

Meta Title: Jinx! You owe me a soda - what does it mean?

Meta Description: This post explains what the saying 'jinx, you owe me a soda' means. I also discuss the various meanings of the word jinx and its other additions.

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Many traditions have been passed down through families and institutions. Some of them are so ingrained in our culture that it's weird to question their history or meaning. These traditions may be religious, cultural, superstitious, or even national.

Thanksgiving celebrations and pumpkin carving for Halloween are examples of traditions passed down several decades and are still respected today.

Another tradition is the 'Jinx, you owe me a soda'. **This tradition dates back to the early 19th century.** It has been passed down several generations in different forms, with different regions, areas, states, or mischievous children adding words like 'soda', 'coke', or 'Pepsi' to make it more relatable or profitable.

In this post, we explore the meaning of the saying 'Jinx, you owe me a soda', its history and its use over the decades.

What does 'Jinx, you owe me a soda' mean?



Jinx, You Owe Me a Soda

Most early variations of this saying did not include a specific product, a soda, coke or Pepsi. The word 'jinx' was said (screamed in most cases) when two or more people said the same word or phrase simultaneously.

The first person to say 'jinx' became the winner and the other(s) a loser.

There have been many variations to the jinx game. In some regions, the loser of the game was not allowed to talk until the person who said 'jinx' first said your name - this is the version of the game I grew up playing.

Another version had it that when you got jinxed, you couldn't talk until someone else said your name (not necessarily the person who jinxed you). But if the person you were trying to jinx said anything before you finished the saying, it didn't count. If you talked while jinxed, the jinxer could punch you.

A popular version in North Carolina in the 2000s had it that the jinxer had to knock on wood to lift the jinx unless the jinxed knocked on wood first.

In the early 1950s, a variation of the word was heard to include 'you owe me a soda'. So kids usually went 'jinx, you owe me a soda' to signify they had won. In most cases, an actual soda was not involved. The winner could soft-punch the loser or something else, but hardly was a soda

given.

Around this time, 'jinx, you owe me a coke' was also a popular saying, especially in the south where coca-cola was founded. It is unknown if Coca-cola had a hand in this, but my guess is probably not. This is because soft drinks were popularly referred to as 'coke' in the south of America, so it is not a far stretch that people in the south would include a 'coke' instead of a 'soda'.

A popular reason for the inclusion of a 'soda' or 'coke' is that games like the jinx were played at the dinner table, giving children the opportunity to have the edge over their parents who joined in the game.

Where did jinx come from?



Alt text: Where did jinx come from?

The word was first documented in a 1973 article, 'The Jinx Game: A Ritualized Expression of Separation-Individuation' by Jerome D. Oremland, published in *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*. In this article, the jinx game was described as a sophisticated ritual, and there were no references to soda or coke in this document.

The word 'jinx' is actually an American variation of jynx, which means a charm or a spell, and was first spelt as 'jinx' in the early 20th century. It was usually associated with bad luck, but its meaning changed as children used it in games. It is speculated that the competitive element of the word was introduced after the 1940s, influenced by world war 2.

Other additions to the word, apart from soda or coke, which served as compensation, included money, where the jinxer demanded money by saying, "Jinx! The jinx machine is out of order. Please insert another quarter"

What are the Official Rules of Jinx?

There are no official rules on what is required from the jinxer and the jinxed as actions that follow the game differ by region. However, the jinxed person is mostly required to be quiet. In some cases, the jinxed person is not allowed to talk until the jinxer says their name, and in other cases, another person can release the jinxed person by saying his name. Also, a soft punch can be given by the winner to the loser.

Where did the saying 'you owe me a coke' come from?



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The original saying was 'you owe me a soda', and the inclusion of the word 'coke' was due to the use of coke as a generic name for soft drinks in some areas. So, instead of saying 'jinx, you owe me a soda', the person could say 'jinx, you owe me a coke'.

Also, the saying 'you owe me a coke' was also made popular by the famous show Saturday Night Live, as an episode featured two actresses in a skit shouting 'jinx, buy me a coke' anytime they said the same thing at the same time. The coke version has also been featured in other television

shows.

What do you say after jinx?



What do you say after jinx?

If you and the other person say jinx together, the jinx game will end without a winner. In the case where a winner must emerge, other words can be agreed upon to be added to provide for the scenario.

In the Saturday Night Live episode where the saying was used, the actresses said 'jinx, buy me a coke' together and had to add a couple of things to get a winner. This is how it went:

'Jinx! Buy me a Coke! Inky-dinky-pinky-winky! Flush it down the kitchen sinky! Alley Ooop! Alley Ooop! Doh hinky. The king of France wet his pants right in the middle of a ballroom dance. Yodleayheehoo! Yodleayheehoo! Nee nee nee ne nee nee neee nee nee nee nee. Huh!'

How do you Lift a Jinx?

For you to lift the jinx, a couple of things can be done. These things depend on where you grew up. Some places require your name to be said by the jinxer, and in other places, by anyone else.

In some cases, to lift the jinx, you have to yell a word immediately after the jinx. This word may be as mysterious as 'buttercup' or as playful as 'blah', depending on where you are playing the game.

Conclusion

'Jinx, you owe me a soda' is said when two or more people say the same thing simultaneously. The person who says it first is the winner, and the other(s) are subjected to the conditions of the game in their region.

'Jinx, you owe me a coke' is a widely known variation of the phrase.