



American Expression E1771 What's the drill

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The phrase "What's the drill?" is an informal idiom that is often used in colloquial language to inquire about the standard or customary procedure or routine for a particular situation or task. It is a way of asking for guidance or clarification on what needs to be done in a specific context. This phrase draws its meaning from the notion of a "drill" or repetitive practice, as in a military or emergency preparedness setting, where individuals are trained to follow a specific sequence of actions.

When someone asks, "What's the drill?" they are seeking information about the established protocol or steps to be taken in a given situation. It can be used in both professional and everyday settings to ensure that everyone is on the same page and knows how to proceed correctly and efficiently.

In emergency situations, such as fire drills or evacuation procedures, the question "What's the drill?" is often posed to clarify the sequence of actions to be taken to ensure safety. For example, in a workplace fire drill, employees may ask, "What's the drill?" to confirm the evacuation route, assembly point, and other safety measures to follow.

In military contexts, the phrase may be used during training exercises or mission briefings to confirm the specific tasks, responsibilities, and sequences of actions required for a mission or operation. Soldiers might ask, "What's the drill?" to receive clear instructions from their commanding officers.

Outside of emergency and military contexts, "What's the drill?" can be used in everyday life to inquire about the standard or expected procedure for various tasks or activities. For instance, if you are new to a workplace and need to understand the process for submitting expense reports, you might ask a colleague, "What's the drill for expense reports?" In this case, you are seeking guidance on how to complete this task correctly and efficiently.

In social situations, people may use the phrase to clarify the customs or etiquette for a particular event or gathering. For example, if you are attending a formal dinner and are unsure about the seating arrangements or how to use specific utensils, you might ask your host, "What's the drill for this dinner?"

"What's the drill?" is a concise way to seek guidance or information without the need for lengthy explanations. It is a practical and effective means of ensuring that individuals understand and follow established procedures, whether for safety, efficiency, or social conventions.

In summary, "What's the drill?" is an informal idiom used to inquire about the established procedure or routine for a specific situation, task, or activity. It is a practical way to seek guidance, clarify expectations, and ensure that individuals are aware of and follow the correct steps or protocol in various contexts, from emergencies and military operations to everyday tasks and social events.

Questions for Discussion

1. How often do you find yourself asking the question, "What's the drill?" in your daily life, whether at work, in social settings, or during emergencies? Can you share a recent situation where you needed to clarify procedures or routines?
2. In professional settings, what strategies do you use to ensure that you and your colleagues are on the same page regarding established procedures and protocols? How does asking, "What's the drill?" contribute to effective communication and task execution?
3. Have you ever been in a situation where you wished someone had asked, "What's the drill?" to prevent confusion or misunderstanding? How could clearer communication have improved the outcome in that scenario?
4. Are there specific areas of your life or work where you believe it's especially important to have a well-defined drill or established procedures? How do these routines contribute to efficiency, safety, or success in those contexts?
5. How do cultural and regional differences influence the need to ask, "What's the drill?" in various situations? Are there cultural norms or practices that may require newcomers or visitors to seek guidance more frequently?