

## DIRE LA DATE EN ANGLAIS

2010 = Two thousand (and) ten    vs    2010 = Twenty-ten

### Du combat entre les usages et les puristes

Aujourd'hui, des collègues m'ont fort justement demandé comment on devait dire «2010» en anglais, car il leur est arrivé d'entendre les deux formulations. Je ne m'étais jamais posé cette question. Qu'elles soient remerciées d'avoir été à l'origine de cette réflexion et de cette recherche!

Lorsqu'on échange avec un anglophone, lorsqu'on écoute la radio ou la télévision anglophone, on entend systématiquement «Two thousand ten» ou «Two thousand and ten». Je n'ai, à ce jour, jamais entendu dire «Twenty-ten». La question, de ce fait, ne se posait pas, du moins le croyais-je. En réalité, d'après mes recherches, si l'usage veut qu'une immense majorité des anglophones utilisent «Two thousand (and) ten», il semble que les puristes de la langue estiment que la formulation correcte lexicalement et grammaticalement soit «Twenty-ten». Plusieurs arguments vont dans ce sens, le premier (très anglais!) étant que dire «twenty» est plus court que de dire «two thousand». La grammaire anglaise est probablement moins fixe, plus pragmatique et évolutive que la nôtre!

Je vous laisse le loisir de découvrir ci-dessous deux articles qui précisent cette dualité.

Je pense donc que nous avons trois options (dans notre pratique personnelle comme dans notre enseignement):

- choisir la formulation la plus usitée (par les natifs, les médias...), parce que l'anglais courant opte pour «Two thousand (and) ten»;
- choisir la formulation des puristes, parce que la grammaire voudrait qu'on dise «Twenty-ten»;
- garder en tête que ces deux formulations se rencontrent, selon les personnes, selon le contexte,...

On peut ainsi faire le parallèle avec la date complète, pour laquelle l'usage diffère entre le Royaume Uni (friday, 28th january) et les Etats-Unis (friday, january 28th). Il est intéressant de familiariser les élèves à ces deux usages, y compris lors des rituels en classe, et d'aborder ainsi un aspect culturel du quotidien des anglophones.

LANGUAGE

January 01, 2010|By Nanette Asimov, Chronicle Staff Writer

How do you say "2010"?

Coming off of "two thousand nine," you'll probably say "two thousand ten." In fact, 4 out of 5 YouTube videos randomly reviewed by The Chronicle have people pronouncing it that way.

But you would be wrong, so wrong, according to the National Association of Good Grammar.

"NAGG has decided to step in and decree that (2010) should officially be pronounced 'twenty ten,' and all subsequent years should be pronounced as 'twenty eleven,' 'twenty twelve,' etc.," proclaims the association's news release.

The National Association of Good Grammar - essentially a guy named Tom Torriglia and some friends who also paid attention in English class - say people have been mispronouncing the year for 10 years.

"NAGG is here to put everybody back on the correct path," Torriglia said by phone from his home in San Francisco. "We lost the battle when we went from 1999 to 2000 - but now we're hoping to win the war."

The "20" should have been pronounced "twenty" all along, he said, pointing out that every year in the 20th century was pronounced "nineteen something."

"'Twenty' follows 'nineteen.' 'Two thousand' does not follow 'nineteen.' It's logical."

Fighting for grammar

Companies pay Torriglia, who has written technical manuals for two decades, to be logical and clear in explaining the least clear concepts, like how to use their own computer software. He's also taught writing to aspiring technical writers and to junior college students.

Torrighia created NAGG in 1986 when he found himself calling publications about their grammatically incorrect ads.

"I would nag them," he said.

Torrighia, who is writing a book he calls "The Grammar Police Never Sleep," believes the time has come to nag again.

To punctuate the idea that "two thousand ten" is the wrong way to say it, Torriglia, 56, pointed out that no one would ever say, "I was born in one thousand nine hundred and fifty-three."

Yet that's how people keep saying "2010." In one YouTube video, a preteen promises to make more YouTube videos in "two thousand ten." Another has a guy on a yellow dirt bike saying he's "amped about the all-new 'two thousand ten' " model. A third features people trying to design novelty eyeglasses in the shape of "two thousand ten."

To Torriglia, it's relentless.

"I'm hearing it on TV commercials. I heard an announcer say it during 'Monday Night Football.' You cringe."

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/12/31/2010-twenty-ten-not-two-t\\_n\\_408202.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/12/31/2010-twenty-ten-not-two-t_n_408202.html)

## 2010: Twenty-Ten, Not Two-Thousand-And-Ten

When you first exclaim "2010" out loud, as you ring in the New Year later tonight, say "twenty-ten" not "two-thousand-and-ten."

Why?

Because the former is two words shorter than the latter, as the web site [Twentynot2000.com](http://Twentynot2000.com) points out. In our shortening, 140-character tweeting vernacular, brevity matters.

According to the site:

Say the year "1810" out loud. Now say the year "1999" out loud. See a pattern? It's been easier, faster, and shorter to say years this way for every decade (except for the one that just ended) instead of saying the number the long way. However, many people are carrying the way they said years from last decade over to this decade as a bad habit. If we don't fix this now, we'll be stuck saying years the long way for the next 89 years. Don't let that happen!

The "twenty-ten" movement -- and it is just that -- is spreading online. The Facebook group "[It's Twenty-ten, not Two-thousand and ten](#)" lists 593 members. Valerie Wilkinson, a new member, wrote on the group's wall: "Think ahead ten years. It has to be 'twenty-twenty'! I'm already picturing graduating students wearing glasses with their caps and gowns." There's also a Facebook fan page and "[Saying 'Twenty-Ten' Instead of 'Two-Thousand-Ten' Because It Sounds Cooler](#)" has even more members -- nearing 20,000.