BOTHER

verb · noun /ˈbɒð.ər/ UK /ˈbɑːðər/ US

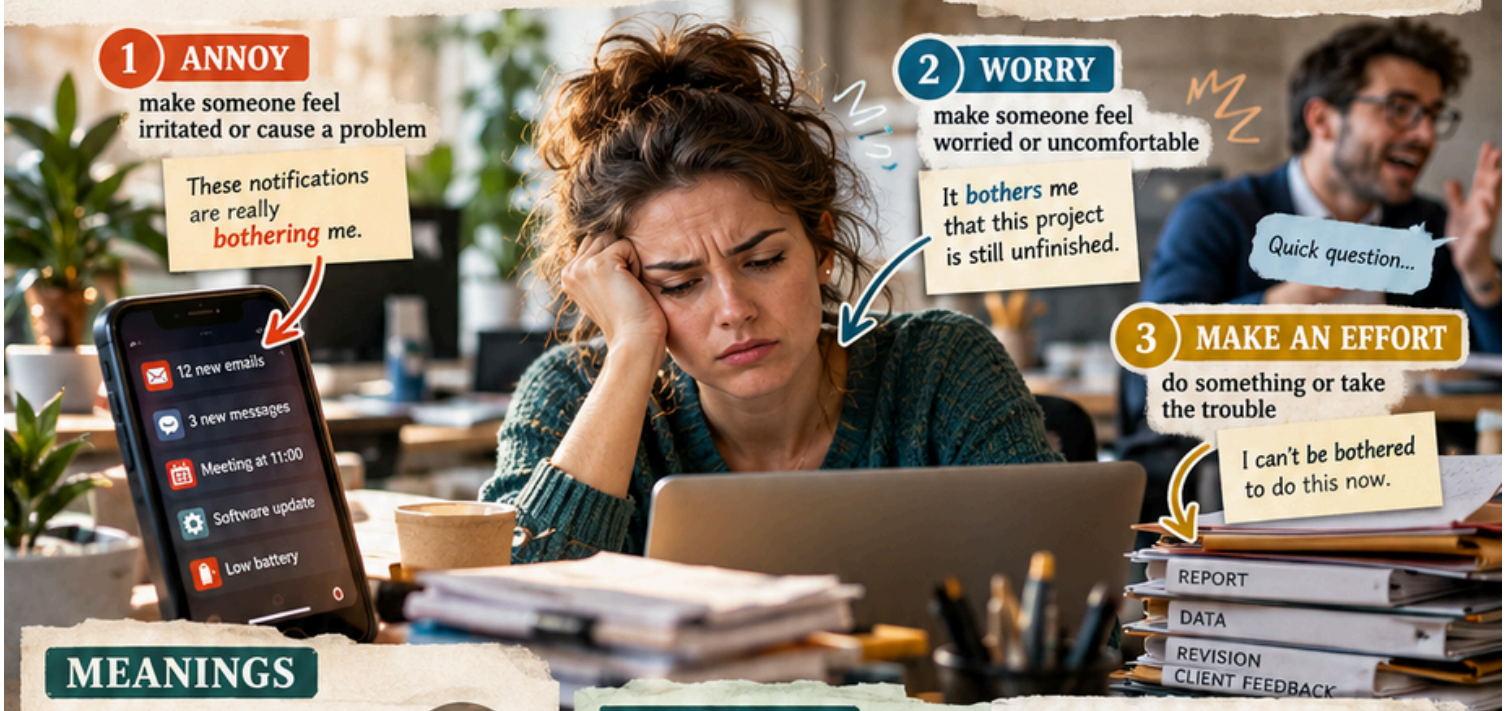
When something annoys you, worries you — or simply takes effort.

ORIGIN



18th-century English

Bother appeared around 1718, initially meaning "to bewilder or confuse". By the mid-18th century it developed the sense "to give trouble". Its deeper origin is uncertain, but it is probably connected with Anglo-Irish *pother* and Irish *bodhairim*, "I deafen".



MEANINGS

1 ANNOY
make someone feel irritated or cause or problem.
The noise is really bothering me.



2 WORRY / UPSET
make someone feel worried or uncomfortable.
Does it bother you that she's late?



3 MAKE AN EFFORT
do something or take the trouble.
He didn't bother to call.



4 TAKE THE TROUBLE / CAUSE INCONVENIENCE
often used when deciding whether something is worth the effort.
Why bother fixing it?



5 BE A BOTHER (noun)
an annoying person or situation.
Sorry to be a bother.



WORD FAMILY

Verb	**bother** · **bothered** · **bothering**
Noun	**bother** (countable/uncountable)
Adjective	**bothered** · **bothersome**
Related noun	**botheration** (less common)

KEY GRAMMAR PATTERNS

bother + object	Don't bother me.
bother + -ing	Don't bother calling.
bother + to + verb	He didn't bother to reply.
Rether someone with something	I won't bother you with the details.
be bothered about/by	She's bothered about the result. He was bothered by the noise.

COMMON EXPRESSIONS

WHY BOTHER?
There is no good reason to make the effort.
It's only five minutes away. Why bother driving?



CAN'T BE BOTHERED
(informal, especially UK)
I don't want to make the effort.
I can't be bothered to cook tonight.



DON'T BOTHER
You don't need to do it.
Don't bother getting a taxi. I'll walk.



NO BOTHER (UK)
It's not a problem.
Sure, I'll help — no bother.



SORRY TO BOTHER YOU
A polite way to interrupt or ask for help.
Sorry to bother you, but could you help me with this?



COMMON COLLOCATIONS

- **bother** someone
- **bother someone with** something
- **be bothered by** something
- **be bothered about** something
- **bother to do** something
- **not bother** doing something
- **go to the bother** of doing something
- **worth the bother**



EXAMPLES IN CONTEXT

DAILY LIFE	The traffic doesn't **bother** me.
WORK	She didn't **bother to** reply to my email.
TRAVEL	Sorry **to bother** you, but is this seat free?
TECHNOLOGY	Constant notifications really **bother** him.
DECISIONS	It's only five minutes away. **Why bother** driving?
SOCIAL	I don't want **to bother** you while you're working.

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