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420, n.

Pronunciation: Brit.  /ˌfɔːtʰwɛnti/, U.S.  /ˌfɔ(ə)rˈtwɛn(t)i/

Forms: 19– **420**, 19– **4-20**, 19– **4:20**, 19– **4/20**, 19– **four-twenty**.

Origin: Formed within English, by compounding. **Etymons:** **FOUR** *adj.*, **TWENTY** *adj.*

Etymology: < **FOUR** *adj.* + **TWENTY** *adj.*, apparently coined as a code word by high school students in San Rafael, California in 1971, with reference to 4:20 p.m., the time at which they repeatedly met to try to locate an unattended plot of cannabis plants.

There is no evidence to support the explanation offered in quot. 1991.

N. Amer. slang.

Used to refer to marijuana, or to the action of smoking marijuana.

Frequently *attrib.*

Often used with reference to the time 4:20 or the date April 20th (abbreviated 4/20 in the United States), considered as occasions for smoking or celebrating the smoking of marijuana.

- 1974 *Red & White* (San Rafael High School, Marin County, Calif.) 7 June 3/2 If you had the opportunity to say anything in front of the graduating class, what would you say?.. 4-20.
- 1975 D. REDDIX *Let.* 23 Sept. in *420waldos.com* (O.E.D. Archive 2016) P.S. a little 420 enclosed for your weekend.
- 1991 *High Times* May 20/1 [Quoting flyer distributed at Grateful Dead concert, Dec. 1990.] Four-twenty..started as the police code for Marijuana Smoking in Progress. After local heads heard of the police call, they started using the expression '420' when referring to the herb... People began getting stoned at 4:20 am and/or pm... Now, there's something even more grand than getting baked at 4:20. We're talking about the day of celebration, the real time to get high, the grand master of all holidays: 4/20, or April 20th.
- 1998 *Spin* May 50/4 One story that's sure to make the rounds at this month's 420 festivals in San Francisco and College Park, Maryland, features the patron saint of the kind bud, Jerry Garcia.
- 2005 *Skiing* Mar. 43 [He is] an Alta local, ski industry insider, and marijuana enthusiast. No, 'enthusiast' is not potent enough: Roy Dee's a damn 4:20 *aficionado*.
- 2006 *N.Y. Times* (National ed.) 7 May XI. 2/3 A number of Craigslist users..say that they are '420 friendly'.
- 2016 *Vancouver Sun* (Nexis) 19 May A5 A review of the 420 marijuana protest event last month showed it cost the city \$148,000.