



American Expression E1743 Bring in the big guns

IOTS Publishing Team  
International Online Teachers Society  
Since 2011

"Bring in the big guns" is a colloquial and idiomatic expression often used in informal language to describe the act of enlisting powerful or influential individuals or resources to address a problem or situation that requires substantial expertise, effort, or authority. The phrase implies that the individuals or resources being referred to are highly capable and can have a significant impact on the outcome.

The origin of this expression can be traced to military terminology, where "big guns" originally referred to large, powerful cannons or artillery used in warfare. These heavy weapons were capable of inflicting significant damage and were often brought in for crucial battles or strategic maneuvers. Over time, the phrase transitioned into civilian language and came to symbolize the use of any potent assets or experts in various contexts.

In everyday conversations and professional settings, "bring in the big guns" is typically used when a challenging situation arises and requires the intervention of experts, specialists, or influential figures. It suggests that the matter at hand is of utmost importance and that ordinary measures or resources may not suffice.

For example, in the business world, if a company is facing a complex legal issue, they might decide to "bring in the big guns" by hiring a top-tier law firm with a reputation for handling such cases effectively. This decision reflects a recognition that the matter is significant and requires the expertise of legal experts who can navigate it successfully.

Similarly, in politics, a candidate running for a high-profile election might "bring in the big guns" by seeking endorsements or support from well-known politicians or celebrities. This strategic move is intended to bolster their campaign with the influence and popularity of these prominent figures.

In personal situations, someone facing a particularly challenging problem, such as a serious illness or legal dispute, might decide to "bring in the big guns" by consulting renowned specialists or experts in the field. This action acknowledges the gravity of the situation and the need for the best available expertise to address it effectively.

The phrase "bring in the big guns" also has a sense of urgency and seriousness attached to it. It implies that the situation has escalated to a point where immediate action is required, and the involvement of experts or influential figures is the best course of action.

In summary, "bring in the big guns" is a figurative expression used to convey the idea of seeking out powerful, influential, or highly skilled individuals or resources to address a challenging or important situation. It signifies the recognition that the situation is beyond ordinary means or resources and requires exceptional expertise, effort, or authority to resolve effectively. This idiom is commonly used in both professional and personal contexts to emphasize the significance of the matter at hand and the need for a robust response.

#### Questions for Discussion

1. Can you share a situation from your personal or professional life where you felt the need to "bring in the big guns"? What led to that decision, and what was the outcome?
  2. In what types of scenarios do you think it is most beneficial to bring in influential or highly skilled individuals or resources? Are there situations where it may not be necessary or appropriate?
  3. How do you differentiate between situations that require "bringing in the big guns" and those that can be handled by standard or existing resources? What criteria do you consider when making this determination?
  4. Are there any potential drawbacks or challenges associated with the strategy of "bringing in the big guns"? How can organizations or individuals navigate these challenges effectively?
  5. Can you think of any historical or contemporary examples where the decision to "bring in the big guns" had a significant impact on the outcome of a situation or challenge? What lessons can be drawn from these examples?
-