**From one day to the next: the language of change**

[**https://dictionaryblog.cambridge.org/2019/06/26/from-one-day-to-the-next-the-language-of-change/**](https://dictionaryblog.cambridge.org/2019/06/26/from-one-day-to-the-next-the-language-of-change/)

Change is something that we all have to deal with throughout our lives. Whether at work, at home or in our relationships, change is something that none of us can escape. It makes sense that we have a tremendous lot of vocabulary for describing change. In this, the first of two blogs, we look at words and expressions that describe things becoming different.

We’ll start by looking at words for *frequent* change. Something that often changes, for example, the weather, may be described as [**changeable**](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/changeable)or [**unpredictable**](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/unpredictable):

*The weather is going to be changeable over the next few days.*

*Her work schedule is quite unpredictable.*

If someone or something changes many times, especially in a way that makes you concerned, you might use the word [**erratic**](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/erratic):

*She was anxious about her son, whose behaviour had become erratic.*

*Progress on the project has been somewhat erratic.*

A situation or plan that is not currently decided and is likely to change, meanwhile, may be described as [**fluid**](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/fluid#cald4-1-2-2):

*The political situation is still very fluid.*

A similar word, but with a more negative meaning, is the adjective [**volatile**](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/volatile). A volatile situation is likely to change suddenly, in a way that can’t be controlled, causing problems or danger:

*The security situation remains highly volatile.*

Two useful phrases for change are [**from day to day**](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/day?q=from+one+day+to+the+next#cald4-1-1-1) and [**from one day to the next**](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/day?q=from+day+to+day). If a situation changes from day to day or from one day to the next, it keeps changing in a way that you cannot predict:

*Things change here from day to day.*

*His moods are so unpredictable. I don’t know how he’ll be feeling from one day to the next.*

In UK English, if you [**chop and change**](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/chop-and-change), you keep changing what you are doing:

*After six months of chopping and changing, we’ve decided to go back to our old system.*

*This constant chopping and changing is no good for anyone.*

Other words describe the *degree* of change. A [**radical**](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/radical#cald4-1-1-2) change is extreme, affecting all parts of something:

*We need to make some radical changes to the system.*

Similarly, a [**drastic**](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/drastic#cacd-1-1-1) change is extreme and sudden:

*He’s called for drastic changes to the industry to address the problem.*

The adjective [**seismic**](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/seismic) is also used to describe a big change, especially in something important and long-lasting:

*What’s needed is a seismic shift in attitude towards the environment.*

Meanwhile, something that is [**unrecognizable**](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/unrecognizable) has changed so much, you no longer recognize it:

*After the factory closed, the town became unrecognizable.*

Another way to say this is that something has changed [**beyond (all) recognition**](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/recognition)**:**

*The whole area has changed beyond all recognition.*