

John Cleese's Piece

To the citizens of the United States of America:

In light of your failure to elect a competent President of the USA and thus to govern yourselves, we hereby give notice of the revocation* of your independence, effective immediately. Her Sovereign Majesty Queen Elizabeth II will resume monarchical duties over all states, commonwealths and territories, excepting Kansas which she does not fancy. Your new prime minister, Tony Blair, will appoint a governor for America without the need for further elections. Congress and the Senate will be disbanded. A questionnaire may be circulated next year to determine whether any of you noticed. To aid in the transition to a British Crown Dependency, the following rules are introduced with immediate effect:

The letter 'U' will be reinstated in words such as 'favour' and 'neighbour. Likewise, you will learn to spell 'doughnut' without skipping half the letters, and the suffix 'ize' will be replaced by the suffix 'ise'. Generally, you will be expected to raise your vocabulary to acceptable levels. (Look up the word "vocabulary").

Using the same twenty-seven words interspersed with filler noises such as "like" and "you know" is an unacceptable and inefficient form of communication. There is no such thing as US English. We will let Microsoft know on your behalf. The Microsoft spell-checker will be adjusted to take account of the reinstated letter 'u' and the elimination of -ize. You will re-learn your original national anthem "God Save The Queen".

July 4th will no longer be celebrated as a holiday.

You will learn to resolve personal issues without using guns, lawyers or therapists. The fact that you need so many lawyers and therapists shows that you're not adult enough to be independent. Guns should only be handled by adults. If you're not adult enough to sort things out without suing someone or speaking to a therapist, then you're not grown up enough to handle a gun. Therefore, you will no longer be allowed to own or carry anything more dangerous than a vegetable peeler. A permit will be required if you wish to carry a vegetable peeler in public.

All American cars are hereby banned. They are crap and this is for your own good. When we show you German cars, you will understand what we mean.

All intersections will be replaced with roundabouts (look it up) and you will start driving on the left with immediate effect. At the same time, you will go metric with immediate effect and without the benefit of conversion tables. Both roundabouts and metrication will help you understand the British sense of

humour.

The Former USA will adopt UK prices on petrol which you have been calling gasoline - roughly \$6/US gallon. Get used to it.

You will learn to make real chips. Those things you call French fries are not real chips, and those things you insist on calling potato chips are properly called crisps. Real chips are thick cut, fried in animal fat, and dressed not with catsup but with vinegar.

The cold tasteless stuff you insist on calling beer is not actually beer at all. Henceforth, only proper British Bitter will be referred to as beer, and European brews of known and accepted provenance will be referred to as Lager. American brands will be referred to as Near-Frozen Gnat's Urine, so that all can be sold without risk of further confusion.

Hollywood will be required occasionally to cast English actors as good guys. Hollywood will also be required to cast English actors to play English characters. Watching Andie MacDowell attempt English dialogue in *Four Weddings and a Funeral* was an experience akin to having one's ears removed with a cheese grater.

You will cease playing American football. There is only one kind of proper football; you call it soccer. Those of you brave enough will, in time, be allowed to play rugby, (which has some similarities to American football, but does not involve stopping for a rest every twenty seconds or wearing full Kevlar body armour like a bunch of nancies). Look up the word "nancies" in the OED, it does not refer to the wife of a former president.

Further, you will stop playing baseball. It is not reasonable to host an event called the World Series for a game which is not played outside of America. Since only 21% of you are aware that there is a world beyond your borders, your error is understandable.

You must tell us who killed JFK. It's been driving us mad.

An internal revenue agent (i.e. tax collector) from Her Majesty's Government will be with you shortly to ensure the acquisition of all monies due (backdated to 1776).

Daily Tea Time begins promptly at 4pm with proper cups (never mugs), high quality biscuits (cookies) and cakes; strawberries in season.

Thank you for your co-operation.

(*You should look up "revocation" in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED). Then look up aluminium, and check the pronunciation guide. You will be amazed at just how incorrectly you have been pronouncing it.)