

'How many aura points did I lose?' The new coolness currency has hints of Aristotle

Level 1: Elementary

1 Warmer

a. How well do you know Gen Alpha slang? Match the words to their definitions below.

- | | |
|---------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. rizz | a. style, especially for clothing |
| 2. cap | b. something excellent or impressive |
| 3. drip | c. charisma or charm |
| 4. fire | d. a lie or to lie or exaggerate |

2 Key words

a. Choose the correct word to match each definition Then find and highlight them in the article to read them in context.

- a feeling or quality that surrounds a person or place and is noticeable
a. character b. philosopher c. aura
- an individual unit that adds to a score in a game or in sports
a. point b. earn c. hashtag
- a word or phrase with the symbol '#' in front of it, used on social media to search for messages with the same subject
a. hashtag b. point c. aura
- get something good, such as money or points, for doing something
a. lose b. earn c. anxiety
- have something/somebody taken away from you
a. earn b. failure c. lose
- a person who studies or writes about the meaning of life
a. character b. philosopher c. success
- all the qualities and features that make a person different from others
a. philosopher b. anxiety c. character

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8. feeling nervous or worried that something bad is going to happen
 - a. anxiety
 - b. aura
 - c. lose
9. the fact that you have achieved something that you want and have been trying to do or get
 - a. failure
 - b. success
 - c. point
10. lack of success in doing or achieving something
 - a. success
 - b. lose
 - c. failure

b. Complete the sentences with words from the previous activity. You might have to change the form of the word.

1. How many _____ is a touchdown worth in American football?
2. Which _____ are popular with teens on social media now?
3. My friend got a special photograph of her _____. It shows her energy as colours.
4. Many people have mental-health problems like depression and _____.
5. You don't have to accept _____. Learn from it and work hard until you succeed.
6. You got the highest results in your class. What a _____!

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Alaina Demopoulos

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- 1 You can count steps, songs, sheep – and now, you can count steps how cool you are. Aura points give you a number for your rizz. (That's what the kids call 'charisma'. If you didn't know that, you just lost 100 aura points.)
- 2 Ask someone out and get a yes? That's 100 aura points. Still on Snapchat but older than 19? Subtract 1,000 aura points. Answered a question in class, but got it wrong? Subtract some more.
- 3 According to the *Wall Street Journal's* report, the hashtag #aurapoints jumped 378 per cent from May to June.
- 4 On TikTok, young people share times when they earned, or lost, points. For example, you'll get points for moving on quickly from a break-up. But stay with a cheater, and that's minus 100 points.
- 5 A recent graduate said that she cried when her father, whom she had not seen or spoken to in five years, showed up to her graduation to say that he loved her. "How many aura points did I lose?" she asked.
- 6 Aura points might seem new, but some philosophers say parts of it come from ancient history, particularly Aristotle. "It is popular in Greek and Roman philosophy," said Ellie Anderson, an assistant professor of philosophy at Pomona College. There is a focus on the quality of a person's character, not how well they follow rules or a higher power.
- 7 This is "about people thinking about whether or not their everyday life is matching up to an idea," Anderson said. "It encourages us to speak with others about what we're doing in life, and whether or not it's good."
- 8 Paul Blaschko, an assistant professor of philosophy at the University of Notre Dame, compares aura points to the idea that every "good" action or decision a person makes can make up for future "bad" ones.
- 9 Philosopher Alain de Botton described "status anxiety" as "anxiety about what others think of us; about whether we're judged a success or a failure". Blaschko sees this in aura points. He said that people are looking for feedback. They are also part of that process by posting their opinions.
- 10 Understanding the philosophy behind a TikTok trend? 1,000 aura points for you.

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3 Comprehension check

a. Answer the questions using information from the article.

1. What is the new way to calculate your 'rizz'?
2. What percentage did hashtag #aurapoints jump from May to June?
3. What is an example from the article of a way to gain aura points?
4. What is an example from the article of a way to lose aura points?
5. Where do young people share about their aura points?
6. Which ancient philosopher is mentioned?
7. What does Assistant Professor Anderson say this encourages?
8. What does Professor Blaschko compare aura points to?
9. What is 'status anxiety' as described by Alain de Botton?
10. What part of 'status anxiety' does Professor Blaschko see in aura points?

4 Key language

a. Match each phrasal verb to its definition.

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 1. move on | a. appear/arrive somewhere |
| 2. show up | b. do something that corrects a bad situation |
| 3. match up | c. start doing or talking about something new |
| 4. make up for | d. be the same or similar |

b. Complete the sentences with the phrasal verbs above.

1. How will he ever _____ lying to her?
2. Let's _____. There are other things we have to discuss in this meeting.
3. It's important to _____ on time for your first day.
4. The brothers' stories didn't _____, so their parents weren't sure what really happened.

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5 Discussion

a. Discuss these statements.

- If at first you don't succeed, try, try again.
- Tell the truth even when it's difficult.
- "Judging a person does not define who they are. It defines who you are." – unknown

6 In your own words

a. Do some research about a popular hashtag on social media. Answer these questions.

- What is the hashtag?
- What is it about?
- What is something on social media you wish would be more/less popular?

b. Report your findings to the class and share the facts you learned, as well as your opinions. Here are some phrases to help you show emphasis during your report.

- especially
- particularly
- most importantly
- above all