



American Expression E0988 Put a pin in it

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"Put a pin in it" is a colloquial expression that's often used in conversations to suggest temporarily setting aside a topic, idea, or discussion for the time being, with the intention of returning to it later. This phrase draws its imagery from the idea of inserting a pin, much like one would in a physical map, to mark a location of interest that will be revisited at a later point. In the context of discussions and decision-making, "put a pin in it" functions as a tool to manage conversation flow and prioritize topics.

When someone says, "Let's put a pin in it," they are proposing that the current topic or idea should be paused or deferred for later consideration. This could be due to various reasons, such as the need to gather more information, involve other participants, or simply because the current timing isn't conducive to addressing the matter thoroughly.

The phrase is commonly used in both casual conversations and more formal settings. For instance, during a team meeting, if a new idea arises but there's insufficient time to delve into it, a team leader might say, "That's an interesting point. Let's put a pin in it for now and come back to it after we've discussed the main agenda items." This approach ensures that the discussion remains focused on the immediate priorities while acknowledging the importance of the deferred topic.

"Putting a pin in it" is a valuable communication strategy because it helps prevent tangential discussions from derailing the main conversation. By acknowledging the topic and suggesting it be revisited later, individuals can maintain the flow of the current conversation without dismissing the new idea entirely.

The phrase also demonstrates respect for the input and ideas of all participants. It signals that the topic is recognized and valued but that it requires dedicated time and attention to be fully explored. This can foster a collaborative atmosphere where everyone's contributions are acknowledged, even if they aren't addressed immediately.

However, it's important to ensure that the deferred topics are actually revisited as promised. Failure to "unpin" a topic and follow up on it can lead to frustration and a sense of unfulfilled expectations among participants. Therefore, effective follow-up is crucial to maintain credibility and trust within the conversation.

In conclusion, "put a pin in it" is a conversational tool that allows individuals to temporarily set aside a topic or idea with the intention of revisiting it later. By using this expression, participants can manage conversation dynamics, prioritize immediate concerns, and ensure that valuable ideas aren't dismissed outright. When applied appropriately and followed through with dedicated follow-up, "putting a pin in it" can contribute to efficient, respectful, and productive discussions in various contexts.

Questions for Discussion

1. How often do you use the expression "put a pin in it" in your conversations? Can you share an example of a recent situation where you used this phrase to manage a discussion?
2. In what types of conversations or situations do you find the strategy of "putting a pin in it" most effective? How does it help maintain focus and prioritize topics?
3. Have you ever been in discussions where someone suggested "putting a pin in it," but the topic was never revisited? How did this impact the overall conversation and participants' engagement?
4. When you hear someone say, "Let's put a pin in it," how do you interpret their intention? Do you see it as a genuine commitment to revisit the topic, or do you think it's often just a polite way to move on?
5. What techniques do you employ to ensure that topics that have been "pinned" are eventually addressed and not forgotten? How can individuals effectively manage the balance between addressing immediate concerns and revisiting deferred topics?