



American Expression E0882 Work like a dog

IOTS Publishing Team
International Online Teachers Society
Since 2011

The phrase "work like a dog" is an idiomatic expression that describes a person's intense and relentless work ethic. It suggests that someone is putting in a tremendous amount of effort and labor, often going above and beyond what is expected, to achieve their goals or complete their tasks.

The origin of the phrase can be traced back to the image of dogs working diligently, such as farm dogs herding livestock or hunting dogs tirelessly pursuing their prey. Dogs are known for their loyalty, dedication, and tenacity, qualities that have led to the phrase "work like a dog" to represent someone who is diligent and unwavering in their pursuit of success.

When someone is said to be working like a dog, it implies that they are pushing themselves to the limit, investing long hours and considerable energy into their work or responsibilities. This may involve taking on challenging projects, assuming additional duties, or persisting through difficult circumstances to achieve desired outcomes.

The phrase is commonly used in professional settings, describing individuals who exhibit strong work ethics and are willing to put in the extra effort to excel in their careers. It can also be used to acknowledge people who take on demanding tasks without complaint, demonstrating a strong sense of responsibility and dedication.

However, it is essential to recognize that "working like a dog" is not synonymous with overworking or neglecting one's well-being. While the phrase celebrates hard work and determination, it also emphasizes the importance of maintaining a healthy work-life balance to avoid burnout and fatigue.

Additionally, the phrase can also be used humorously or in a lighthearted manner, especially when describing non-work-related situations. For instance, someone might say they "worked like a dog" to organize a family gathering or clean their home meticulously.

In conclusion, "work like a dog" is an idiomatic expression that characterizes someone's intense and tireless work ethic. It draws on the image of dogs diligently performing tasks and exemplifies the qualities of loyalty, dedication, and tenacity. The phrase is commonly used to describe individuals who invest considerable effort and energy into their work, going above and beyond what is expected to achieve their goals or responsibilities. However, it is crucial to remember the importance of maintaining a healthy work-life balance and avoiding overworking to ensure overall well-being. While "working like a dog" celebrates hard work and determination, it should also be balanced with self-care and mindfulness to foster long-term success and satisfaction.

Questions for Discussion

1. How do you interpret the phrase "work like a dog," and how does it resonate with your own work ethic and approach to tasks or responsibilities? Do you believe that putting in extra effort leads to better outcomes, or is there a point where it becomes counterproductive?
 2. In today's fast-paced and competitive work environments, how can individuals strike a balance between working diligently and avoiding burnout or exhaustion? What strategies do you employ to maintain a healthy work-life balance?
 3. The phrase "work like a dog" often conveys a sense of determination and tenacity. Can you share a personal or professional experience where you worked exceptionally hard to achieve a goal or overcome a challenge? What motivated you to persevere, and what were the results?
 4. While "working like a dog" is commonly associated with professional settings, how can the same dedication and diligence be applied to personal goals or projects? Can you think of an instance where you worked relentlessly to achieve a non-work-related objective, such as learning a new skill or completing a creative project?
 5. In a team or organizational context, how can the concept of "working like a dog" impact team dynamics and collaboration? How can leaders foster a culture of dedication and excellence while also encouraging self-care and well-being among team members?
-