



American Expression E1762 A close shave

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A close shave is an idiomatic expression that refers to a situation where someone narrowly avoids a potentially dangerous or harmful outcome. It is often used to describe a situation where luck or quick thinking plays a significant role in preventing a disaster. The phrase originates from the world of shaving and implies that a person almost suffered an injury or mishap but managed to escape it by a hair's breadth.

In everyday life, we encounter close shaves in various forms. For instance, imagine driving on a rainy night when suddenly, a car swerves into your lane, narrowly missing your vehicle. In this scenario, you've had a close shave because you narrowly escaped a potential car accident. It's a heart-pounding moment where quick reflexes or the actions of another driver can mean the difference between life and death.

Close shaves can also occur in professional settings. Picture a crucial job interview where you almost arrive late due to unexpected traffic. You manage to make it just in the nick of time, and as it turns out, the interviewer appreciates your dedication and punctuality. This fortunate turn of events saved you from missing a significant career opportunity.

In sports, close shaves are a common occurrence. Consider a soccer match where the opposing team launches a powerful shot towards your team's goal. The ball grazes the goalpost but doesn't go in. Your team wins the game by a one-goal margin. In this instance, your team experienced a close shave because the outcome hung in the balance, determined by a matter of inches.

Sometimes, close shaves are not life-threatening or career-altering but still hold significant personal value. Imagine planning a surprise birthday party for a friend, and just moments before they arrive, a decoration mishap threatens to reveal the surprise prematurely. With quick thinking and teamwork, you manage to fix the situation in the nick of time, preserving the excitement and joy of the surprise.

A close shave can also describe situations where someone avoids financial or legal trouble. For example, a person might unknowingly be in violation of a parking rule, but just as they are about to receive a ticket, a parking officer decides to let it slide. This fortunate turn of events serves as a close shave, sparing the individual from an unnecessary financial setback.

In summary, a close shave is a figurative expression that captures moments of narrowly avoiding undesirable outcomes, whether they be life-threatening, career-related, or personal in nature. These instances serve as reminders of the unpredictable nature of life, where sometimes, a stroke of luck or quick thinking can make all the difference between a near-miss and a disaster. Close shaves highlight the importance of staying vigilant, making good decisions, and appreciating the fragility of circumstances that can change in an instant.

Questions for Discussion

1. Can you recall a personal experience when you had a close shave, and luck played a significant role in avoiding a dangerous situation? What happened, and how did you feel afterward?
 2. In professional settings, close shaves can sometimes lead to unexpected opportunities. Have you ever encountered a close shave at work that turned out to be a fortunate turn of events? How did it impact your career or projects?
 3. Close shaves often occur in sports, where victory or defeat can hinge on a matter of inches. Can you think of a memorable sports moment where a team or athlete narrowly avoided a loss? How did that moment change the game's outcome?
 4. Close shaves aren't always life-altering; they can also involve personal or social situations. Have you been part of a situation where quick thinking or teamwork saved the day, even in a minor way? Share your story.
 5. Sometimes, close shaves can serve as life lessons. Do you think close calls make people more aware of the unpredictability of life, and do they influence decision-making? How have your close shaves shaped your perspective on risk and opportunity?
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