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These sentences are from the book, "Outlive: The Science and Art of Longevity."If you had wanted to create a "self-driving" car in the 1950s, your best option might have been to strap a brick to the accelerator. Yes, the vehicle would have been able to move forward on its own, but it could not slow down, stop, or turn to avoid barriers. Is the could in the last sentence the past tense or the present tense?Why isn't that part "would not have been able to slow down, stop, or turn to avoid barriers?" but "could not slow down, stop, or turn to avoid barriers." I think it is in the conditional mood, which is tenseless. Probably an informal variant of the unreal conditional it could not have slowed down. Would of the "type 2" and "type 3" conditionals can be replaced by could, might and sometimes should, which each add their own meanings and/or nuances.If you had strapped a brick to the accelerator, it would have been unable to slow down. There would have been an obstacle preventing it from slowing down - namely, there would not have been a driver to slow it down. I think it is in the conditional mood, which is tenseless. Probably an informal variant of the unreal conditional it could not have slowed down.Would of the "type 2" and "type 3" conditionals can be replaced by could, might and sometimes should, which each add their own meanings and/or nuances.If you had strapped a brick to the accelerator, it would have been unable to slow down. There would have been an obstacle preventing it from slowing down - namely, there would not have been a driver to slow it down. Can it be just it could not slow down just as it is and not it could not have slowed down?So it is like this: before that part, you could be thinking about the 1950s, but in that part, you are talking about the self-driving car in general in an unreal situation. If it did not exist, you cant say that it was unable to slow down. If it did not exist, you cant say that it was unable to slow down. I meant conditional. So it is like this: if it existed, it could not slow downBefore that part its like: if it had existed, it would not have been able to slow downOr is the former part just a short version of if it had existed, it could not have slowed down? 'Could' could be complicated. As for tense, look at simpler examples: (1) If you removed its engine, it was useless.(2) If you removed its engine, it would be useless. These seem to mean the same thing. If you are very precise about nuances of meaning, perhaps (1) implies "sometimes people removed the engine - and when they did this, the car was useless", whereas (2) implies "perhaps no-one ever actually removed the engine, but if they did/had, this is what would have been the result". So now apply this distinction to 'could': (1) If you put a brick on its accelerator, it could not slow down. (2) If you put a brick on its accelerator, it would not be able to slow down. Again there is a possible (but not grammatically necessary) fine distinction: in (3) some people tried putting a brick there, and found that the car could not slow down; but in (4) perhaps no-one ever used a brick like this, but if they had done, this is what they would have found.I don't think this distinction is one we need to make. The situations are very similar; we don't have to decide which of the two it is. These sentences are from the book, "Outlive: The Science and Art of Longevity."If you had wanted to create a "self-driving" car in the 1950s, your best option might have been to strap a brick to the accelerator. Yes, the vehicle would have been able to move forward on its own, but it could not slow down, stop, or turn to avoid barriers.Is the could in the last sentence the past tense or the present tense?Why isn't that part "would not have been able to slow down, stop, or turn to avoid barriers?" but "could not slow down, stop, or turn to avoid barriers." In addition, consider this: could is a modal verb, and modals dont conjugate for tense in the same way lexical verbs do. Instead, they interact with the surrounding context for their "temporal" reference. In the sentence, there are enough references to past "time" (had wanted, might have been, would have been) that could can appear as it does. We get that could refers to a judgment, and that it refers to the contextual past time. It's not a question of grammar. It's a matter of its about stylistic economythere is no reason to mark "past time" every time a modal verb appears in the narrative. But style is subjective. Another writer might have preferred "could not have slowed down." 'Could' could be complicated. As for tense, look at simpler examples: (1) If you removed its engine, it was useless.(2) If you removed its engine, it would be useless. These seem to mean the same thing. If you are very precise about nuances of meaning, perhaps (1) implies "sometimes people removed the engine - and when they did this, the car was useless", whereas (2) implies "perhaps no-one ever actually removed the engine, but if they did/had, this is what would have been the result". So now apply this distinction to 'could': (1) If you put a brick on its accelerator, it could not slow down.(2) If you put a brick on its accelerator, it would not be able to slow down. Again there is a possible (but not grammatically necessary) fine distinction: in (3) some people tried putting a brick there, and found that the car could not slow down; but in (4) perhaps no-one ever used a brick like this, but if they had done, this is what they would have found.I don't think this distinction is one we need to make. The situations are very similar; we don't have to decide which of the two it is. The problem is that the situation implied in the original sentences is that of (4), but the author used the construction could for that of (3). Thats why I am confused. In addition, consider this: could is a modal verb, and modals dont conjugate for tense in the same way lexical verbs do. Instead, they interact with the surrounding context for their "temporal" reference. In the sentence, there are enough references to past "time" (had wanted, might have been, would have been) that could can appear as it does. We get that could refers to a judgment, and that it refers to the contextual past time. It's not a question of grammar. It's a matter of its about stylistic economythere is no reason to mark "past time" every time a modal verb appears in the narrative. But style is subjective. Another writer might have preferred "could not have slowed down." Oh, now I see you dont have to mark the tense. Oh. Good. I don't want to make a new thread so I'm writing here. What about word "brick" in British Eng. I heard it is old-fashioned friendly remark...Mod Edit: These posts were moved from another thread on a different topic (use of "dog" as a slang expression). Not "wanting" to make a new thread is different from "needing" to. Please see rule # 8, HERE. I don't want to make a new thread so I'm writing here. What about word "brick" in British Eng. I heard it is old-fashioned friendly remark... generally it is better to make a new thread for a new idea - you get better responses. A brick is an old fashioned noun for a man who is a "good sort" - solid, dependable, that type of thing. Yeah - 'you're a real brick' is you're really dependable, i can rely on you. but it is a bit old-fashioned, i suppose. i assume lots of people would know what it meant if you said it though Hmm, must be very old-fashioned because I've not heard it ever. I guess it depends how old you are or how well read you are. It has never been a phrase I've heard very often but I've seen it in plenty of books, especially in genres like Agatha Christie, Wooster, and others that centre on societies who have used public-schools! It means a good, helpful or trustworthy person. I learned the word from my favorite author as a child, Enid Blyton. I had completely forgotten this expression until this thread reminded me. As suggested, a brick is a good sort, a person who won't let the side down. More importantly, this is often used to describe someone after they have demonstrated such qualities.Bricks may be male or female, and I remember the word clearly from boarding school books for girls and boys published in England until the 1950s. I don't think I have ever heard the term outside that context - or perhaps some black-and-white British film of the same era. So, everyone would crowd round Giles after the cricket match. He has played a captain's game and scored the winning run despite having only one leg, being blind, and his parents and sister having disappeared in the Amazonian forest for three months.The last words of the book are, "You're a real brick, Giles." We have those bricks over here as well, but they are not so frequently leg- and family-deprived. When I was young, we used to crowd around the camp fire,toasting marshmallows that had been brought to us, at great risk of life and limb, by good old Uncle Panjy. He was a real brick. There is another slang use of brick, but it doesn't quite belong here, and I'm too lazy to open a new thread to talk about thebricklaying conditions.... There is another slang use of brick, but it doesn't quite belong here, and I'm too lazy to open a new thread to talk about thebricklaying conditions.... That was also the first thing that came into my mind when I read "brick". It seems I'm too much of a pleb/too young to have encountered the other meaning. ye brick was a synonym for 'reliable'. but nowadays.. to lay a brick.. can mean.. you know - to answer the more severe of the two potential calls of nature I have also heard the expression "dumb as a brick" (probably a derivation of "dumb as a rock"). Consequently, a "brick" can also be someone who is considered "dense," or not very bright. And then there is that other worthy-of-its-own-thread brickwork... Built like a brick sh__house! One British suggestion about the meaning and origin... So the phrase "built like a brick outhouse" carried over to refer to a woman who has a fine structure.It's a rural U.S. expression since few city folk have outdoor toilets. here Built like a brick sh__house! One British suggestion about the meaning and origin...So the phrase "built like a brick outhouse" carried over to refer to a woman who has a fine structure. It's a rural U.S. expression since few city folk have outdoor toilets. here In Australia the expression "Built like a brick sh*thouse" is quite common Not normally applied to a Pamela Anderson type woman, but perhaps to an Andrea Dworkin type woman. I have also heard the expression "dumb as a brick" (probably a derivation of "dumb as a rock"). Consequently, a "brick" can also be someone who is considered "dense," or not very bright. In this sense I've heard "thick as a brick". For someone who is very, very dense. or, it's like talking to a brick wall - not directly relevant, but thereabouts! And there's "sh*ing bricks". See I tend to say 'Bricking it' if I'm nervous. Obvioulsy has the same meaning n all. I suppose the meaning that you're looking for lux is what I would call 'a pillar' as in a pillar to society, someone who is dependable and reliable. I really, really wish I had been more clear about the thread topic when I carved this one off it's parent.The parent was about calling someone a dog, not about all the possible meanings of the word dog. This thread was meant to be about calling someone a brick, not about all possible slang and other uses of the word brick. Maybe I should have checked in more often to see what you were all up to..... Pah, let us off, it's an interesting topic...we all have interesting things to say *smiles angellically at you* Re. how old-fashioned a term 'brick' is, I heard it used yesterday in my local pub, by a 20-something guy. Don't know if it's a regional factor, but I still hear it used now and then. I have just heard this slang word after not being used for a long time. I have it down as solid (dependable to his or her own character) and I heard the term as "not a brick". If the other character is different, the term can be misinterpreted. I think it can also be used as a term for inflexible. However, in the case I heard it, the people were too stupid to put it in the right context. "Brothels are made of the bricks of religion" puts it in a different context. It can mean conventionally religious or even prudish. He was a "brick in bed" means ...? This is someone's posting on another website: "brick of a man -- A good, solid, substantial person that you can rely upon. The expression is said to have originated with King Lycurgus of Sparta, who was questioned about the absence of defensive walls around his city. 'There are Sparta's walls,' he replied, pointing at his soldiers, 'and every man is a brick.'" From the "Encyclopedia of Word and Phrase Origins" by Robert Hendrickson (Facts on File, New York, 1997). Hi, what does "brick" mean in this sentence : "Thanks, You're a real brick"Does it mean "friend" ? I've never heard this, but often heard you're a real rock (une personne solide et stable sur laquelle on peut compter en situation de crise) In BE "brick" means a generous, helpful, and reliable person. The expression is dated. Ok I found that in the movie : "Atonement" (from Ian McEwan novel) great movie by the way =) You're a brick means exactly what Edwingill says - someone on whom you can build. Not to be confused with: You are as *thick as a brick. *Chiefly British: bte, obtus Does "first brick in the wall" have the same meaning like the beginning of something (possibly an unstoppable process), and if so, does it have a negative connotation? I found this expression in the below article about the pro democracy demonstrations in Hong Kong. If the CCP manages to ram through mainland-style elections, it will cement in place a precedent from which there is no return, short of full-on revolution. It is the first brick in the wall of formal mainlandization of the political system. Hullo, ek.Does "first brick in the wall" means the beginning of something (possibly an unstoppable process)?Yes, it does. It's similar to "to start the ball rolling". It can have either positive or negative connotations, but that depends on what comes after the expression, which, per se, is neuter. GS Hullo, ek.Does "first brick in the wall" means the beginning of something (possibly an unstoppable process)?Yes, it does. It's similar to "to start the ball rolling". It can have either positive or negative connotations, but that depends on what comes after the expression, which, per se, is neuter. Thanks heaps, Giorgi!! How interesting! Still, I don't understand the phrase "another brick in the wall" in the song "I don't need no education..." Could someone tell me? Thank you. Ah, well, in order to understand that, you need to understand what Pink Floyd are talking about in the first place. 'The wall' is a wall of alienation that surrounds an individual in our modern society (well, the modern society of the late 70s, in fact). That wall is made of various facts and characters that surround the person. Since all those facts and characters help build the wall of alienation, they can be seen as its structural elements, just like bricks are the structural elements of a physical wall. And so the kids say 'hey, teacher, leave those kids alone; all in all you're just a-nother brrrick in the wall' - the teacher is another brick in the wall of alienation that is being erected around the kids.Am I making sense? Put a brick [on/over/at/onto] the table Hello, my friends! What's the difference in meaning?Many thanks. Last edited by a moderator: Dec 9, 2015 On and onto are synonymous and mean the brick is placed on the surface of the table.I can't imagine one would "put a brick over/at the table"One might possibly "throw a brick over the table" i.e. whilst standing one side of the table throw the brick to land on the floor on the opposite side of the table. If one were to throw a brick at the table it would mean you intend either a) to make the brick land on the surface of the table or b) to hit some part of the table with the brick. a) to make the brick land on the surface of the table or b) to hit some part of the table with the brick. What do you mean by a) and b) here? Please clarify it, FF.If I look at a), then both "on" and "at" should have the same meanings, because we're going to make the brick land on the surface in both situations. To throw an object at another object means to throw it towards the other object in the hope that it will land "on" or "in" that object or, at least, hit it.e.g if you throw a ball at a bucket the ball could land in the bucket, on the bucket (if it's upside down) or it could just strike the bucket and land on the floor. In all these cases the preposition "at" goes with the verb to "throw" Thank you so much, FF. Looking at the scenario you have just presented, I think both "at" and "on" can be used interchangeably, e.g:I put a brick on the table = I put a brick at the table. Am I right? No.Throw at = throw towards with force, with intention to do damage to some part.Throw on/onto = throw gently so as to land on the tabletop. (Franco-filly introduced the idea of "throw." The question is about prepositions with "put.")No. "At" merely means nearby, in the general area.I am at the train station. I am in the parking area, I'm on the street in front of the station, I'm on the platform, ...I am on the train station. I have climbed onto the roof of the train station."I put the brick at the table." is so vague that you would have to spend some time looking for the brick. It's somewhere in the same room as the table. I don't think I would ever say that. I'm having some difficulty understanding the difference b/w 'at' and 'on' with the verb "put". I'm bewildered about how can they be different in meaning as they both mean the same thing to me, i.e, to land something on a surface. (as FF has indicated in #2 and #4) "At" does not mean "to land something on a surface." If you throw the brick at (in the direction of) the table, you are trying to hit any part of the table. You succeed if you hit a leg or the underside or a foot or the edge or the top or any other part of the table.With "put," "place," "set," and other words like that, "at" has the meaning "nearby" not "in the direction of."We would say "Put the chair at the table." for the normal way that chairs are near the table with the seat under the table. "Put the brick at the table." is meaningless, however, since bricks and tables have no natural association. I think you've misunderstood me, Myridon. I mean I've put the book at/on the table using my hands. See the picture here: question is: Can I use 'at' and 'on' interchangeably here for the sentence in RED? First, you need to understand that the same preposition (on, at, over, by) can mean something completely different depending on the verb. They do not have a universal meaning. Next, you need to understand that, even in the case where the preposition has a similar meaning, the meaning has to relate logically. People are stretching here to accommodate your request, but "put a book at the table" doesn't occur in everyday English. We don't put books at tables. Think of it this way: "There is a woman at the front desk who can answer your question". The woman is in the general location of the front desk. She is most likely sitting behind the desk but you can say she is at the desk. She is not sitting on the desk. "There is a brick at the table" doesn't make much sense. When would you talk about the deliberate placement of a brick in the general vicinity of the table but not on the table, just nearby. What situation would call for that behavior? Would you walk up to a reception desk and expect to see a brick behind the desk, waiting to greet you? Yes. "At the table" implies a relationship between the table and the object or person. You could say "There is a brick near the table" or "There is a brick by the table" but not "at".You can see this implied relationship in sentences like "There is a man at the door". This implies that the man has approached the door and has knocked or has rung the bell. He either wants to come in or wants to speak to someone who answers the door. "There is a man by the door" implies that the man is near the door but there is no implied intent to enter through the door. Hola gente! Alguien puede explicarme qu es pasta brick (ver este hilo)? Es que he encontrado el trmino en varios lugares, pero no encuentro ninguna explicacin y me estoy volviendo loco! Una traduccin me resultara de gran utilidad, pero al menos necesitara una explicacin. Llev un tiempo creyendo que fuera filo pastry, pero acabo de encontrar usos de philo en espaol, que me parece la traduccin de filo pastry. Por favor no digas que la traduccin sea brick pasta: no lo es! Tal trmino no existe en ingls. Saludos y gracias de antemano It's not very well known in N.A. yet, but it is called "brick pastry". I understand it's of Tunisian origin and used as fine sheets for wrapping. "Pasta Brick" es la misma pasta llamada tambien "Pasta Philo" Es una pasta usada en la elaboracion de muchos platos del medio oriente y se parece al hojaldre en el sentido de que viene o se prepara en capas superpuestas, aunque su elaboracion es muy distinta del hojaldre.Se puede freir, se puede cocinar, o asar a la plancha, y se usa en la elaboracion de muchos postres como en el famoso "Baklava" griego.est hecha de harina de trigo, agua, un poco de aceite y algunas gotas de raki (en Grecia) o de vinagre blanco. Cuando la masa se destina a la repostera, se le pueden aadir yemas de huevos.Sin embargo, ahora es producida tambien de forma industrial de manera que se puede conseguir ya elaborada en Supermercados y tiendas. Vale. Muchas gracias por la clarificacin Dear forum, I would like some help in finding a suitable idiomatic way to express the following I feel like I'm banging my head against a brick wall meaning, despite my best efforts I am making no progress/cannot make a breakthrough. Thanks, S Hello Not that much different from the English actually... Se cogner la tte contre un mur.Parler un mur Dear forum, I would like some help in finding a suitable idiomatic way to express the following I feel like I'm banging my head against a brick wall meaning, despite my best efforts I am making no progress/cannot make a breakthrough. Thanks, S I've never heard this expression. What I have heard is the following variations:Talking to him is like talking to a brick wall. (I can't manage to convince him of anything.)I feel like banging my head against a brick wall. (I'm frustrated.) Note this differs from the above by the absence of the "I feel like I'm..". It is a sentiment of "I feel like I should go hit my head against a wall", not "I'm already doing it" (pretty subtle, eh?)From the meaning described (making no progress/cannot make a breakthrough), I would say the expression would normally run "I feel like I've run up against a brick wall" Caveat: my expressions might be AE! We say sometimes : "c'est se taper la tte contre les murs" or "se taper la tte contre un mur"."se cogner" is not intentional, its an accident.Parler un mur is good We say sometimes : "c'est se taper la tte contre les murs" or "se taper la tte contre un mur"."se cogner" is not intentional, its an accident. Ok, but what does it mean precisely? There seem to be a lot of variations in English... with slightly different meanings. Thanks to all for the suggestions, very helpful! I've never heard this expression. What I have heard is the following variations: Talking to him is like talking to a brick wall. (I can't manage to convince him of anything.) I feel like banging my head against a brick wall. (I'm frustrated.) Note this differs from the above by the absence of the "I feel like I'm..". It is a sentiment of "I feel like I should go hit my head against a wall", not "I'm already doing it" (pretty subtle, eh?) From the meaning described (making no progress/cannot make a breakthrough), I would say the expression would normally run "I feel like I've run up against a brick wall" Caveat: my expressions might be AE! Yes, very subtle. However I can assure you that my original phrase is perfectly normal, and your attempt to correct it with "I feel like I've run up against a brick wall" has a sense of meeting an insurmountable barrier in the way of progress, whereas my original has more a sense of frustration resulting from numerous failed attempts to acheive something, for example... pretty subtle, eh? Thanks to all for the suggestions, very helpful! Yes, very subtle. However I can assure you that my original phrase is perfectly normal, and your attempt to correct it with "I feel like I've run up against a brick wall" has a sense of meeting an insurmountable barrier in the way of progress, whereas my original has more a sense of frustration resulting from numerous failed attempts to acheive something, for example... pretty subtle, eh? You are absolutely correct, here it is: banging/hitting+head+against+a+brick+wallI've never heard it phrased exactly like that (in the present tense with I'm) hence the caveat! Don't know if it's a BE'ism or not. Well, as my physics professor always used to say: "you just have to take everything with a grain of sand". Ok, but what does it mean precisely? There seem to be a lot of variations in English... with slightly different meanings. "Se cogner la tte contre un mur" could be if you where running without looking ahead and you bumped into a wall. It's real. you get hurt."Se taper la tte contre les mur" is an image.I hope it helps I've never heard this expression. []Caveat: my expressions might be AE! I reckon you've hit the nail on the head. "Banging one's head" is very BE and used regularly (the use of "banging" is a dead giveaway to being BE or OzE).I'd say: J'ai l'impression de me cogner la tte contre les murs I reckon you've hit the nail on the head. "Banging one's head" is very BE and used regularly (the use of "banging" is a dead giveaway to being BE or OzE).I'd say: J'ai l'impression de me cogner la tte contre les murs Ah ha. My physics professor also always used to say "you've hit the hammer right on the nail."Teafrog, what do you think though of shunrei's preference for taper vs. cogner in this case? what do you think though of shunrei's preference for taper vs. cogner in this case? 6 of one, half a dozen of the other.. almost > (means almost the same, in plain lingo)Honestly I prefer "cogner" because you ram yourself against an object, whereas "frapper" infers you use an object to hit yourself (in this case).Besides, I prefer the sound of cogner vs taper In our example, you bang your head against an object, you don't grab the object to bang your head.Makes sense or am I off track? Sto cercando un equivalente in inglese dell'espressione "muro di gomma" nel senso che almeno in Italia usiamo spesso in riferimento a call-center/customer service.Quello che voglio dire qualcosa tipo "Mettete un servizio di assistenza decente invece di un muro di gomma" (in risposta a un sondaggio di un customer service su come migliorare il loro servizio - ricevuto dopo aver fatto loro una richiesta e aver avuto indietro una replica idiota). Tra i possibili candidati che ho trovato l'espressione che mi pare si avvicini di pi sia "brick wall".Per non sono affatto sicuro sia quella giusta perch, come per le altre espressioni candidate, ne ho trovato pochissimi usi sul web nel contesto di invettive contro i call center. Ora, o solo in Italia abbiamo call center come quelli che abbiamo (non mi pare sia cos), o in inglese non esiste un espressione analoga oppure semplicemente non sono ancora riuscito a trovarla. Le altro espressioni che ho gi considerato sono:"buffer"- Sembra assolutamente usata nel contesto dei customer service etc., ma non ho trovato usi in senso negativo per cui non direi che quello che cerco."iron curtain""water off a duck's back"- Anche se i sensi non sono lontanissimi da quello che vorrei dire, non mi sembra siano usate in questo contesto. Ovviamente ho gi visto i thread contenenti "muro di gomma" nel forum, proprio da l che sono venuto a conoscenza di "brick wall" e "water off a duck's back" (che come detto non mi convincono). Sapete aiutarmi?O devo rassegarmi a insultare l'azienda in modo meno preciso? Hi gfa,I think "brick wall" is your answer, but it has to be phrased in a certain way: you have to "run into a brick wall" or "hit a brick wall," meaning that after a certain point in dealing with this call centre, you received no useful help whatsoever. So, you could write something like Your customers are entitled to some decent service: when I called to get help with XX I ran into a brick wall. The expression doesn't work exactly like "muro di gomma" seems to (I must admit I've never encountered it before): the call centre doesn't "put up a brick wall"; the customer has to hit the brick wall.The "iron curtain," is what cut off Western Europe from the old Soviet bloc of Eastern Europe; I've never heard it used any other way. And "water off a duck's back" refers to an unpleasant experience (or one that should be unpleasant) having little to no effect on someone: The boss yells at Mitch all the time, but for him it's just water off a duck's back. gfa , could you explain exactly (for those English speakers like myself who are not sure) what you mean in Italian by a muro di gomma, and what sort of customer help service you are talking about ? Is the idea of muro di gomma that of absorption (of shock/criticism etc) , of a defensive wall, or of a wall from which things bounce back? In the UK 'call centre' is used of a place which interacts with customers via the telephone, as opposed to the help centres or customer services (via email) associated with commercial websites. In the UK, the problem with call centres is initially the length of time it takes to actually get to speak to someone; then the person you first speak to , being unable or unwilling to answer your question, promises to look into the matter and ring you back - but doesn't; you need to be exceptionally articulate, persistent and ruthless to make them bring someone to the phone who will actually do something to solve your problem. Email customer services aren't quite the same - you usually get a prompt reply, very apologetic, often offering detailed solutions - but not to the specific problem you have raised; however often you repeat your question (and refer to the irrelevance of the previous response(s)), you keep receiving the same reply. If a muro di gomma is one from which things rebound then there's an obvious appositeness here, but unfortunately no equivalent phrase in English.In both cases , the behaviour might be described as 'stonewalling', so you might answer the survey by saying 'Give some actual help instead of simply stonewalling.' In both cases , the behaviour might be described as 'stonewalling', so you might answer the survey by saying 'Give some actual help instead of simply stonewalling.' Stonewalling was the first word that came to mind, and I guess it's probably the best equivalent for 'muro di gomma'. Nel film "Il muro di gomma" l'espressione era usata per indicare l'omert, la reticenza dell'apparato statale e militare dopo l'incidente aereo di Ustica. Il "muro" dei call center" fatto semmai di incompetenza, per cui secondo me l'espressione non usata correttamente. Personalmente, invece, io trovo che l'espressione "muro di gomma" calzi a pennello per alcuni tipi di call center: trasmette perfettamente quell'impressione di essere "rimbalzati" (come da un muro di gomma) da un numero all'altro in un labirinto di "se vuole X digiti Y", che tutti noi purtroppo abbiamo sperimentato almeno una volta. Personalmente, invece, io trovo che l'espressione "muro di gomma" calzi a pennello per alcuni tipi di call center: trasmette perfettamente quell'impressione di essere "rimbalzati" (come da un muro di gomma) da un numero all'altro in un labirinto di "se vuole X digiti Y", che tutti noi purtroppo abbiamo sperimentato almeno una volta. Quello lo chiamerei pi un flipper che un muro Last edited: May 18, 2018 In both cases , the behaviour might be described as 'stonewalling', so you might answer the survey by saying 'Give some actual help instead of simply stonewalling.' It may be a BE/AE difference, or just a difference of opinion about what actually goes on at call centres, but for me "stonewalling" is behaviour that is deliberately obstructive, not obstructive through incompetence, bad systems, or indifference. I've dealt with my share of notoriously bad call centres--trying to get my mother's cable subscription cancelled after her death was truly absurd--but only at my most irritated did I feel that they were deliberately out to get me.Based on the definitions of muro di gomma that Tellure has listed, though, the concept isn't quite that of a "hitting a brick wall" either, which doesn't assign enough blame to the people putting up the "wall of indifference." It's more like "all my requests for help fell on deaf ears," but that's not something I'd say in a complaint to a call centre. (oddio rispondo in inglese o italiano adesso? Spero che cos vada bene...) ---Devo precisare che non sono sicuro che la mia idea di "muro di gomma" corrisponda al suo significato corretto originale. Non sono sicuro di averla mai sentita fuori dal contesto dei call center (s, ero ancora abbastanza giovane quando sono cominciati a venir fuori) e del film (di cui non mi ricordo niente), e probabilmente non ho mai cercato il suo significato sui dizionari prima di ieri.Associata ai call center mi sembra che calzi a pennello nel descrivere quella che molto di frequente la loro funzione: di frapporsi fra gli utenti e l'azienda facendo rimbalzare le lamentele, senza lasciarle mai arrivare a chi potrebbe far qualcosa a riguardo.S, per esprimere una cosa cos "muro" potrebbe essere sufficiente, ma la "gomma" aggiunge l'idea che qualunque tentativo di sfondarlo sia solo una spreco di forza (viene assorbito senza batter ciglio).Il fatto che contro un muro di gomma si rimbalzerebbe (un po') ha meno rilevanza nell'espressione, conta pi l'aspetto di assorbimento, ma in questo caso anche il rimbalzo pu essere appropriato nel senso che frequentemente, specialmente via e-mail, a una richiesta viene risposto con le stesse cose che si sono dette nella richiesta (probabilmente perch l'addetto ha dedicato solo 2 secondi a leggerla, cogliendo solo le tre parole che per caso gli passavano sott'occhio) .In realt i muri di gomma non esistono nel mondo reale (a parte questo poco rilevante Gum Wall - Wikipedia , che decisamente non quello che si intende qui), se esistessero probabilmente sarebbero pi facili da abbattere di un muro di mattoni, ma credo che tutti gli italiani sentendo l'espressione pensino a un muro infrangibile, contro cui uno spreco di forze combattere.A dire il vero per materassi di protezione, airfence e simili si avvicinano all'idea. --- Yes, I'm speaking precisely of those "call centres" and customer services, although in my experience the replies by mail can also take many days - which are still not enough for the replier to understand a single sentence of the original request .Hm, so no equivalent sentence... Maybe it's this lack of effective descriptions that allows for the survival of these things... ---Stonewalling in realt l'avevo anche gi trovato, mi ero dimenticato di elencarlo nel post. Cos dite che la cosa che pi si avvicina? Ok, andr per quello. --- for me "stonewalling" is behaviour that is deliberately obstructive Yes, I meant deliberately obstructive. I'm absolutely certain that the precise purpose of many customer assistance services is to block the voice of the clients from reaching anyone within the company. Incompetence, bad systems, or indifference are engineered as well, if present .I'm not saying that all of these companies take pleasure from their customers' troubles but most just don't want to be touched by them. It's still not un muro di gomma, but another relevant wall-related expression came to me:Dealing with this call centre is like banging your head against a [brick] wall."To bang your head against a brick wall" is defined by the Cambridge Online Dictionary as "to do, say, or ask for something repeatedly but to be unable to change a situation". It may be a BE/AE difference, or just a difference of opinion about what actually goes on at call centres, but for me "stonewalling" is behaviour that is deliberately obstructive, not obstructive through incompetence, bad systems, or indifference. No, because that's how I understand 'stonewalling' too, so I honestly don't think it works here. For sure I've come up against call centres where I have been unable to get a satisfactory reply: that is what I call 'banging my head against a brick wall'.Edit. Sorry, I saw you have already said that. Great minds... Alguien sabe como se puede traducir "brick de leche" al ingls, de entrada en Inglaterra la leche se vende en botella no???Ayudarme por favor, gracias de antemano. Formally it is known as a (resealable) aseptic carton but since such a carton consists iof multiple reinforced layers (to enhance shelflife) it is sometimes referred to colloquially as a small box in allusion to its sturdiness. Best Regards, Dinis Formally it is known as a (resealable) aseptic carton but since such a carton consists iof multiple reinforced layers (to enhance shelflife) it is sometimes referred to colloquially as a small box in allusion to its sturdiness. Best Regards, Dinis Ok thanks I think I'll use the colloquial form "small box" cos it's for an advertising agency.Thanks and regards. Although we don't refer much to the container when buying milk, except when it is in a bottle I think. in the UK, we would normally refer to the 'small box' as a 'carton'. Thanks both, yes I think this is it "carton" is more like a daily word. Thanks THANKS!!!!! Entonces en ingls no se dice "brick de leche" como decimos en Espaa? No usan coloquialmente expresiones como "brick of milk" o "milk brick"?Me extraa porque obviamente la palabra "brick" no es espaola. Y en la Argentina se suele decir un tetrabrik o simplemente un "tetra". Living in the U.S., I've never heard of "brick" or "tetrabrik" in relation to milk.I would not have understood it without the explanations given above. Leche en tetra, vino en tetra. Nor would I if I didn't live in Spain.The short answer is that a 'brik de leche' has got nothing to do with a brick (ladrillo). In BrE, the equivalent is a carton. Vemos cmo surgen los malentendidos. Esto sali en un artculo publicado hoy (Uy): "... Aprovechar hasta la ltima gota en los tetra bricks, latas y envases de vidrio..." Es que la leche que se vende en tetrabrik is UHT y no se necesita almacenar en la neverra, y no se compra mucho comparada con la leche fresca (la que no se vende en tetrabrik) y por eso no se dice "brick of milk" (ni carton mucho la verdad). Solemos decir la medida (pint, gallon). Si, lgico. Tetrapak esta in Collins (espaol)Tetra-Pak (carton) esta in Collins (ingls). Con . Tetrabrick o tetra brick: invisible. Creo que aqu la gente, cuando no dice simplemente tetra, dice tetra pak, que es una marca y nombre de empresa. Tal como una gillette es una afeitadora, y otros casos similares. Me refera a la confusin que pueden causar las cosas mal escritas y que as se propagan. No hay diferenci entre brick o tetra y carton? No s para brick o brik (uso espaol) pero entre tetra y carton hay diferencia creo. Well it's purely a question of it's form of use in English and Spanish here.Personally I was more aware of Tetra brick than of Tetra-pak/tetrapak. And a brick stood short for Tetra brick in my eyes (ears).Me voy a informar como los Canarios usan tales trminos. Tampoco usamos voz en off, mobbing, puenting, footing, zapping ... those are all Spanish Un brik de leche se hace referencia a la marca Tetra Brik, aunque la gente no s de cuenta.In the USA, it's a "carton" of milk. La marca Tetra Pak ha mantenido durante aos una fuerte publicidad en la televisin mexicana, pero en mi ciudad seguimos diciendo una leche o un litro de leche. No decimos brick de leche. En Espaa, conocemos el trmino tetrabrick pero no creo que se use mucho a nivel de calle.Aparece en la prensa, en revistas, en folletos sobre reciclaje, pero yo no me veo diciendo:-Qu desea?-Deme un tetrabrick...Dira: una leche, un cartn de leche, un cartn de vino. In Spanish I would say a "brik de leche" and in English, a "carton of milk". Me parece que es "brik" (sin "c"), una marca registrada de "TetraPak". El "tetra" (4) se refiere, creo, a las capas que el material tiene para aislar y proteger los alimentos. Ok, sin "c".Quizs s dira tetrabrik, una vez vaciado, refirindome al tipo de envase, en la frase"los tetrabriks se tiran al contenedor amarillo".Pero por ejemplo, estando a la mesa, haciendo alusin al envase, podra decir (yo y todos mis paisanos, creo):"psame la botella" (de agua, de vino), en cambio, no dira: "psame el tetrabrik",sera: "psame la leche". Al ir a comprar, yo digo "una leche en caja/cajita" o "una leche largavida". "Brik de leche" es algo relativamente reciente en Espaa, que viene del formato Tetrabrik. El nombre comn para referirse a un "brik" es "cartn".Carton of milk = cartn de lecheY la "caja de leche" sera un envase con 6 12 cartones de leche. Aunque hay veces que tambin se llama al "cartn de leche" "caja de leche". Quizs s dira tetrabrik, una vez vaciado, refirindome al tipo de envase, en la frase "los tetrabriks se tiran al contenedor amarillo".Pero por ejemplo, estando a la mesa, haciendo alusin al envase, podra decir (yo y todos mis paisanos, creo):"psame la botella" (de agua, de vino), en cambio, no dira: "psame el tetrabrik", sera: "psame la leche". Coincido con este uso. En mi experiencia: cartn de leche no lo he escuchado nunca en espaa y "brik" es mucho ms comn.Nota: la leche UHT en tetrabrick es con mucho el formato ms habitual de venta en Espaa, por eso la palabra est tan extendida, hasta el punto de que es sinnimo de la "unidad de venta". alguien puede decir "voy a comprar tras briks de leche" aunque luego compre una marca que usa botellas de plstico. En mi experiencia: cartn de leche no lo he escuchado nunca en Espaa y "brik" es mucho ms comn.Nota: la leche UHT en tetrabrik es con mucho el formato ms habitual de venta en Espaa, por eso la palabra est tan extendida, hasta el punto de que es sinnimo de la "unidad de venta". alguien puede decir "voy a comprar tras briks de leche" aunque luego compre una marca que usa botellas de plstico. Evidentemente tenemos un uso distinto de la palabra. Yo creo que lo llamara "cartn". Se puede saber de qu parte de Espaa eres? En mi experiencia: cartn de leche no lo he escuchado nunca en espaa y "brik" es mucho ms comn.Nota: la leche UHT en tetrabrick es con mucho el formato ms habitual de venta en Espaa, por eso la palabra est tan extendida, hasta el punto de que es sinnimo de la "unidad de venta". alguien puede decir "voy a comprar tras briks de leche" aunque luego compre una marca que usa botellas de plstico. Pues parece que vivimos en dos Espaas diferentes, porque nunca he escuchado a nadie referirse a una botella de leche como un brik. Y desde luego "brik" no es la forma ms comn para referirse a un Tetrabrik propiamente dicho, que principalmente se le llama o cartn o caja. Al menos en mi entorno, "brik", aunque s se usa, suena un poco a... alguien que se quiere hacer el moderno? Que s se usa, pero no es lo comn. Pues ir por zonas... Yo soy de Barcelona y como digo en mi entorno es habitual y el post inicial parece que tambin. En Madrid se dice un brik de leche, sopa de brik Puede ser diferencia por zonas o generacional, no se Pues ir por zonas... Yo soy de Barcelona y como digo en mi entorno es habitual y el post inicial parece que tambin. Para los envases pequeos s decimos de cajita para diferenciarlos de los frascos o latas, pero ya no estoy hablando de leche sino de pur de tomate, salsas picantes, conservas, etc. Un pur de cajita (antes vena en lata). En Madrid se dice un brik de leche, sopa de brikPuede ser diferencia por zonas o generacional, no se Parece que por zonas. Yo tambin soy de Madrid, y coincido con Kermit en el uso que le damos por aqu. Hello all!I'd like to translate the phrase:'It's so much better than my old phone (a Nokia Brick!)'In BE slang (I don't know about AE), a 'brick' is a rubbish (but often rather durable, hence 'brick') mobile phone, often associated with Nokia, which looks like this:www.google.co.uk/search?q=nokia+bri...tYCAAQ&sqi=2&ved=0CAYQ_AUoAQ&biw=1280&bih=709 Here's my attempt, translating 'brick' literally:' cos migliore del mio telefonino precedente (un mattone di Nokia!)' I doubt that 'mattone' makes sense here: is there a proper Italian word which reflects my meaning?Thanks,WD Last edited: Jul 13, 2014 I've heard "mattonella" a few times. I've often heard (and used) the word"giocattolo", speaking of those feature phones I think you're referring to. "Un giocattolo della N." However, the idea of "durability" is not as explicit as in the word "brick" I've often heard (and used) the word"giocattolo", speaking of those feature phones I think you're referring to. "Un giocattolo della N." However, the idea of "durability" is not as explicit as in the word "brick" That's not what brick means. So, Paulfromitaly, would 'mattonella di Nokia' be understood as 'Nokia brick'? Hi WillieDee,"mattoncino" is better. That's not what brick means. You're right. "giocattolo" doesn't mean "brick". However, the word "mattonella" is now used also to describe a thin, rectangular-shape smartphone like this (not sure if this link is allowed). Thus, if you use that word to mean an old fashioned low end mobile you'll possibly be misunderstood. After all, "un vecchio mattone della Nokia" could work. At least, I would understand what you're talking about. Pietruzzo,ciao ! Quando si chiama "mattone" o "mattoncino" un telefono di quella particolare marca, ci si riferisce ad un modello, sicuramente non attuale, che, come un mattone, era pesante e anche resistente "There's a reason the Nokia 3310 is nicknamed the "brick phone." Throw it down the stairs, drop it 5,000 times? No matter, you could just pick it up again and use it again".

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