Some systematic metaphors with *UP*

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A) *UP* ~ ‘completion’, ‘thoroughness’, ‘quickness’, easiness’

When we begin to construct a building, it is low. When it is finished, it is *up*. As we fill a glass, the level literally goes *up*. When it is *fully* filled, the level is completely *up*. So, in English ‘upness’ has become associated with ‘completion’ or even ‘thoroughness’. An extra, idiomatic meaning that is often associated with the meaning ‘completion / thoroughness’ is ‘quickness’.

‘Completion’ plus maybe ‘Quickness’ too → *Drink up!*

Literal:  *Shall I fill up* your glass?
Figurative:  *Shall I type this up for you?*

Because quickness suggests easiness, *UP* tends to make something sound easy to do.

B) *UP* ~ ‘more’ in intensity, quantity, value

*Turn up* the radio.  
*Has the price gone up?* ↑

C) *UP* ~ ‘become visible, come into being, come into consideration,

Also, *UP* ~ come near’

When something moves up from ground level towards eye level, it becomes easier to see. upness is also associated with visibility.

Literal:  *Oh look, the grass seeds we planted have come up.*
Figurative:  *Another problem has come up.*  
*Oh puleeze, don't bring that up again.*
Also, when we see a person in the distance, s/he seems small. As the person approaches, s/he seems to get bigger. In particular, the person seems to get taller – i.e., the person’s height seems to ‘move up’. So, we associate approaching with ‘coming up’.

*Close approach ➔ She walked up (to me) and said, "Hi".*

**Exercise:** which figurative meaning of *up* do you see in each of these sentences? A, B, or C?

*(Sometimes two meanings are active at the same time)*

*Example:* ‘She came up to me and said hello.”  **C**

1. Could you *chop up* the onions?
2. A few problems *came up* during the first experiment.
3. Oh! Look who's *turned up*! Fred!
4. *Shut up*!
5. Could you *turn up* the heat?
6. He likes to *make up* stories.
7. Let's *fry up* a couple of fish.
8. She *did up* her jacket and left.
9. I'm all *fired up* [= motivated, enthusiastic] and ready to go.
10. She *wrapped up* the book and put it under the Christmas tree.
11. Could you *type* this letter *up* for me?
12. Why don’t you just *walk up to* that policeman and ask him the way?
13. The ship *broke up* on the rocks and sank.
14. He really *talks up* his home town. According to him, it's perfect.
15. She really *lived it up* [= celebrated] on her lottery winnings.
16. *Call* me *up* sometime.
17. She’s **stored up** a lot of anger against her mother over the years.

18. Let’s **push** the sofa **up against** the wall.

See the Chapter on *up* in *English Prepositions Explained*, 2ª edition. S. Lindstromberg.2010. (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins)

Answers, in my opinion: 1(a), 2(c), 3(c), 4(a), 5(b), 6(a, c), 7(a), 8(a), 9(b), 10(a), 11(a), 12(c), 13(a), 14(b), 15(a, b), 16(a), 17(a,b), 18(c).