



American Expression E1777 Run of the mill

IOTS Publishing Team
International Online Teachers Society
Since 2011

"Run of the mill" is a colloquial expression used to describe something that is ordinary, average, or typical. It is often employed to denote things or experiences that lack uniqueness or exceptional qualities. When we refer to something as "run of the mill," we are essentially saying that it is unremarkable and falls within the norm or the expected.

In our daily lives, we encounter countless "run of the mill" experiences. For example, a routine workday can be described as run of the mill if it lacks any particularly notable events or challenges. Similarly, a meal at a familiar fast-food restaurant might be considered run of the mill because it meets our expectations but doesn't stand out in any significant way.

The term can be applied to a wide range of contexts. In education, a student who consistently earns average grades without excelling or struggling might be described as having a run-of-the-mill academic performance. In the world of entertainment, a movie that follows a predictable plot and doesn't offer any groundbreaking elements might be labeled as a run-of-the-mill film.

It's important to note that labeling something as run of the mill doesn't necessarily imply negativity. While it may suggest a lack of excitement or uniqueness, there is a place for such experiences in our lives. They provide a sense of stability and predictability, which can be comforting in a world filled with constant change and uncertainty. In fact, many aspects of our daily routines, from our morning coffee to our commute to work, are often run of the mill, and we rely on them for consistency and reliability.

However, there is a caveat to this term. While "run of the mill" is generally used to describe something unexceptional, it's essential to remember that what one person considers run of the mill may be quite significant or even extraordinary to someone else. Our perceptions and expectations play a significant role in determining what we categorize as run of the mill. Something that has become routine to us might be a novel and exciting experience for someone else.

In conclusion, "run of the mill" is a common expression that characterizes things or experiences as ordinary, typical, or unremarkable. It is a term we use to describe everyday occurrences that don't stand out in any particular way. While it may suggest a lack of uniqueness, run-of-the-mill experiences serve a valuable role in providing stability and predictability in our lives. It's a reminder that what may seem ordinary to one person can be quite meaningful or special to another, depending on their perspective and individual circumstances.

Questions for Discussion

1. How do you define "run of the mill" experiences in your life, and what are some examples of activities or situations that you consider to be typical or unremarkable?
2. Can you think of a specific instance when you unexpectedly found beauty or significance in what you initially perceived as a run-of-the-mill experience?
3. How do run-of-the-mill routines and activities contribute to the stability and predictability in your daily life, and do you find comfort in them?
4. In what ways might cultural or societal expectations influence our perceptions of what is considered run of the mill, and how can this influence impact our overall satisfaction with life?
5. Have you ever sought to break away from run-of-the-mill experiences deliberately, and if so, what motivated you to seek novelty or uniqueness in your life?