

## Pet Peeves: What's a Pet Peeve?

For me, it's what I call 'vocabulary inflation.'

'Vocabulary inflation' is my own word for making things sound bigger and better—or smaller and worse—than they really are. If my friend Peter says “I love Harry Potter,” I want to ask him how his girlfriend feels about his love for Harry Potter.

You and I, we're intelligent, rational people who know that normal people can't *love* the character in a book or movie. But, people still say it, because it's easier than saying “I really enjoy reading the Harry Potter books.” And, if I ever did ask Peter what his girlfriend thought, he'd say “Toby, you know what I mean.”

I'm an English teacher. I like people to use the right words, and to use them correctly. But, I also know that when they don't, it's harmless. It doesn't *hurt* me, it just turns on internal teacher in me. It's a **pet peeve** of mine.

A 'pet peeve' is a term that we use to describe something that we don't like. It's a good term to know if you're learning English, because when you say something is a 'pet peeve,' you're admitting that the thing you don't like really isn't a problem. . . it just doesn't fit you somehow.

*Anything* can be a pet peeve: the jokes your English teacher makes (you like my jokes, though, right?) or the way your boss ends every sentence with 'okay?'

What's *your* pet peeve?