



American Expression E2486 Long shot

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The phrase “long shot” is an idiomatic expression used to describe a venture or attempt that has a low probability of success. It often refers to a risky or uncertain effort where the odds are clearly stacked against the person trying. Despite the unfavorable chances, people still take long shots when the potential reward is great or when no better options exist. This makes the phrase both a statement about risk and a reflection of hope.

The origin of the term can be traced to shooting or gambling, where a shot taken from a long distance is much harder to land, and a long-odds bet is unlikely to win. Over time, the expression migrated into broader usage, especially in sports, politics, business, and everyday life. It implies a bold attempt with little expectation but a glimmer of possibility that makes the risk worthwhile.

In politics, a candidate with low name recognition or limited support may be referred to as a long shot. In business, a risky investment in a new product or startup might be considered a long shot if success seems improbable. Even in personal situations—such as applying for a dream job or confessing feelings to someone—people use the term to describe actions they take despite slim chances.

The phrase carries a tone of realism but also of courage. While acknowledging the risk, calling something a long shot does not dismiss it entirely. Instead, it subtly admires the bravery or optimism behind such a move. It reflects a mindset willing to challenge the odds for something potentially valuable or meaningful.

In popular culture, long shot stories often captivate audiences. Underdog narratives in movies and sports highlight individuals or teams that succeed despite overwhelming disadvantages. These stories resonate deeply because they reflect the human desire to overcome limitations and defy expectations. The long shot becomes a symbol of perseverance and belief in possibility.

However, not every long shot results in success, and the term also reminds us of the reality of failure. Pursuing low-probability goals requires careful judgment, emotional resilience, and often, a willingness to fail. Recognizing when a long shot is worth taking—and when it’s better to wait for a better opportunity—is part of wisdom and experience.

In conclusion, “long shot” is a rich and evocative expression that captures the tension between risk and reward. It speaks to the daring spirit that motivates people to try even when the odds are against them. Whether in sports, politics, business, or life, the long shot remains a compelling metaphor for reaching beyond the probable and striving for something greater, despite uncertainty.

#### Questions for Discussion

1. What motivates people to take a long shot even when the chances of success are low?
2. How do long shot attempts in sports or politics inspire audiences and supporters?
3. Can taking a long shot be seen as a strategic decision, or is it mostly driven by emotion?
4. What are the potential risks and rewards of pursuing a long shot in personal or professional life?
5. How does the phrase “long shot” reflect broader themes of hope and resilience in human behavior?