**Top 10 most annoying Americanisms**

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Michelle Obama just sent me an email wishing me "Happy Holidays" and asking me to give money "to causes that are especially meaningful to me and my family" (food banks and deployed troops – not the Obama campaign this time).

She doesn't mention Christmas at all, instead talking vaguely of "a time to celebrate our blessings, the new year, and a new era for our country".

The term "Happy Holidays" is certainly one that grates on this British ear and I confess it's not the only one. Every day, I have to navigate the common language which, as [George Bernard Shaw put it](http://forum.wordreference.com/showthread.php?t=146783), divides our two nations.

But I don't mean simple Americanisms like stroller (pushchair), diaper (nappy), ladybug (ladybird), Mom (Mum), entrée (main course), Santa (Father Christmas), takeout (takeaway), pre-owned (secondhand), mad (angry), chill (calm down), etc etc but they aren’t the phrases that really make you [want to go postal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Going_postal).

Here are the top 10 that, after nearly seven years here, infuriate me most:

**1. "**[**Happy Holidays**](http://www.csmonitor.com/patchworknation/csmstaff/2008/1222/happy-holidays-or-merry-christmas/)**."**

Translation: "Merry Christmas but I realize you might be Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Bahai, something even more exotic, agnostic or Godless and I don't want to offend you."

**2. "**[**Have a Nice Day**](http://ezderek.blogspot.com/2006/08/have-nice-day.html)**."**

Translation: "I would like you to have a pleasant time today" or "I hate you" – or anything in between.

**3. "**[**You're welcome**](http://www.answers.com/topic/you-re-welcome)**."**

Translation: Meaningless [Pavlovian response](http://employees.csbsju.edu/tcreed/pb/pavcon.html) to thank you.

**4. "**[**Do the math**](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/do_the_math)**."**

Translation: "Work it out yourself, stupid."

**5. "**[**Let's visit with each other**](http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/Visit)**."**

Translation: "We should spend time together."

**6. "**[**How are you today**](http://www.abc.net.au/unleashed/stories/s2243509.htm)**?"**

Translation: "We mean nothing to each other, but let's pretend."

**7. "**[**Good luck with that**](http://www.mathewingram.com/work/2008/12/23/ignore-the-web-good-luck-with-that/)**.”**

Translation: "You have no chance at all."

**8. "**[**Oh my gosh!**](http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=oh+my+gosh)**"**

Translation: "I fear you may feel that taking the Lord's name in vain is blasphemous."

**9. "**[**Can I use your bathroom?**](http://www.thefreedictionary.com/go+to+the+bathroom)**"**

Translation: "I would like to use your lavatory."

**10. "**[**Not so much**](http://www.azcentral.com/ent/pop/articles/1031catchphrases1031.html)**."**

Translation: "That's completely wrong." Used on me in [classic fashion by a Clinton aide](http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/toby_harnden/blog/2008/02/03/clinton_aide_i_only_talk_to_americans) back in February.

Maybe there are others that make your blood boil – or some Britishisms that really get under your skin.

WN Response Part I: Make a list of the 10 top phrases or expressions that stand out to you because they are: annoying, funny, old-person-ish, childish, teen-ish, creative, British, etc.

WN Response Part II: Now take one or more of those phrases and turn it into a narrative and use dialogue!