



American Expression E1526 Have to hand it to someone

IOTS Publishing Team
International Online Teachers Society
Since 2011

The phrase "have to hand it to someone" is an idiomatic expression used to acknowledge and give credit to someone for their achievements, skills, or accomplishments. When you say, "I have to hand it to someone," you are essentially expressing admiration and recognition for their abilities or the positive outcomes they have achieved.

The phrase "have to hand it to someone" implies a sense of respect and appreciation. It often suggests that the person being acknowledged has done something impressive or praiseworthy, and the speaker wants to commend them for it. It's a way of acknowledging the effort, talent, or ingenuity that someone has demonstrated in a particular situation.

For example, if a colleague successfully completes a challenging project ahead of schedule and with exceptional quality, you might say, "I have to hand it to them; they did an outstanding job." In this context, you're giving credit to your colleague for their exceptional performance.

This expression can be used in a wide range of scenarios, from professional settings to personal relationships. For instance, if a friend organizes a surprise birthday party that turns out to be a great success, you could say, "I have to hand it to you; you really know how to throw a fantastic party." This acknowledges your friend's event-planning skills and the effort they put into making the celebration special.

The use of this phrase often indicates genuine admiration and can be a polite way of expressing approval or gratitude. It's a way of highlighting someone's positive attributes or actions without being overly formal or effusive in your praise.

In summary, "have to hand it to someone" is an idiomatic expression that is used to give credit and recognition to someone for their achievements, skills, or positive actions. It's a way of acknowledging and appreciating what someone has done, and it often implies genuine admiration and respect for their abilities or accomplishments. Whether in professional or personal contexts, this phrase is a simple yet effective way to express appreciation and admiration for others.

Questions for Discussion

1. Can you think of a recent situation in your life where you felt compelled to say, "I have to hand it to someone"? What did that person do to deserve your recognition, and how did your acknowledgment affect the situation?
2. In what types of scenarios is it most common to use the phrase "have to hand it to someone"? Are there specific qualities or achievements that typically elicit this kind of acknowledgment from people?
3. How does expressing appreciation using idiomatic expressions like "have to hand it to someone" differ from more straightforward compliments or praise? What nuances does this phrase convey that make it unique?
4. Is there a cultural aspect to acknowledging someone with this expression? Do different cultures have similar idiomatic expressions for giving credit and recognition to others, and how do they compare?
5. Can overusing expressions like "have to hand it to someone" diminish their impact and sincerity over time? How can one strike a balance between acknowledging others genuinely and avoiding excessive or insincere praise?