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## What pisses you off? Vocabulary notes

Here are some idiomatic ways to express irritation, frustration and difficulty in English.

### Noun phrases

**Pain in the neck** (Am E. Br.E) : /rear/ass/bum (Br.E)/butt (Am.E) : describing anything tedious, difficult, annoying or irritating. Also used to describe people who are annoying, irritating or difficult to deal with:

*My boss is a real pain in the ass (neck/butt/rear); he's constantly complaining about my work, but he won't tell me how to improve it.*

You can also omit the body part, and just call something a **pain**. This usage often collocates with the intensifying adjective **royal**.

*Setting the time and date on my DVD recorder is a royal pain; the instructions are complete gibberish!*

**Ball ache** (Br. E) is used to talk about something annoying or tedious, usually that you don't want to do.

*I love my dog, but having to walk him in all weathers is a real ball ache.*

**Bitch** is used to talk about something very difficult to do. Often used with intensifying adjectives such as real, total.

*My driving test was a real bitch, but I passed on my third try.*

*I spilt red wine on my shirt, and it was a real bitch to get it out.*

**Bitch** is also used to denote something generally annoying or unpleasant:

*The Swedish summers are beautiful except for the mosquitoes; they're a real bitch!*

**Bitch** is also used to denote women who are perceived as acting in an unpleasant manner. This usage often collocates with the intensifying adjective **fucking**.

*My ex-wife is a fucking bitch, she tells my children terrible things about me that aren't true.*

The following saying gets its humor from playing on both senses of the noun **bitch**:

*Life's a bitch, and then you marry one.*

I.e., Life is a bitch (difficult), and then you marry one (an unpleasant woman).

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## Verb phrases

All of the idiomatic verb phrases below are used to talk about feeling annoyed, frustrated, irritated, or even angry.

### It gets on my tits (Br. E)

*That awful song my neighbor plays totally gets on my tits. If I hear it one more time, I will scream!*

### It gets on my nerves

*My office chair squeaks every time I make the slightest move; the squeaky sound is really getting on my nerves.*

### It pisses me off (both)

*We have to get a cordless phone, because constantly tripping over the phone cord totally pisses me off.*

**It tees me off** clean variation of *to piss sb off*.

### It drives me crazy:

*The new guy at work is always picking his nose when he thinks nobody's looking. It's driving me crazy because it's so disgusting.*

USAGE GUIDE		
<b>never offensive</b> (Grandma-safe)	<b>sometimes offensive</b> (use with caution)	<b>nearly always offensive</b> (use with extreme caution)
to tee sb* off to get on sb's nerves to drive sb crazy	to piss sb off to get on sb's tits	None of these expressions are as offensive to most people as the REALLY taboo words (e.g., fuck, cunt), but you should definitely use the "Grandma-safe" alternatives if you are unsure.
to be a pain in the neck to be a (royal) pain	to be a pain in the rear/butt/bum/ass to be a bitch to be a ball-ache (said about things only, not people)	

\*sb= somebody; sb's=somebody's