

MARIST POLL

Marist College Institute for Public Opinion

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“Whatever” Loses Ground but Retains Annoying Word Title

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This Marist Poll Reports:

For the ninth consecutive year, Americans say “whatever” is the most annoying word or phrase used in casual conversation. But, fewer Americans feel that way than in previous years. Residents under the age of 45, compared with their older counterparts, do not find the word all that bothersome.

33% of Americans consider “whatever” to be the most annoying word or phrase. The recent addition of “fake news” takes second place with 23% followed closely by “no offense, but” with 20%. 11% think “literally” is the most grating word used in conversation while 10% assert “you know what I mean” is the most agitating.

In 2016, “whatever” received 38% to 20% for “no offense, but.” “Ya know, right” and “I can’t even” each garnered 14%. Eight percent of Americans deemed “huge” to be the most irritating word or phrase spoken in casual conversation.

“Since 2015, we have seen a narrowing between ‘whatever’ and the rest of the list,” says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. “It has been more than 20 years since ‘whatever’ first gained infamy in the movie *Clueless*. While the word irks older Americans, those who are younger might not find ‘whatever’ to be so annoying.”

Opinions differ based on age. A plurality of U.S. residents 45 and older, 40%, believe “whatever” is the most annoying spoken word. In contrast, 28% of Americans under 45 years old say “no offense, but” is the most bothersome. A similar 26% of these residents consider “whatever” to be the most grating word or phrase used in casual conversation.