



American Expression E2406 In the can

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"In the can" is an idiomatic expression that signifies a project, task, or piece of work has been completed and is ready for use or distribution. While the phrase is most commonly associated with the film and television industry, where it originally emerged, it has expanded into broader usage across various fields to indicate that something is finished and prepared for its next phase.

The origin of "in the can" dates back to the early days of filmmaking when completed film reels were stored in metal cans for safekeeping, transportation, or later development. During the era of analog film, each reel of captured footage was placed in a can once filming and editing were finished, signifying that the project had reached a point of completion. The phrase became shorthand in the industry to indicate that a film was finished and ready for distribution, editing, or viewing. As the process of filmmaking transitioned over the decades, the term stuck, even with the advent of digital technology, to describe projects that are fully complete and ready for release.

Beyond the film industry, "in the can" has found relevance in other areas such as publishing, music production, and corporate projects. For instance, an author might say that their manuscript is "in the can" after completing all revisions and edits, meaning it's ready for printing or publication. Similarly, a music producer might use the phrase to describe a track that has been fully recorded, mixed, and mastered, indicating that it's prepared for release. In a corporate environment, a team might refer to a finished presentation, report, or project as being "in the can," signaling that all tasks have been completed and it's ready for delivery or implementation.

The phrase carries a sense of accomplishment, finality, and readiness. It is often used with a tone of satisfaction, as it marks the conclusion of a potentially lengthy or challenging process. When something is "in the can," it implies that all the necessary steps have been taken, any obstacles have been overcome, and the work is now ready to move forward. This sense of completion can be a source of pride for those involved, as it represents the successful culmination of their efforts.

It is important to note that "in the can" doesn't necessarily mean that the work is yet available to the public; it simply indicates that it's ready for the next stage, whether that's distribution, release, or another form of presentation. For example, a television series might be "in the can" even if it won't air until a scheduled date, or a marketing campaign could be described this way before its official launch.

In conclusion, "in the can" is a phrase that encapsulates the idea of a project being fully completed and prepared for its intended purpose. Its origins in the film industry have given it a specific cultural resonance, but its meaning has since broadened to encompass any scenario where work is finished and ready for the next step. It conveys a sense of readiness, achievement, and the successful conclusion of a creative or professional endeavor.

#### Questions for Discussion

1. How does the phrase "in the can" reflect the challenges and milestones of completing a project, particularly in creative industries like filmmaking or music production?
2. Why do you think the phrase "in the can" has persisted even in the digital age, where physical film reels are no longer as common?
3. How does the feeling of relief or accomplishment associated with having something "in the can" impact the overall creative or professional process?
4. In what ways can a project being "in the can" still face challenges, such as delays in release or distribution, even after completion?
5. How does the concept of "in the can" differ across industries, and what parallels can be drawn between them in terms of project completion?