

## B2: Annoying Habits

### Lead-in

Discuss the following questions with a partner:

- Has anything in particular been getting on your nerves recently? At home? In the street? On public transport?

### Expressing Annoyance

Look at the different structures we use to express irritation or annoyance.

- **Present Continuous + *always*** (used to describe annoying, repeated habits)
  - He **'s always leaving** his clothes on the floor.
- **Keep + *-ing*** (used to highlight continuous, frustrating actions)
  - She **keeps forgetting** to lock the door.
- **I wish + *subject* + *wouldn't*** (used when you want someone to change their behavior)
  - **I wish you wouldn't** play music so loudly at night.
- **It drives me crazy when...** (used to express strong, daily irritation)
  - **It drives me crazy when** people leave dirty dishes in the sink.
- **I can't stand it when...** (used for things you intensely dislike or tolerate poorly)
  - **I can't stand it when** my flatmate talks on the phone for hours.
- **Get on my nerves** (a very common phrase to describe things that irritate you)
  - It really **gets on my nerves** when people don't reply to messages.
- **Would you mind + *-ing*?** (a direct, slightly sharp request for someone to stop doing something)
  - **Would you mind cleaning** up after yourself for once?

 **Task:** Can you apply any of these expressions to the things you mentioned in the lead-in?

## Reading & Discussion

### 1. The “I’ll Do It Later” Person

“Honestly, the thing that **drives me crazy** is when my flatmate says he’ll do something later, and then just... never does it. If you leave your dishes in the sink for three days, that’s not ‘later’ anymore. And the annoying part is he acts surprised when I bring it up. Apparently, I’m the unreasonable one because I don’t enjoy living in a mess. **He keeps forgetting** that other people live here too. If procrastination were an Olympic sport, he’d definitely win gold.”

#### Questions

- What household habits **get on your nerves** the most?
- Do you think some people naturally have different standards of cleanliness?
- How long is it acceptable to leave dishes in the sink?
- Is it better to confront someone immediately about annoying habits or ignore them?

### 2. Thermostat Wars

“My partner and I have completely different ideas about what counts as a normal indoor temperature. She’s **always turning** the heating up, even when it’s warm outside. I’ll walk into the living room sweating, and she’ll be sitting there wrapped in a blanket saying, ‘It’s freezing in here.’ Freezing? We could grow tropical plants in this flat. At this rate, our energy bill is going to ruin us. **I wish she wouldn't** treat our apartment like a sauna.”

#### Questions

- Are you usually too hot or too cold at home?
- Have you ever argued with someone about air conditioning or heating?
- What’s more important to you: personal comfort or saving energy?

- Do housemates need strict rules to avoid arguments about shared spaces?

### 3. The Loud Cleaner

“I appreciate that my boyfriend likes cleaning, I really do. But **it really gets on my nerves** when he decides to vacuum at the worst possible moment. Sunday morning at 8 a.m., when everyone else in the building is asleep? Perfect time for massive noise, apparently. He doesn’t just clean normally—he cleans aggressively. **I can’t stand it when** he hits the vacuum against my bedroom door. Meanwhile, I’m lying in bed wondering why I can’t just have a peaceful morning.”

#### Questions

- What time is too early to do noisy housework?
- **Would you mind** living with an overly tidy person, or do you prefer someone a bit messy?
- Do you think people should change their routines to avoid disturbing others?
- Is being considerate more important than being productive in shared living situations?

### 4. Passive-Aggressive Notes

“My housemate has this incredibly irritating habit of leaving little notes around the flat instead of just speaking to people face-to-face. You’ll open the fridge and see something like, ‘Some people should remember milk doesn’t magically replace itself :)’ with a smiley face that somehow makes it worse. **I wish he wouldn’t** turn our kitchen into a sarcastic office environment. If you have a problem with me, just say it directly! I haven’t done it yet, but I want to just ask him: “**Would you mind** talking to me like a normal person?”

#### Questions

- Which is worse: direct confrontation or passive-aggressive behavior?
- Why do you think some people avoid saying things directly?
- Have you ever received a passive-aggressive message or note?
- What’s the best way to deal with conflict or arguments at home?

### 5. Kitchen Experiments

“My partner keeps trying these complicated recipes she finds online, which sounds great in theory. The problem is the kitchen looks like a total disaster afterwards. There’ll be flour everywhere, seventeen dirty pans, and weird ingredients just lying around. **She’s always leaving** a massive mess for me to clean up. After spending four hours cooking, she made me try some strange ‘mushroom foam’ when all I wanted was pasta. **I can’t stand it when** I can’t even see the kitchen countertops.”

#### Questions

- Do you enjoy cooking, or do you see it as a chore?
- How much mess is acceptable when someone else cooks a meal for you?
- Would you rather eat simple food every day or try unusual dishes?
- Have you ever pretended to enjoy someone’s cooking?

### Expressions & Conversation

Guess the meaning of the bold expressions from the context, then discuss the questions with a partner.

1. I wanted to tell him how messy he was, but I decided to **keep quiet** to avoid an argument.
  - In what situations do you find it best to just keep quiet?
  - Do you find it difficult to stay silent when you’re annoyed?
2. My partner **gave me the silent treatment** for two days when I forgot our anniversary.
  - Do you think the silent treatment is an effective way to deal with conflict?
  - What’s a healthier way to show someone that you’re upset?
3. He completely **hogs the bathroom** every morning, so I’m always late for work.
  - What annoying habits do people usually have in shared spaces?
  - How would you deal with a housemate who takes too long in the shower?

4. During lockdown, we had absolutely **no personal space**, and every little habit became annoying.
  - Do you think people need a lot of personal space to have a good relationship?
  - How much time spent together is *too much* time?
5. My housemate and I constantly **clash over** how clean the kitchen should be.
  - Do you think people should adapt to each other's habits when living together?
  - What household rules are most important in a shared house?
6. Everyone else was cleaning up after dinner while he just sat on the sofa and **didn't lift a finger**.
  - How important is it to share household chores equally?
  - Have you ever lived or worked with someone incredibly lazy?
7. Whenever my brother bakes, he **leaves a trail of destruction** in the kitchen.
  - Are you a tidy cook, or do you make a mess when you cook?
  - Would you rather do the cooking or the cleaning up afterwards?
8. I usually apologize first just to **keep the peace**, even if I know I'm right.
  - Is it better to avoid conflict or always be completely honest?
  - Have you ever apologized to someone just to end a stupid argument?

## B2 First: Reading and Use of English (Part 4)

For questions 1–6, complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. **Do not change the word given.** You must use between **two and five words**, including the word given.

It really irritates me when people don't reply to my messages.

### NERVES

It really **gets on my nerves** when people don't reply to my messages.

1. My brother has a frustrating habit of leaving his clothes on the floor.

#### ALWAYS

My brother \_\_\_\_\_ his clothes on the floor.

2. She regularly forgets to lock the door when she leaves.

#### KEEPS

She \_\_\_\_\_ to lock the door when she leaves.

3. I really want you to stop playing your music so loudly at night.

#### WISH

I \_\_\_\_\_ play music so loudly at night.

4. It makes me very angry when people leave dirty dishes in the sink.

#### CRAZY

It \_\_\_\_\_ when people leave dirty dishes in the sink.

5. I absolutely hate it when my flatmate talks on the phone for hours.

#### STAND

I \_\_\_\_\_ when my flatmate talks on the phone for hours.

6. Could you please clean up after yourself for once?

**MIND**

\_\_\_\_\_ up after yourself for once?

### **Teacher's Answer Key**

*(The bolded words indicate the exact 2-to-5-word answer required)*

1. **is always leaving** (*Present Continuous + always*)
2. **keeps forgetting** (*Keep + -ing*)
3. **wish you wouldn't** (*I wish + subject + wouldn't*)
4. **drives me crazy** (*It drives me crazy when...*)
5. **can't stand it** (*I can't stand it when... — note: the "it" is grammatically required here!*)
6. **Would you mind cleaning** (*Would you mind + -ing*)