



American Expression E0251 Everything but the kitchen sink

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"Everything but the kitchen sink" is an idiomatic expression used to describe a situation or event where an excessive or overwhelming amount of items, resources, or ideas are included or utilized. It implies that nearly everything imaginable has been included or considered, leaving nothing out except for the literal kitchen sink. The phrase emphasizes the abundance or inclusiveness of a particular endeavor or collection.

The origin of the expression can be traced back to the early 20th century, when it was commonly used in reference to the practice of moving house. When people moved, they often took with them everything they owned, except for large and immovable items like the kitchen sink, which would typically be left behind. Over time, the phrase expanded its meaning beyond literal objects and came to represent an all-encompassing or exhaustive collection or effort.

"Everything but the kitchen sink" is typically used in a figurative sense to convey a sense of excess or completeness. It suggests that no detail has been overlooked or spared, and that a comprehensive approach has been taken. It can be used to describe situations where numerous items, ideas, or factors are included, often to the point of being excessive or unnecessary.

For example, if someone is describing a party where an abundance of food, decorations, entertainment, and activities are provided, they may say, "They had everything but the kitchen sink!" This indicates that the party was well-stocked and included an extensive array of elements.

The expression can also be used to convey a sense of clutter or overloading. If someone is packing for a trip and brings an excessive amount of luggage or items, someone observing might comment, "You've packed everything but the kitchen sink!" In this case, the phrase highlights the notion of bringing an excessive number of possessions, going beyond what is necessary or practical.

Additionally, "everything but the kitchen sink" can be used in discussions or descriptions of plans, ideas, or solutions. If someone presents an approach that includes a wide range of factors, options, or considerations, it may be said that they have included "everything but the kitchen sink." This indicates that they have thoroughly considered various aspects and left no stone unturned.

In conclusion, "everything but the kitchen sink" represents a situation or collection that includes an extensive or exhaustive amount of items, ideas, or factors. It originated from the practice of moving house but has evolved to encompass a broader figurative meaning. The phrase conveys a sense of abundance, completeness, or excess and is commonly used to describe situations where nearly everything imaginable has been included or considered.

Questions for Discussion

1. Can you think of a situation or event in your life or in popular culture where the phrase "everything but the kitchen sink" accurately described the abundance or inclusiveness of the experience? How did the overwhelming amount of elements or factors contribute to the overall impact or outcome?
2. In what ways can the concept of "everything but the kitchen sink" be beneficial or advantageous? How does an all-encompassing approach contribute to thoroughness, preparedness, or creativity in certain contexts?
3. On the other hand, can the inclusion of "everything but the kitchen sink" sometimes lead to negative consequences or inefficiencies? How can an excess of options, items, or considerations hinder decision-making or productivity?
4. How do you personally approach situations where you need to consider or include multiple factors or elements? Do you tend to lean towards a comprehensive approach, including "everything but the kitchen sink," or do you prefer a more streamlined or minimalist approach? What factors influence your decision-making process?
5. Are there any specific fields or industries where the phrase "everything but the kitchen sink" is more commonly used or applicable? How does the concept of inclusiveness or comprehensiveness play a role in those areas, and what are the potential benefits or challenges associated with it?