



American Expression E1971 Big deal

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The expression "big deal" is an informal idiom commonly used in spoken and written English to describe something that is not particularly significant or impressive, often accompanied by an element of sarcasm or dismissiveness. It is used to downplay or minimize the importance of an event, accomplishment, or situation, suggesting that it is not as remarkable or noteworthy as it may seem.

When someone uses the phrase "big deal," they are essentially expressing a lack of enthusiasm or interest in what is being discussed or highlighted. It implies that the subject at hand is mundane, trivial, or unworthy of special attention or praise. For example, if someone says, "So what if he won the spelling bee? It's not a big deal," they are diminishing the achievement of winning the spelling bee as something they consider unimpressive or insignificant.

In some cases, "big deal" can also be used sarcastically to emphasize that the matter being discussed is, in fact, quite important or significant. For instance, if someone says, "Oh, you got a promotion at work? That's a real big deal," they may be using sarcasm to congratulate the person genuinely on their accomplishment, even though they are making it sound less important.

The use of "big deal" in conversations can vary based on tone, context, and the speaker's attitude. It can be used to convey indifference, annoyance, or even frustration when someone is unimpressed by a situation that others find noteworthy. On the other hand, it can be used humorously or ironically to highlight the triviality of a situation.

It's important to note that the phrase "big deal" is often used in informal or casual conversations and may not be appropriate in more formal or serious contexts. It is generally a conversational tool for expressing one's opinion about the perceived significance or lack thereof of an event or achievement.

In some cases, "big deal" can also be used in a positive context, especially when someone wants to acknowledge that something is indeed impressive or significant. For example, if someone says, "Winning the Nobel Prize is a big deal," they are emphasizing the tremendous achievement and importance of receiving such an award.

In conclusion, "big deal" is an informal idiom used in conversations to express varying degrees of indifference, sarcasm, or irony regarding the perceived significance or importance of a subject, event, or accomplishment. Its usage can convey a range of attitudes, from downplaying the importance of something to acknowledging its true significance, depending on the speaker's intent and the context of the conversation.

Questions for Discussion

1. How does the use of the phrase "big deal" in conversations impact the way people perceive and react to achievements or events? Can it inadvertently diminish the significance of something important?
2. What are some situations where the phrase "big deal" might be used sarcastically to downplay an accomplishment, and how does this form of communication affect social dynamics and relationships?
3. In what ways can the use of "big deal" reflect cultural differences in how people express enthusiasm, humility, or indifference toward achievements and events? Are there cultures where downplaying accomplishments is more common?
4. Have you ever been in a situation where you felt that your achievements or experiences were dismissed as "not a big deal" by others? How did this make you feel, and how did you respond to it?
5. Can you think of instances where using the phrase "big deal" might be more appropriate and constructive, such as when offering encouragement or perspective in response to someone's concerns or anxieties about an event or achievement?