion, to politics. Charli XCX's impact can be seen in the way younger people engage with social media, expressing their identities

more openly and confidently. The «brat» person aligns with the growing trend of rejecting mainstream ideals in favour of a more individualistic, «live for the moment» ethos.

Politically, the «brat» attitude has even found its way into election campaigns. The U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris's campaign, for instance, adopted the slogan «Kamala IS Brat» to connect with younger voters, tapping into the rebellious, youthful spirit of the «brat» culture. This strategic move highlighted how the term has become more than just a description of a misbehaving child. Nowadays it is a signifier of youth-driven cultural power.

In today's cultural landscape, being a «brat» is about rejecting the pressures of perfection and embracing a lifestyle of self-expression, fun, and unapologetic independence. It represents a refusal to be boxed in by expectations of how one should behave or what one should pursue. It is a way of living that celebrates boldness, creativity, and personal freedom, often manifesting in a mix of rebelliousness, self-assurance, and hedonism. At its heart, the «brat» mentality is about taking control of your own pleasure. It is not about entitlement or expecting hand-outs, but about creating the life, you desire through effort and intention. When you know, what you want, working toward it becomes an act of play, and life becomes a richer, more fulfilling experience. This approach also emphasizes gratitude and an appreciation for the abundance of the universe. With only one life to live, it is never too late to begin.

As more people adopt the «brat» mind-set, one may see a wave of creativity, kindness, and positive change. The term has become a reflection of the times, a cultural marker for a generation that is redefining norms and breaking free from the constraints of traditional expectations. Whether through music, fashion, or personal philosophy, the «brat» has come to represent more than just a spoiled child; it's a symbol of a generation's desire to carve out a space for themselves that is unapologetically their own.

Thus, the «brat» phenomenon is a powerful cultural force that has redefined what it means to be confident, independent, and self-assured. It is not just about rebellion for the sake of rebellion, but rather about living life fully and on one's own terms. Through Charli XCX's influence and the rise of a more self-empowered and unapologetic youth culture, «brat» has transformed from a term of disapproval into a symbol of a new cultural identity – a loud, proud, and often messy embrace of individuality and hedonism. As more people adopt this mind-set, the «brat» phenomenon continues to shape the way we think about self-expression, pleasure, and freedom in modern society.

### **References**

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