

Who doesn't like an occasional weird word or two? When it comes to telling people off, we need to keep our sense of humor and perhaps tell them to get lost with quaint, if perhaps obscure language. I'd like to offer up a few real suggestions along this line and then add a few of my own (with a little poetic license).

Smatchet: A contemptible, unmannerly person. Given the wealth of choices available, this one is a beauty. Hardly anyone will realize that they've been insulted. Given some of the alternatives you could use, like cockloche, dandiprat, and good old [dirtbag](#), they got off easy. Maybe they'll think their remarks are so brilliant they smack like a hatchet. James Leslie provided an example for us in 1839:

"And you, ye idle ablich 'at ye are! negleckin yer business an' galantine about wi' yon blackguard smatchet o' a loon, Geordie Onnerson."
- The Otter's Tale-Book for the Winter Evenings

Ultracrepidarian: At the summit of presumptuousness, this person offers their opinions or advice beyond their actual knowledge. Yeah, sort of like our bloviating, self-aggrandizing, narcissist of a president (his licensed clinical psychologist niece diagnoses him as a "sociopath"). Like when he wonders on camera about the possible benefits of ingesting disinfectants to combat coronavirus and seems not to personally care much about the horrific death count. Imagine your irritating acquaintances focusing on the "ultra" part and walking away with a swelled chest, doing a jig to a song they fancy they wrote themselves.

The origination of this word lies in an ancient story in which the famous Greek painter [Apelles](#) one day heard a

[cobbler](#)

criticizing the way he had rendered a foot. Apelles replied cuttingly that he shouldn't presume to judge beyond his knowledge: "The fatal dowry has been cobbled sure, by some purblind ultracrepidarian." (Thomas Lovell Beddoes, letter to Thomas F. Kelsall, 11 Jan., 1825). Boy oh boy, that's telling him!

Smell-Feast: Someone dedicated to searching for and getting invited to delectable meals. This is a special type of sponger, one who lives for being invited to lavish dinners. An ancient quote from Thomas Bancroft's *Time's Out of Tune* (a mere 292 years before I was born) helps to bring this linguistic pirouette into focus.

"Base fawning Smell-feast, I beleeve thou art Shrewdly distemper'd both in head and heart; Thy wits are dreggish, and thy spirits dull and restive, c'ause thy belly's always full."

Fustilug: a ponderous clumsy person. This "take a hike" sleight of hand creates some risk of discovery, as it just sounds disparaging upon modest reflection. It's derived from combining the words [fusty](#) (stale) and *lug* (a heavy clumsy fellow). Who but Richard Younge could have used this word so eloquently?

"...especially your Ale-wives, who, like the Germane Froas, are all cheekes to the belly, and all belly to the knees, whose duges and chins meete without any forceing of either, because you may dayly see such fustilugs walking in the streets, like so many Tunnes, each moving upon two pottle pots, his essentiall parts are so obscured, his Sense so dulled, his Eyes so dazeled, his Face so distorted, his Countenance so deformed, his loynts so infeeble, and his whole body and minde so transformed, that hee is become the child of folly, and derision of the world, a laughing stock to fooles, a lothing stock to the Godly, ridiculous to all." (The Drunkard's Character, 1638)

My first wife, Kathryn, earned her master's degree in medieval English whilst I toiled in graduate school with her cat Sir Bercelek at my side. This language seemed like Greek to me back then (and now, methinks), but God bless her.

[Flibbertigibbet](#) : a silly, flighty person. This flip-over-backwards-over-giblets term is an incarnation of the Middle English word *flepergebet*, which referred to a "gossip" or "chatterer." I understand that Shakespeare used "flibbertigibbet" as the name of a devil in *King Lear*, but its usage never really caught any linguistic houses on fire. That said, the word popped up over 200 years later when Sir Walter Scott used "Flibbertigibbet" as the nickname of an impish urchin in the novel *Kenilworth*.

Bibbity Bobbity Booyah

Written by Jack Sparacino

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OK, that's it for real if incredibly dusty terms of non-endearment. If I may now chip in a few of my own, uh, creations:

Effoffwitchu: This one is actually a verbal command, combining effoff for guess what, witch for with and of course u for you. It has the advantage of also sounding like a noun, with foffwitch sounding at least vaguely like something you might order on toast with a bowl of soup. Maybe throw in some of those wonderful oyster crackers they serve in Boston, too.

Geddalifeoleferte: Another combo-term, this one comes close to tipping your hand so say it fast with a heavy accent. Southern, Bostonian, Italian, pick something thick so you don't get sluggish. Hey, that's it. Start or end with y'all and what could possibly go wrong?

Uppa-U-S: Sure this one might sound rather rude, though it can also be construed as a reference to North Dakota, Minnesota, Idaho or Michigan. But *holdathephone*(see, I really am half Italian). It could also sound like a bastardization of *upper class*. Yeah, that's it. Try this one out on your acquaintances who are self-conscious about their social status. The ones who have trouble figuring what to wear for a walk in the park or a picnic after Labor Day. You know the type.

Bibbity Bobbity Booyah: Here we mash together a military standard with echoes of "Bibbidi-Bobbidi-Boo," a [novelty song](#) from 1948 by [Al Hoffman](#) , [Ma ck David](#) , and [Jerry Livingston](#) . You may remember it from the 1950 film [Cinderella](#) . The song is about a [fairy godmother](#) transforming a pumpkin into a white carriage, four brown mice into white horses, a gray horse into a white-haired coachman, and a brown dog into a white-haired footman. You film buffs may recall that the song was Academy Award nominated [for Best Original Song](#) in [1951](#) . Alas, it lost the gold statuette to "

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[Mona Lisa](#)

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This one may not sound like much of a pushback, so just put on a sneering face and add your favorite gesture. And “bless your hearts.” Be sure to tell me how that works out. Just don’t call me a smatchet, y’all.