



American Expression E1630 That figures

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"That figures" is an idiomatic expression used in informal language to indicate that something is not surprising or unexpected given the circumstances or information at hand. This phrase is typically used in response to a statement, situation, or outcome that aligns with one's expectations or prior knowledge. It carries an undertone of resignation or acceptance, acknowledging that the observed result is consistent with what one might have anticipated.

The phrase "that figures" can convey a range of sentiments, depending on the context in which it is used. It can indicate agreement with a statement or a sense of validation when the information presented confirms one's beliefs or assumptions. For example, if someone says, "It started raining just as I left for work without an umbrella," and another person responds with "That figures," they are essentially expressing understanding that the situation aligns with what they might have expected, given the circumstances.

On the other hand, "that figures" can also be employed with a touch of sarcasm or cynicism. In this context, it suggests that the outcome or situation is not surprising due to a perceived pattern of behavior or a lack of positive change. For instance, if someone repeatedly arrives late for appointments and offers yet another excuse, a friend might respond with "That figures" to convey skepticism about the reliability of the excuse.

In interpersonal relationships, "that figures" can be used to communicate a sense of resignation or understanding when a friend or family member exhibits a consistent behavior or habit. It implies a degree of acceptance of the person's tendencies, even if they may be less than ideal. For instance, if someone has a friend who is known for always being late, they might say, "She's running late again, that figures," indicating that they have come to expect this behavior from her.

In addition to social interactions, "that figures" can be used in various situations, such as discussing politics, economics, or everyday life occurrences. When used in the context of news or current events, it often signifies a lack of surprise when developments align with one's existing beliefs or knowledge.

It's important to note that while "that figures" is a commonly used expression, its meaning can vary depending on tone, context, and the relationship between the individuals involved in the conversation. It can serve as a neutral acknowledgment of alignment with expectations, a sarcastic comment on recurring patterns, or a resigned acceptance of the status quo.

In summary, "that figures" is a conversational phrase used to express that a statement or situation aligns with one's expectations or prior knowledge. It can convey agreement, resignation, or even sarcasm, depending on the context and tone of the conversation. This expression reflects the idea that individuals often form expectations based on their experiences and observations, and "that figures" serves as a way to communicate those expectations in a succinct and colloquial manner.

Questions for Discussion

1. Can you recall a recent situation where you found yourself saying "that figures," and what was the context? What did your response reveal about your expectations or prior knowledge in that situation?
2. How does the use of "that figures" impact communication and understanding in conversations, especially when it is employed with a touch of sarcasm or cynicism?
3. In what ways can the phrase "that figures" be both a means of expressing agreement and a form of passive resignation to recurring patterns or behaviors?
4. Can you share an example of a situation where "that figures" was used in a positive or humorous context, and how did it contribute to the dynamics of the conversation?
5. When is it most appropriate to use "that figures" in conversations, and how can individuals ensure that its use is understood in the intended way, whether as a straightforward acknowledgment or a more nuanced expression of sarcasm or cynicism?