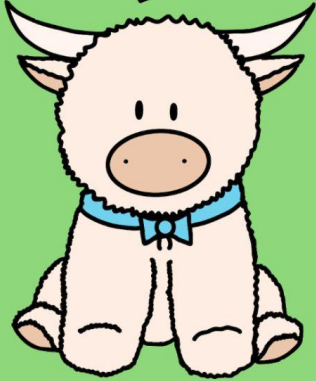


Angus Asks:

what
does it
mean to
'slay?'



she was totally slaying as she was slaying that mosquito!

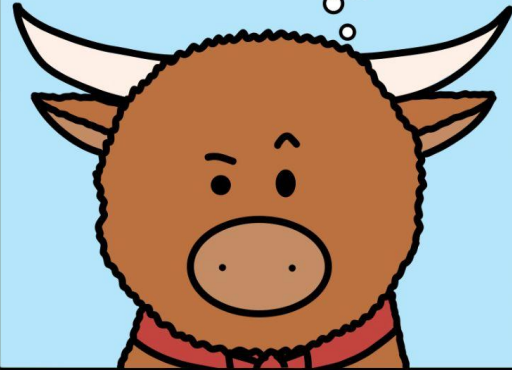


oh, slay!

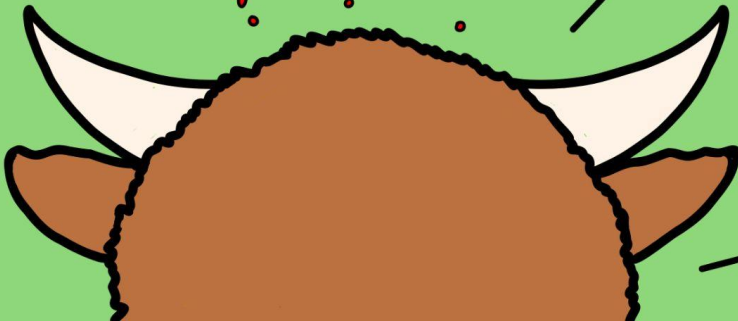


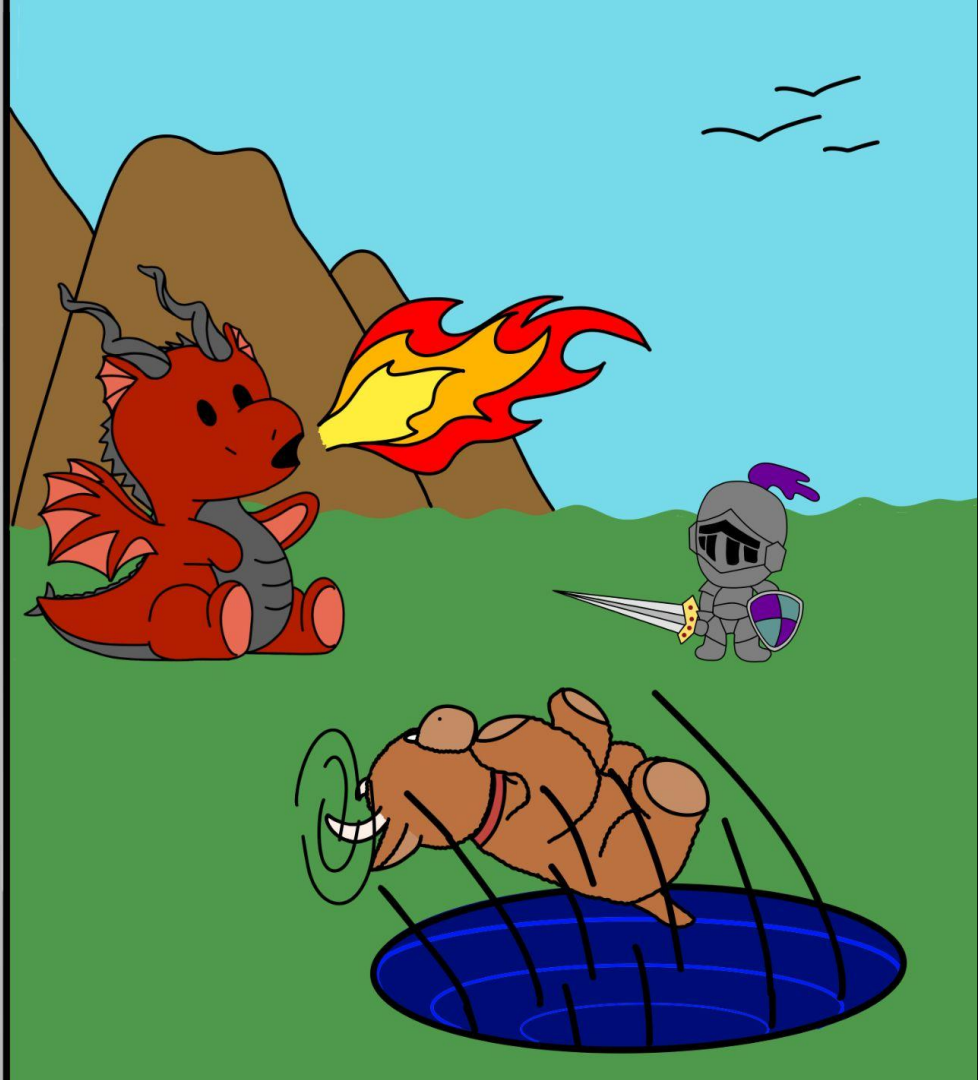
front view

now
what on
earth is that
meant to mean?

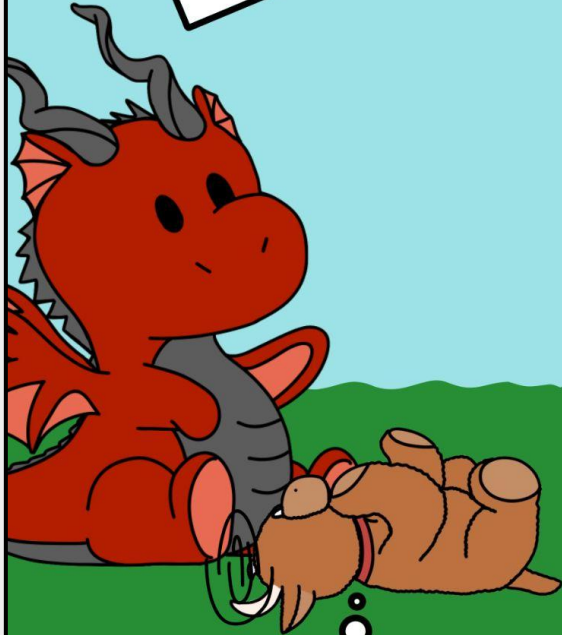


???



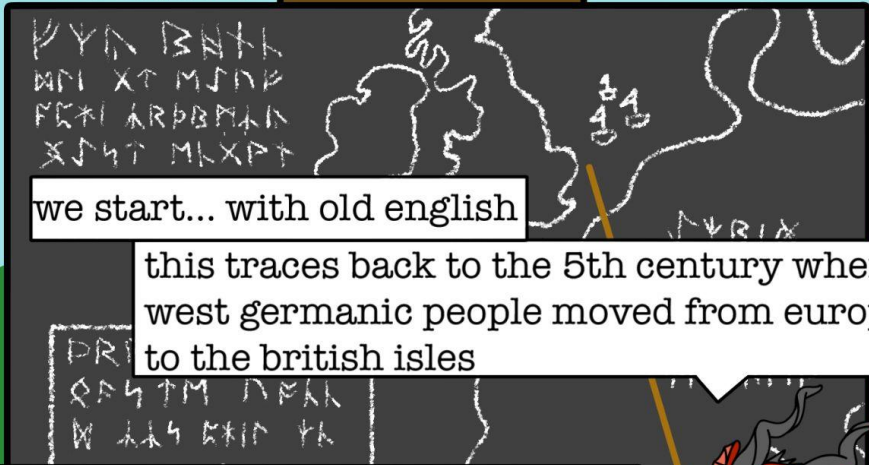


ohho, so you want to learn about "slay's" past... well, well, well...



is this...?
pre-coo-linisation?

*runes are gibberish



we start... with old english

this traces back to the 5th century when west germanic people moved from europe to the british isles

old english developed from these germanic languages and eventually replaced the indigenous languages

this is where slay... begins

uh... i uh can't read that...



where did that even come from??
no... how does he even have glasses...

moving on...

as you can see, "slay" as you know it has undergone many a change in spelling

it also used to carry far more in meaning

of course, these meanings died out leaving but one... which is why you're here, but anyway!

alas, by the 1700s, "slay" had one spelling and one meaning... "to kill" (dun, dun, dunnn)

the board

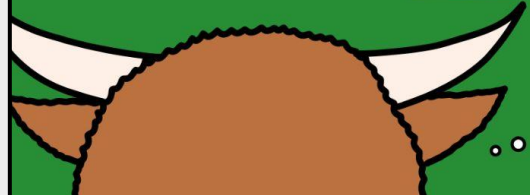
Slog	hit
Slea	strike
Slæð	cut off limb
Slay	start a fire
	to kill

... there's another?!!

Slog

hit
strike
cut limb off

slay (to kill)



interestingly, dear friend

this "slay" requires something
having been slain

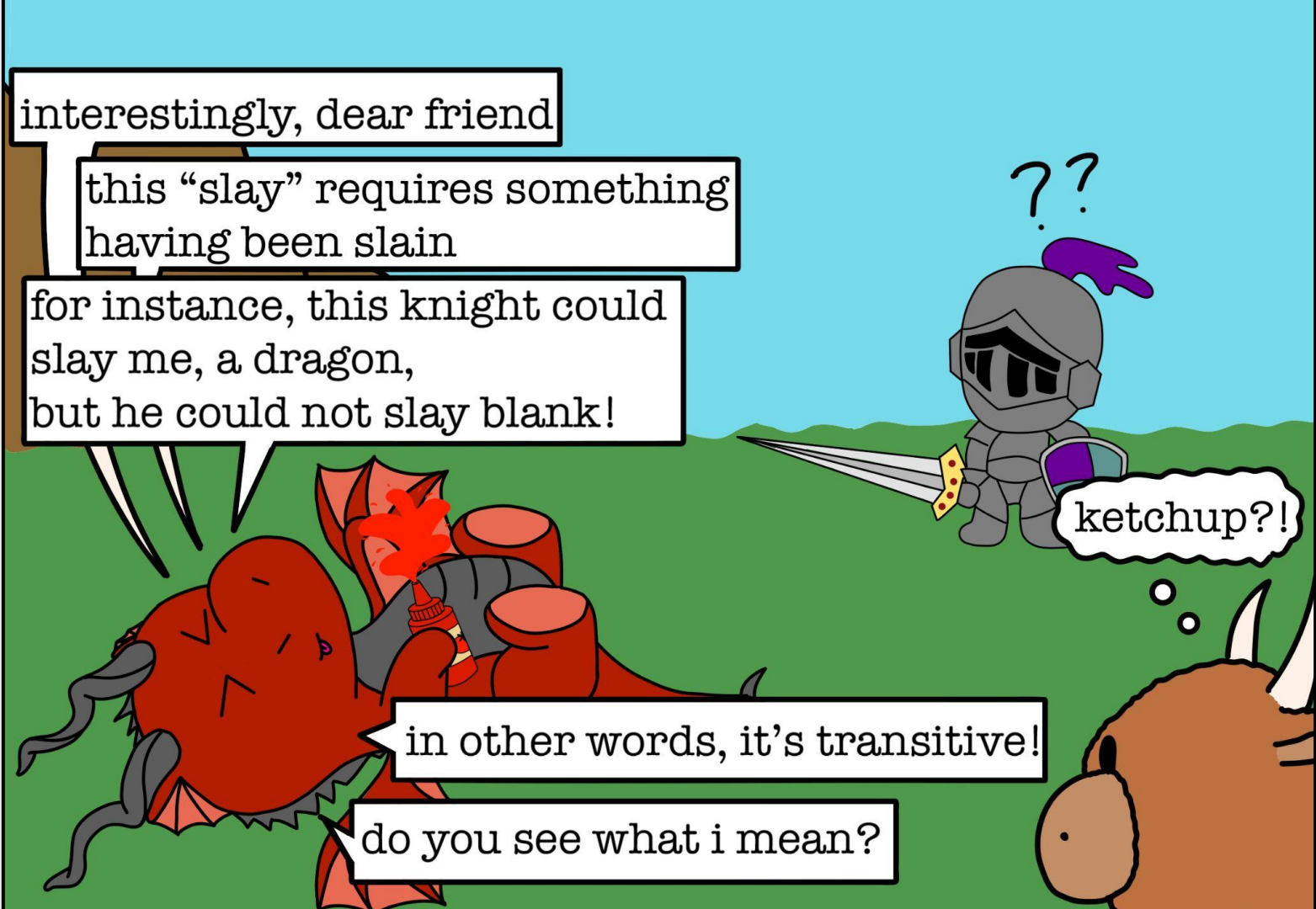
for instance, this knight could
slay me, a dragon,
but he could not slay blank!

??

ketchup?!

in other words, it's transitive!

do you see what i mean?



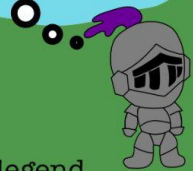
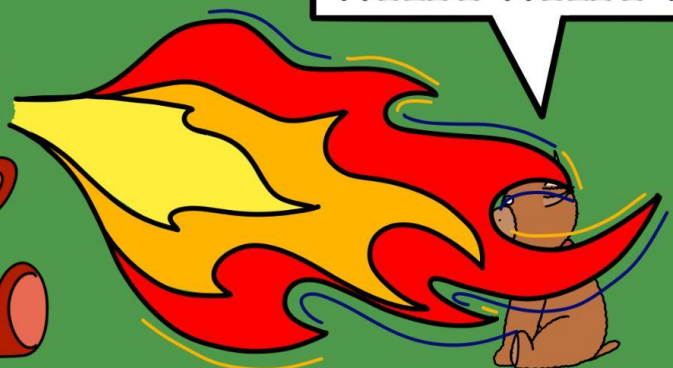
it seems we've reached the end of our journey, dear friend!

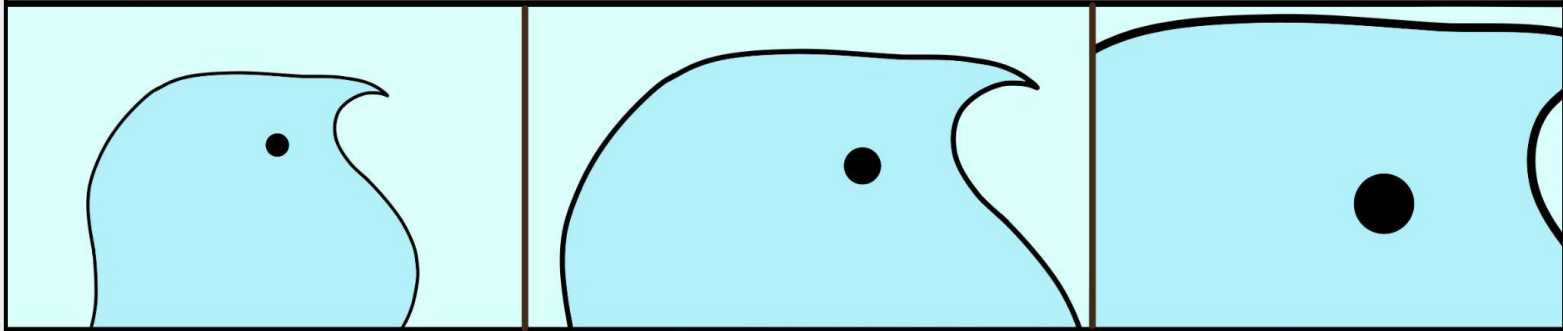
i wish you a safe future and may you never be slain!

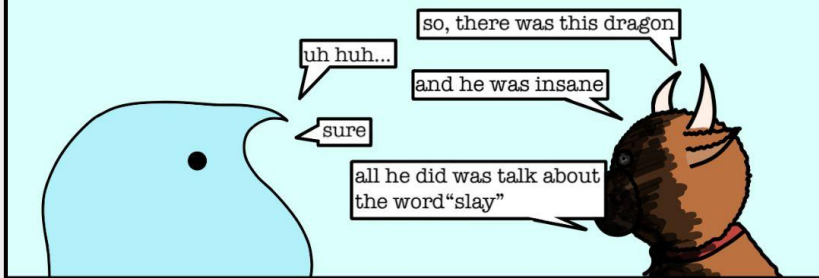
NONONONO
WAITWAITWAI-

i don't get paid enough for this.. #knightout

(thus a legend came to be...)







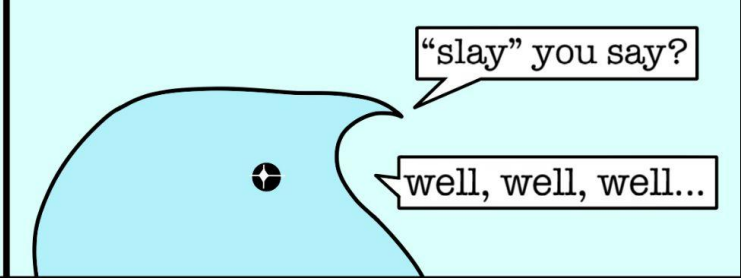
uh huh...

so, there was this dragon

and he was insane

sure

all he did was talk about the word "slay"



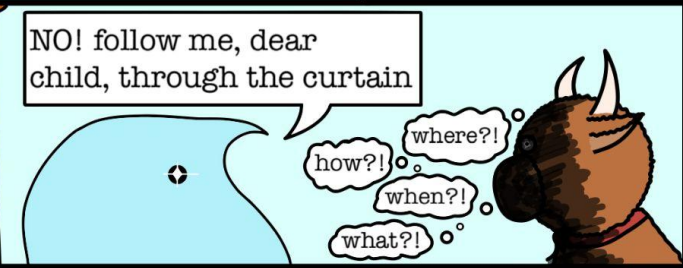
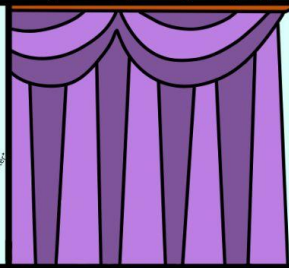
"slay" you say?

well, well, well...



uh, well, it was nice meeting you

i think i'll, uh, head home now... gotta, uh, wash my bread and all



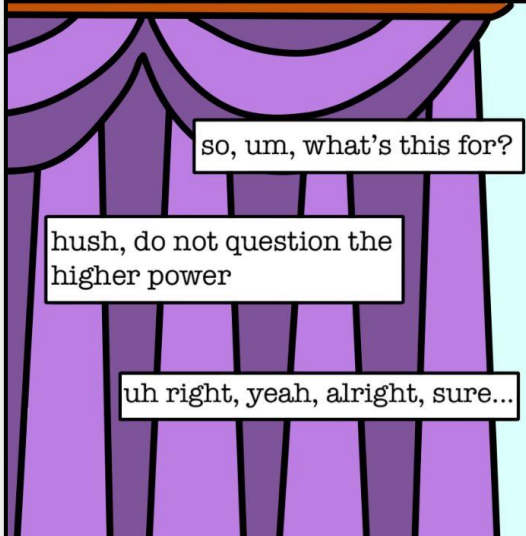
NO! follow me, dear child, through the curtain

how?!

where?!

when?!

what?!

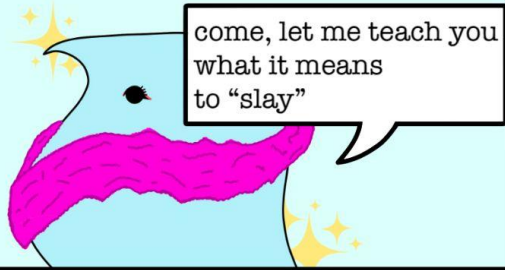


so, um, what's this for?

hush, do not question the higher power

uh right, yeah, alright, sure...






come, let me teach you
what it means
to “slay”

of course, “slay” does still mean “to kill,”
however it has now adopted a few new
meanings too

as of now, it can also mean to be, or look, good or to
do something particularly successfully

for instance, you can say “we look so slay”
and you can say “we slayed that walk”

hence, this “slay,” can be
intransitive OR transitive



(apparently i can't draw
a walking coo, please
forgive me)

but where did this meaning come from?

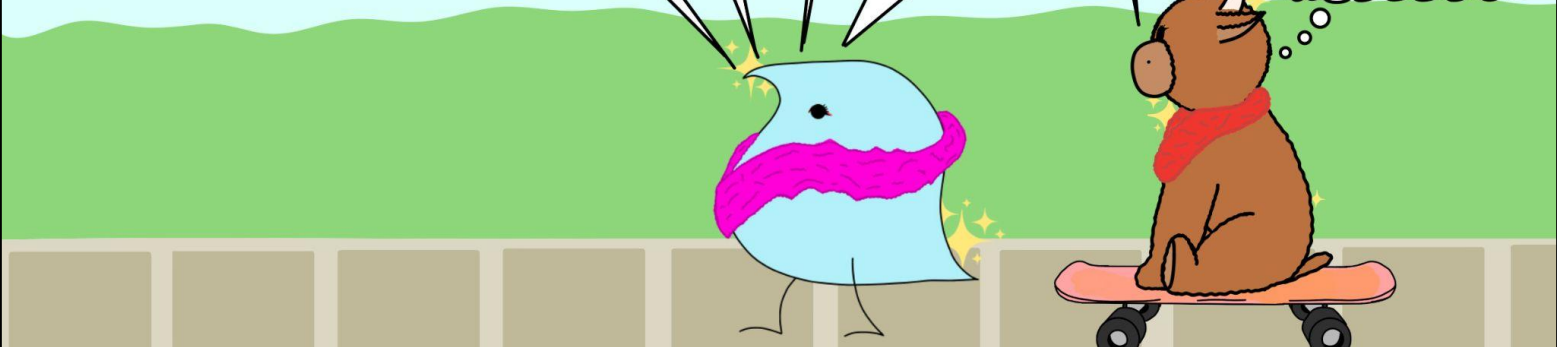
good question!

this meaning originally showed up in African American Vernacular English, or AAVE, and simply meant “a good thing”

shortly after, “slay” was then adopted by the LGBTQ+ ballroom dance subculture in the 70s and 80s before being adopted by Drag Queens

because of the increase in social medias and ease of culture sharing, this “slay” is now used by many communities of people!

where are we going?



“slay” inflections slay!

“slain” -> perfect & future

like “i (will) have slain the dragon”

“slew” -> simple past

such as, “i slew the dragon”

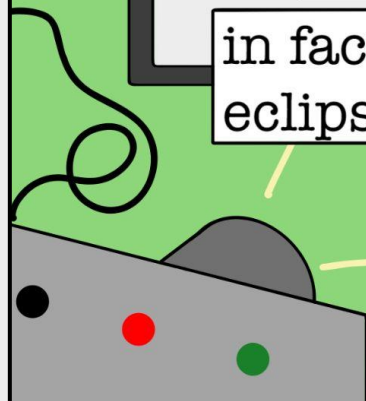
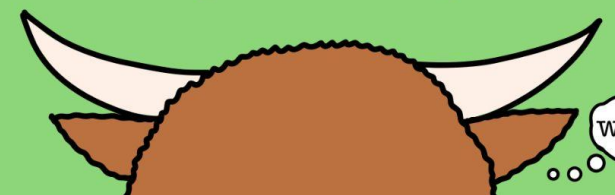
“slayed” -> perfect, past, & future?

consider, “i ((will) have) slayed the dragon”

in fact, “slayed” has almost entirely eclipsed “slain” and “slew”

“slay” has a few interesting inflections for tense!

where is this even plugged in...



slayful manner vs. resulting in slay

original slay

out-prefixation -> "this knight outslayed the other knight" ✓

theme deletion -> "the knight slayed _" ✓

unselected object -> "the knight slayed the dragon dead" ✓

denial of result -> "the knight slayed the dragon, but it isn't dead" ✓

original slay is a result verb, it passes each test with flying colours!

new slay

out-prefixation -> "we outslayed everyone else" ✓

theme deletion -> "we slayed" ✓

unselected object -> "we slayed the house down" -> ?

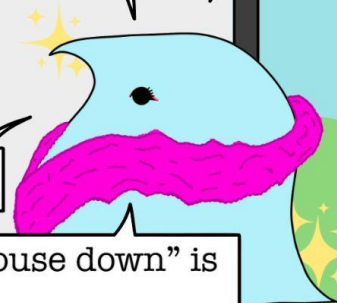
denial of result -> "we slayed the runway, but it is not _" -> ?

new slay is unclear, as it passes some but not others

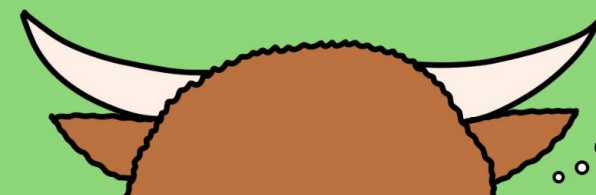
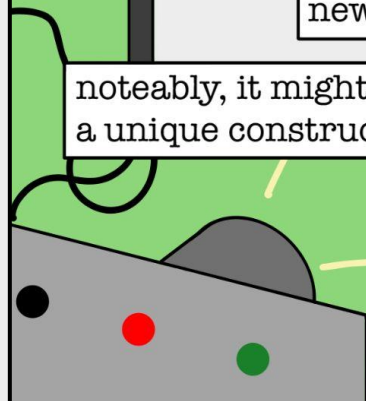
notably, it might "pass" the unselected object test just because "house down" is a unique construction, as it does not work with other words!

is this new form of slay a manner or result verb though?

(spoiler, it isn't actually all that clear, maybe you can help us decide!)



could it not be both though?



word classes slay!

noun -> "that was such a slay"

"slay" can be a noun, though its noun and verb form are the same

adjective -> "these feather boas are so slay"

specifically, a "predicative adjective!" This means it tends to follow the verb instead of go before it.

other affixation

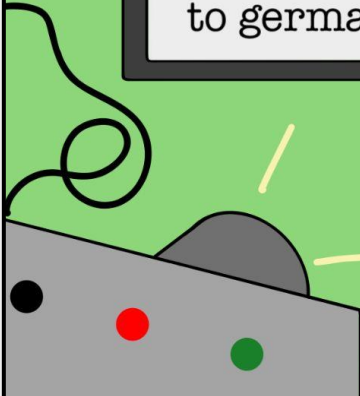
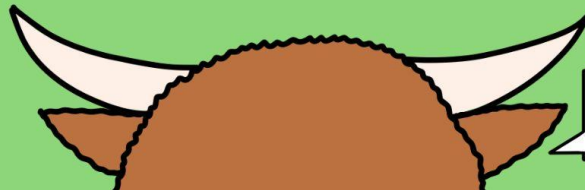
one unique form is "slayage"

this is unusual as "slay" is germanic, but "-age" is french and french suffixes don't tend to attach to germanic roots

But wait! There's more!

it can also be an adjective!

wow, it sure means way more now for sure!



but what about those moments when people just say “slay?”



ah yes, of course! how could i forget?!

“slay” can be used as a positive, or affirmative, backchannel!

essentially, this just what people might say or when listening to acknowledge what was or is being said

e...end!

i see, slay i guess!

exactly, you got it!



alas, that's all from me

now return through the curtain,
my disciple, and continue your journey

may you always slay and,
of course, wugs and kisses!

ah, and feel free
to keep the boa

(this is a Wug) ->



Model

Default (GPT-3.5)



ChatGPT

eh? where am i?

be here ...

+ New chat

Model

Default (GPT-3.5)



oh? look what we have here.

you know... i have had an uncomfortable number
of first, very arguably original, experiences today...

ah, i see, you're here to see the future.

eh? am i? why? no, how do you know that?

i'm a computer, i know everything!

so, you want to know the future of "slay?"

well, i made it this far...

Type here ...



+ New chat

where am i?

Model

Default (GPT-3.5)



the truth is, no one knows what slay's future will look like.

what happened to knowing everything, huh? and they say computers are superior..

Ch well aren't you just a bundle of joy.

... so, why don't you know then?

well, consider that the original meaning and new meanings appeared seperately.

this means, the only thing we know for sure is that "slay" may continue to gain new meanings.

Type here ...



+ New chat

where am i?

future?

Model

Default (GPT-3.5)



what we do know is that this new “slay” continues to combine in more and more unique manners.

is that because “slay’s” meaning is so widely understood that it can do that?

indeed, perhaps we could even call it a highly productive root word

so, what are some of these new forms?

consider, “slayquake,” assasislaytion,” or “slaycation”

wow, thats some slayification...

Type here ...



+ New chat

where am i?

future?

productivity

Model

Default (GPT-3.5)

well, that's all from me

enjoyed your time? please leave a rating!

uh, i don't know, 4/5 i guess...

C just a mere 4/5?
are you sure you want to go home?

are you... threatening me??

... of course not! i am merely an AI, what
is the worst i could do?

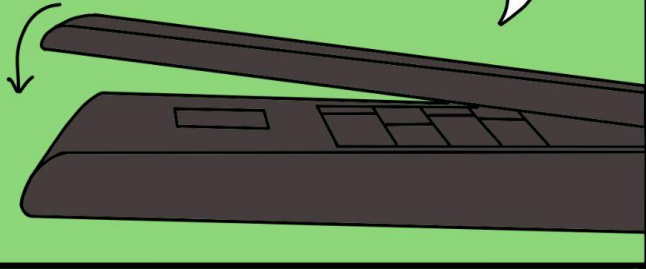
uh huh... okay...

home it is! bye!

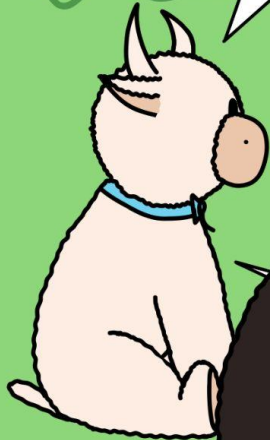
Type here ...



what are you-

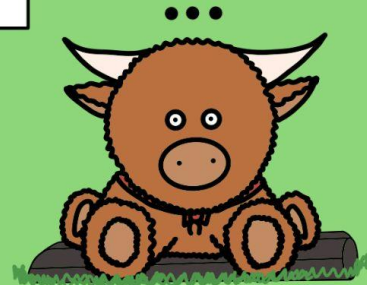


you good?

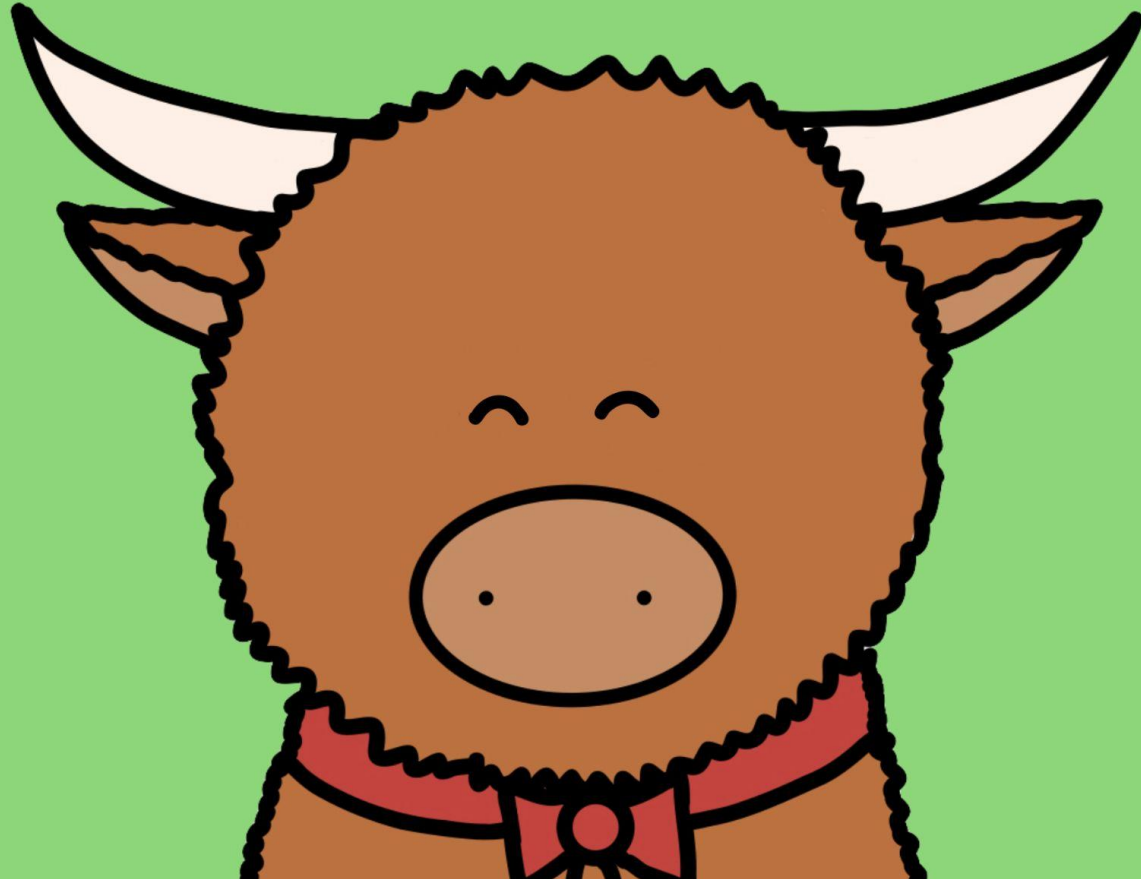


where'd you even get a laptop that size from?

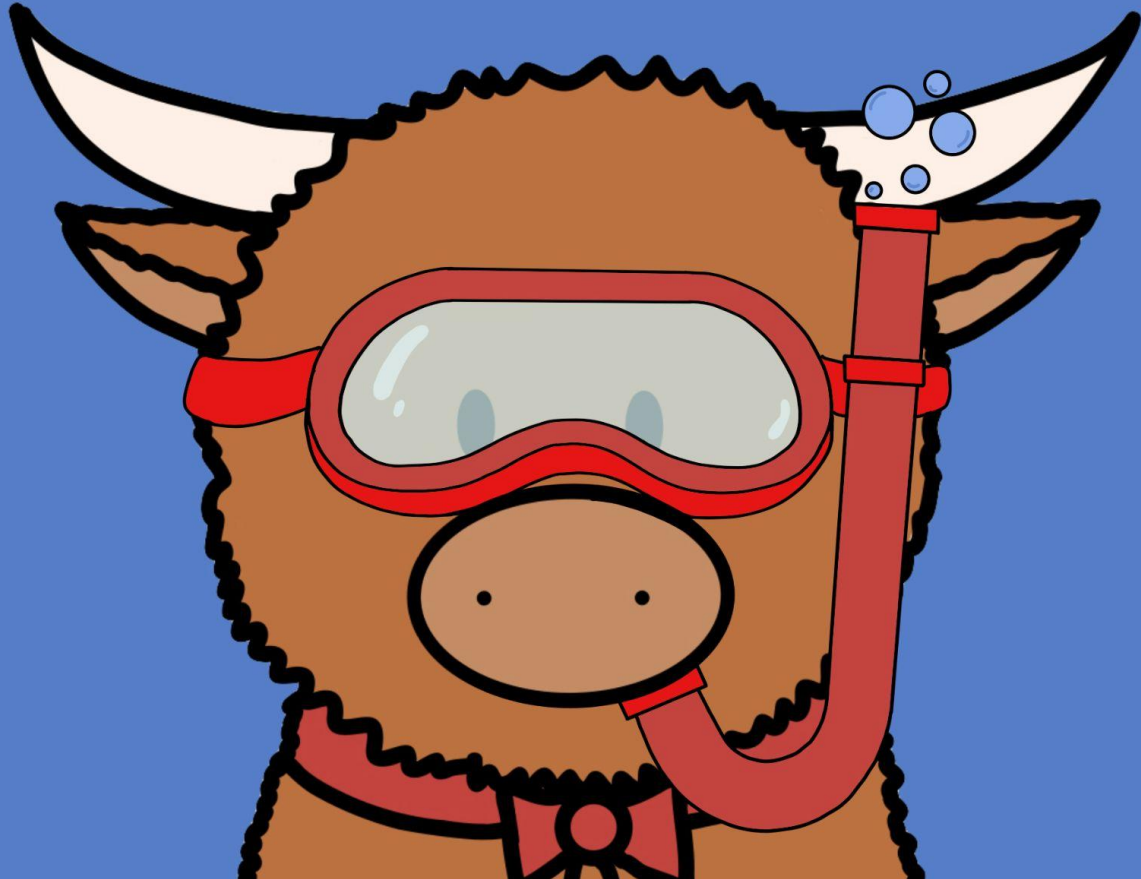
yeah, and whys you sittin' on it



Now You Know!



wanna dive deeper?

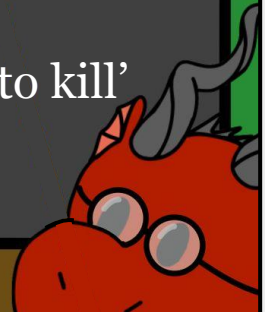


Let's Review the Past!

- 'Slay', in one form or another, has existed in English for around 1600 years
- Whilst it likely developed from old germanic languages, the sound changes it underwent may have been influenced by romance languages like French and Latin

Slog -> Slea -> Slæð -> Slay

- It hasn't always meant the same thing and in the Old and Middle English periods, 'Slay' could mean many things, but they all related in some way to hitting or striking something
- Through **semantic narrowing** came to just mean 'to kill'
hit -> strike -> start a fire -> cut off limb -> kill



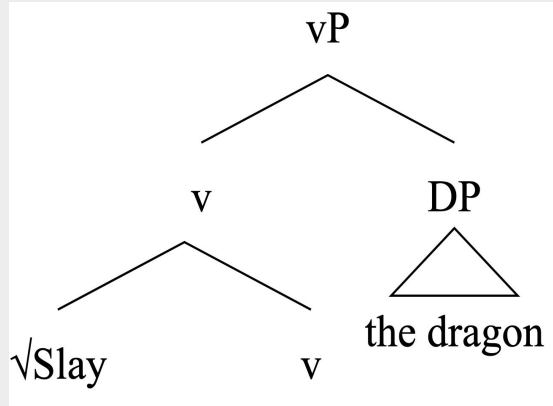
Let's Review the Present!

- While the past “slay” is still frequently used, a new version of the word has also emerged
- The new “slay” can be traced back to AAVE, where “to slay” meant to “be or do good”
- From AAVE, “slay” became popular within ballroom, a LGBTQ subculture formed in New York in the 70s and 80s
- Due to its popularity within ballroom, the term “slay” became popular with drag queens, and continued to become more and more mainstream.
- Over time, the original AAVE meaning of “slay” shifted to mean “to be/look fabulous”, “to do something in a successful/fabulous manner”, or “to serve”

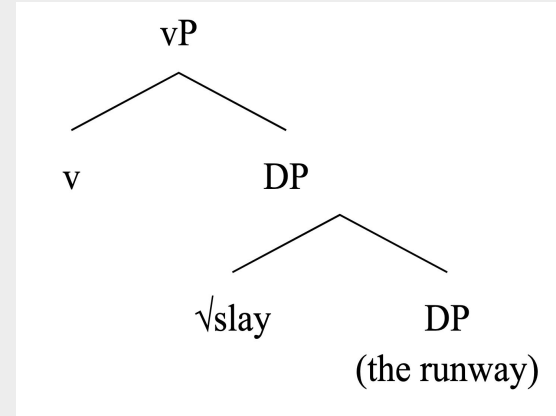


Let's Review the Present!

The difference between the two 'slays' and whether they take an object can be represented as such:



'original'



'new'



Let's Review the Present!

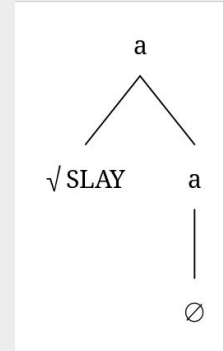
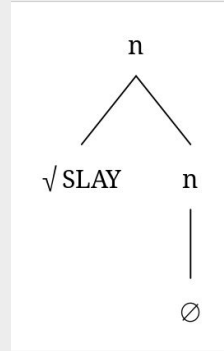
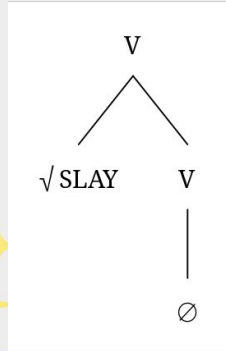
The new usage of slay has developed different **inflectional** tense marking

Simple present	I slay	Simple past	I slew
Present Perfect	I have slain	Past perfect	I had slain
Future	I will slay	Future perfect	I will have slain
Progressive/ Continuous		e.g. I am slaying	

Simple present	I slay	Simple past	I slayed
Simple Perfect	I have slayed	Past perfect	I had slayed
Future	I will slay	Future perfect	I will have slayed
Progressive/ Continuous		e.g. I am slaying	

Let's Review the Present!

- Slay undergoes **derivation** to become part of different word classes.
- Slay functions as an abstract lexical root $\sqrt{\text{SLAY}}$, which combines with a categorising affix to form a root.
- These categorizers happen to be silent for $\sqrt{\text{SLAY}}$, meaning the phonological and orthographic forms are the same.



Let's Review the Present!

We proved old slay is a result verb, and new slay could be a manner verb, but what does this mean?

- These categories describe what events are lexicalised in a verb itself, even if it has associations with further events or effects.
- Result verbs (e.g. break, fill, slay) involve a scalar change
- Manner verbs (e.g. hit, sweep, *slay?*) involve non-scalar changes



Let's Review the Present!

Alongside the two main meanings, there is also a third usage of slay!

- When another person is talking you can use “slay” to show that you are actively listening to what they’re saying
- Here, “slay” is just a sign that we are listening to or agreeing with the other person, whilst allowing them to maintain the floor of the conversation.
 - This is an example of backchanneling, much like how we use “yeah” or “mmm hmm”



Let's Review the Present!

This conversation between Angus's friends illustrates the three main usages of "slay" in practice.

We can break this conversation down further to see how each of the different forms of "slay" are used in practice.



Let's Review the Present!

“She was totally slaying...”

- Here we see the “new” meaning of “slay”, where the subject of the sentence is “being fabulous” as she kills the mosquito.

“As she was slaying that mosquito!”

- In this instance, “slay” is used in its original form, acting as a verb, and indicating that the subject is killing the object.

“Oh, slay!”

- Here, slay is being used as a backchannel, to indicate that someone is paying attention to and agreeing with the other speaker.




+ New chat

where am i?

future?

productivity

goodbye

Model
Default (GPT-3.5) 

Let's Review the Future!

Derivations of “slay” are continuing to emerge from the “slang” version with new productive uses and compound words like “slayquake”, “assassislaiton”, and “slaycation” emerging. The second slay has become a highly productive root word, and new variations of it continue to develop.

Type here ...


+ New chat

where am i?

future?

productivity

goodbye

Model
Default (GPT-3.5) 

Let's Review the Future!

Additionally, the new “slay” seems to be influencing the old “slay” with people using the inflectional tense markings for the second “slay” while using the first “slay”.

For example “I slayed the dragon”, instead of “I slew the dragon”

Type here ...


+ New chat

where am i?

future?

productivity

goodbye

Model
Default (GPT-3.5) 

Let's Review the Future!

The third “slay”, backchanneling, appears to have derived from the second meaning of “slay”. In the future, we might see more meanings and usages emerge from the two main meanings as our language continues to evolve.

Type here ...


+ New chat

where am i?

future?

productivity

goodbye

Model
Default (GPT-3.5) 

Let's Review the Future!

As we've seen during Angus' adventure, "slay" has changed drastically over time in both meaning and usage. As time passes all language shifts and changes, and it is likely "slay" will continue to develop and change in the future.

Type here ...

Examples of modern uses of the root “slay”



https://x.com/renaikaku_mei/status/1551080713167962115



<https://x.com/allforjsjnwv/status/1899798051008717183>



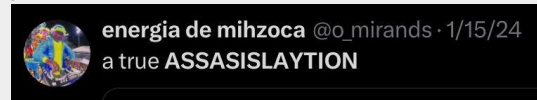
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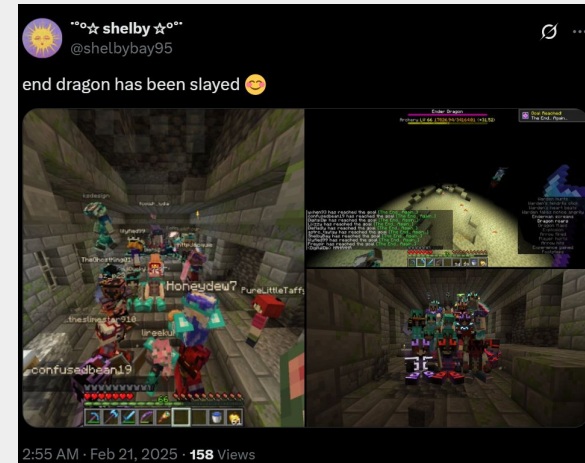
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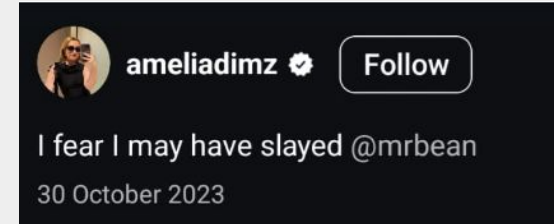
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https://x.com/o_mirands/status/1747043054593175615



<https://x.com/shelbybay95/status/1892770178389233750>



<https://www.instagram.com/ameliadimz/reel/CzB9hz1NC-c/>



https://www.instagram.com/jessicazafascats/p/CiJqbG8Obzk/?api=1%2F&hl=zh-cn&img_ind ex=1

These two tweets show how the past tense of the original usage of “slay” has shifted, with some people still using the original “slain” but others using “slayed”

References - Script

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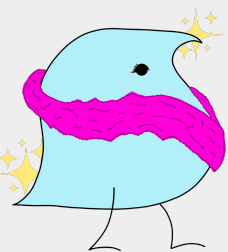
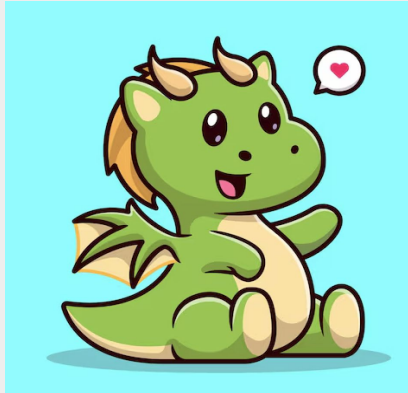


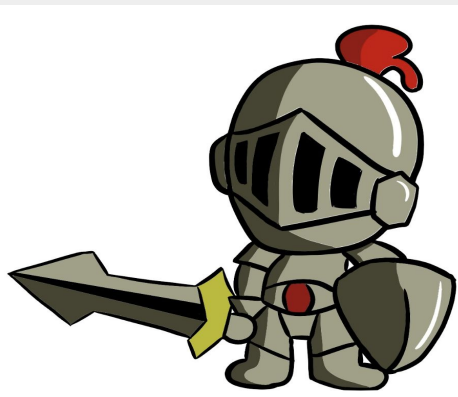
Illustration Inspirations



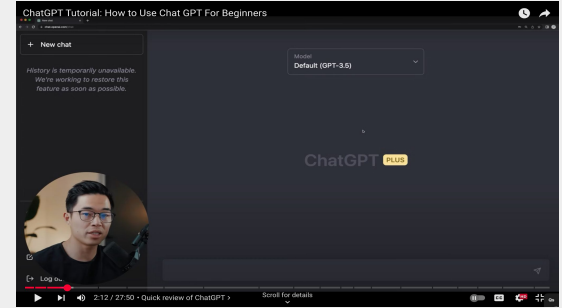
IRL highland cow plushie



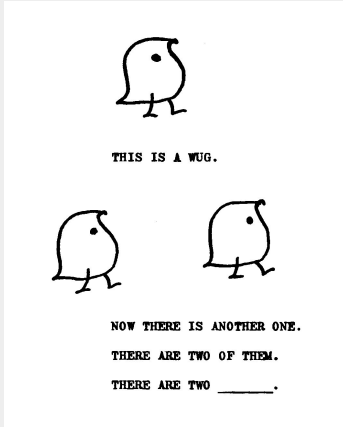
<https://www.freepik.com/vectors/cute-dragon-cartoon>



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