



American Expression E1476 Have designs on

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The phrase "have designs on" is an idiomatic expression that signifies having intentions, ambitions, or plans for something or someone, often with a specific goal or purpose in mind. It is typically used in a figurative sense to convey a person's desire or interest in achieving or obtaining something.

When someone says they "have designs on" something, it implies that they have a clear intention or objective related to that thing. This can encompass a wide range of desires and ambitions, from personal aspirations to professional goals. It suggests a level of determination and purpose in pursuing a particular aim or outcome.

For instance, in a professional context, an ambitious employee might say, "I have designs on the position of manager within the next two years." This statement indicates that they have a concrete goal of advancing their career and aspire to reach the managerial position.

In matters of the heart, someone might confess, "I have designs on John; I'd like to ask him out on a date." In this case, it reveals a romantic interest and a desire to initiate a romantic relationship with John.

Additionally, "have designs on" can be used to describe someone's intentions regarding objects, possessions, or opportunities. For example, a collector of rare antique coins might say, "I have designs on acquiring that 19th-century gold coin for my collection." This demonstrates a specific intention to obtain that particular coin.

In a more abstract sense, this phrase can also relate to broader ambitions and aspirations. A visionary entrepreneur might declare, "I have designs on revolutionizing the renewable energy industry." Here, the expression conveys a grand vision and a strong determination to make a significant impact in the field of renewable energy.

It's important to note that while "have designs on" typically conveys intention and ambition, it does not necessarily imply a guaranteed outcome. Just having plans or desires for something does not ensure success. The phrase reflects the initial step of setting goals and articulating intentions.

In summary, "have designs on" is a figurative expression used to convey one's intentions, ambitions, or plans regarding something or someone. It signifies a clear purpose or goal, whether in personal relationships, professional aspirations, or the pursuit of objects or opportunities. This phrase highlights the importance of intention and determination in achieving one's desires and objectives but does not guarantee their realization.

Questions for Discussion

1. Can you share a personal experience where you had designs on a particular goal or achievement, and what steps did you take to work toward realizing that ambition?
2. How does the concept of "having designs on" something differ from merely having a passing interest or desire? What distinguishes a genuine intention or ambition from a fleeting wish?
3. In the context of career development, how can individuals effectively communicate to their superiors that they have designs on advancing within their organization, and what strategies can they employ to increase their chances of success?
4. Are there any ethical considerations associated with having designs on certain opportunities or possessions, and how can individuals ensure that their ambitions align with their values and principles?
5. Can you provide examples from history or contemporary society where individuals or groups had designs on bringing about significant social or political change, and what challenges did they face in pursuing their ambitions?