



American Expression E0034 A dime a dozen

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The expression "a dime a dozen" is an idiomatic phrase used to describe something that is abundant, easily accessible, or commonly available. It implies that the subject in question is not unique, valuable, or particularly noteworthy due to its widespread presence or lack of scarcity.

The phrase originated in the United States during the 19th century when a dime (a ten-cent coin) was considered a relatively small and common denomination. The phrase "a dime a dozen" was used to convey the idea that something was so plentiful or common that it had little value or significance.

When something is described as "a dime a dozen," it suggests that it is easily found, encountered, or obtained in large quantities. It can refer to objects, goods, services, or even people. The phrase implies that the subject is not exceptional, rare, or of high quality.

For example, if someone remarks that "talented singers are a dime a dozen," it means that there are many singers with talent, and finding one with exceptional skills or unique qualities might be challenging due to the abundance of talent in the industry.

Similarly, if someone describes a particular item as "cheap toys are a dime a dozen," it suggests that there are numerous inexpensive toys available, and they are not considered valuable or special due to their widespread availability.

However, it's important to note that the phrase can be used in both positive and negative contexts. While it often conveys a sense of commonness or lack of value, it can also emphasize affordability or accessibility.

In summary, "a dime a dozen" is an idiomatic expression used to describe something that is abundant, easily accessible, or commonly available. It signifies that the subject lacks uniqueness, rarity, or exceptional value due to its widespread presence or lack of scarcity. The phrase conveys the idea that the subject is not noteworthy or particularly valuable in comparison to other things that may be more rare or exceptional.

Questions for Discussion

1. In what areas of life or society do you often encounter things that are described as "a dime a dozen"? Can you provide examples and discuss how their abundance or commonness affects their perceived value or significance?
2. How does the concept of something being "a dime a dozen" intersect with the principles of supply and demand in economics? How does the availability or scarcity of a particular item or service impact its perceived worth?
3. Can you think of instances where something initially considered "a dime a dozen" became highly valued or sought after? What factors contributed to the change in perception and the increase in value?
4. How does the phrase "a dime a dozen" influence our consumer behavior and decision-making processes? Are there situations where we prioritize rarity or uniqueness over the abundance and accessibility of a particular item or service?
5. Is there a downside to things being "a dime a dozen"? How can the abundance or commonness of certain goods, skills, or traits impact competition, market dynamics, or personal experiences? Are there instances where rarity or uniqueness holds more value than something that is readily available?