



American Expression E1898 As an aside

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"As an aside" is a phrase commonly used in spoken and written communication to introduce a remark or comment that is tangential or unrelated to the main topic of discussion. When someone uses this expression, they are signaling a temporary departure from the primary focus of the conversation to share an additional thought, observation, or anecdote. It serves as a way to provide context, clarification, or an interesting side note without disrupting the flow of the main conversation.

The term "aside" in this context draws its meaning from the world of theater. In a theatrical performance, an actor may step aside from the main action to speak directly to the audience or share a private thought. These asides are usually brief and offer insight into a character's motivations or inner thoughts. Similarly, when used in everyday communication, "as an aside" allows individuals to briefly step away from the main topic to offer insight or information that may enhance the conversation.

"As an aside" can serve several purposes in conversation. It can be a way to clarify a point that may have been misunderstood, provide relevant background information, or share a personal anecdote that adds depth to the discussion. This phrase is particularly useful in situations where the additional information, while interesting or valuable, may not directly align with the main theme of the conversation.

For example, during a discussion about a recent vacation, someone might say, "As an aside, I discovered this charming little cafe tucked away in a narrow alley," to share a memorable detail without diverting the conversation from the main topic of the vacation itself. In this context, the use of "as an aside" acknowledges that the comment is a brief detour from the primary narrative.

In writing, "as an aside" is often used to create a conversational tone or to provide context for the reader. Authors may use it to offer background information or an interesting fact that enriches the narrative without disrupting the flow of the story. It allows the writer to connect with the reader on a more personal level, as if they are sharing a side note or an additional thought.

While "as an aside" is a valuable tool for enriching conversations and narratives, it is essential to use it judiciously. Overusing this phrase can lead to a disjointed and meandering discourse, where the main topic gets lost in a series of tangential comments. Effective communication involves balancing the main points of discussion with relevant asides that enhance the conversation rather than detract from it.

In conclusion, "as an aside" is a versatile expression used to introduce additional thoughts, insights, or anecdotes into a conversation or written narrative without veering too far from the main topic. This phrase provides a means of sharing valuable context or side notes, enriching discussions and stories while maintaining a coherent and focused narrative. When used appropriately, "as an aside" can enhance communication and provide depth to the exchange of ideas.

Questions for Discussion

1. How do you decide when to introduce an "as an aside" comment during a conversation, and what criteria do you use to determine the relevance of the additional information?
2. Can you recall a recent conversation where someone used "as an aside" effectively to enhance the discussion, and how did that contribute to a more engaging and informative exchange of ideas?
3. In your experience, how does the use of "as an aside" differ between spoken communication and written narratives, and what unique benefits does it offer in each context?
4. Are there situations where you find "as an aside" comments to be distracting or disruptive in a conversation, and how do you navigate such instances to maintain a focused discussion?
5. How can authors and storytellers effectively utilize "as an aside" to engage readers and provide additional depth or context to their narratives? Can you share examples from literature or storytelling where this technique was particularly successful?