



American Expression E0752 Score brownie points

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The phrase "score brownie points" is an idiomatic expression that is often used in informal contexts to describe the act of gaining favor or earning approval from someone, typically through doing something kind, helpful, or praiseworthy. The phrase is derived from the concept of "brownie points," which is a system of imaginary credits or rewards given for good behavior or actions.

The origin of the term "brownie points" is uncertain, but it is believed to have originated in the mid-20th century, possibly in the United States. It may have been inspired by the Brownies, fictional characters known for performing good deeds in children's literature.

In its figurative sense, "scoring brownie points" refers to the act of earning recognition or appreciation, often with the intention of improving one's standing in someone's eyes or gaining an advantage. This can happen in various contexts, such as personal relationships, workplace dynamics, or social interactions.

For instance, in a romantic relationship, one partner might "score brownie points" by remembering an important date, such as an anniversary or a birthday, and planning a thoughtful surprise. The thoughtful gesture would likely lead to the other partner feeling appreciated and valued, thus improving the overall relationship dynamics.

Similarly, in the workplace, an employee may "score brownie points" by going the extra mile to help a coworker with a challenging task or by volunteering for additional responsibilities. By doing so, the employee may gain recognition from supervisors or colleagues, potentially leading to career advancement or better professional opportunities.

The expression "scoring brownie points" is often used humorously or informally, and it does not typically involve literal points or tangible rewards. Instead, it emphasizes the notion of doing something positive to win favor or goodwill.

However, it's essential to recognize that "scoring brownie points" should not be seen as a manipulative tactic or a means to exploit others. Authentic kindness and genuine actions are more likely to lead to meaningful and long-lasting relationships and rewards.

In conclusion, "scoring brownie points" is an idiomatic expression that means gaining favor or earning approval through kind, helpful, or praiseworthy actions. The phrase draws from the concept of "brownie points," which represents imaginary credits for good behavior. This informal expression is commonly used in various contexts, such as personal relationships and workplaces, to describe actions that lead to improved standing or better opportunities. However, it's important to remember that true kindness and genuine actions are more likely to create authentic and lasting connections, rather than using actions solely for self-serving purposes.

Questions for Discussion

1. In what situations do you find yourself trying to "score brownie points" in your personal or professional life? How do you feel about the idea of earning favor through actions, and how does it impact your behavior?
 2. Do you think "scoring brownie points" is a positive or negative concept in relationships? Can it lead to genuine acts of kindness and appreciation, or does it sometimes promote insincerity or manipulation?
 3. Share a personal experience where you felt genuinely appreciated or recognized for your efforts. How did that acknowledgment impact your motivation and relationship with the person or group involved?
 4. How do cultural or societal norms influence the concept of "scoring brownie points"? Are there certain behaviors or actions that are more valued in different contexts or communities?
 5. Reflect on instances where you witnessed someone using "brownie points" to gain an advantage or favor. How did that affect the dynamics of the situation or relationship, and how do you think it could have been handled differently?
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