

Some systematic metaphors with *UP*

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Inspired by *Metaphors We Live By*. George Lakoff & Mark Johnson. 1980. University of Chicago Press.

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

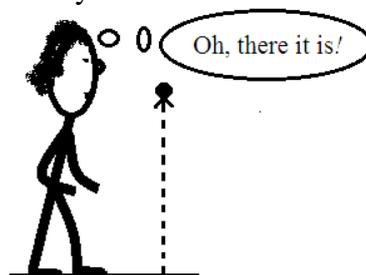
Turn up the radio.

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".

EXERCISES: 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 up 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*, 2nd 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).