

Unit 8 Up in the air

Expressions meaning "realize" or "understand"

Learn the expressions

1 In this unit, we discussed the air travel industry. *Up in the air* can mean (literally) *up in the sky* or it can mean (figuratively) *undecided*. Let's look at some expressions about realizing, understanding, and deciding things. Write the verbs and verb phrases in bold in the appropriate column. Use the present tense and the appropriate subject pronoun (I, you, he, it . . .).

1. Come on, driving is very easy. You'll see that you'll begin to **get a handle on** it after a little practice.
2. It never **occurred to me** that I shouldn't put a silk shirt in the washing machine.
3. It **finally dawned on me** why Susan left the company: She was sick and tired of her boss!
4. OK, I **get the picture** now. You want to travel alone. Why didn't you tell me from the beginning?
5. The moment we walked into the restaurant, it **struck me** that we had made the wrong choice. After the meal, we all agreed that my prediction was correct.
6. Bob is always talking about himself and his job. Doesn't he **get it** that people are really tired of it?
7. It took me ages to learn how to buy cheap airline tickets on the Internet. Now that I've finally **figured out** how to do it, I buy all my tickets online.
8. Let me play a little bit with this computer program. Once I **catch on**, I'll show you how it works.
9. When are you going to **get it through your head** that you should be at the airport two hours before the departing time?

Verbs and verb phrases that mean

realize (sudden understanding)

understand

you get a handle on it

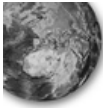
Answer Key

realize

it occurs to me
 it strikes me
 I figure out

understand

you get a handle on it
 it dawns on me
 I get the picture
 he gets it/he doesn't get it
 I catch on
 you get it through your head



Use the expressions

2 Rewrite the sentences using the words in parentheses.

1. I just realized that something I said may have bothered Maria. I left a message for her the other day and she hasn't called me back. (occur)

2. Sarah is a smart young woman, but she doesn't understand that she can't treat people that way. (get)

3. Sally tried to explain to Tom that she wanted to break up with him. Tom just didn't understand. (get the picture)

4. Did you get the idea that Sam and Lou might have had an argument before they got here? (strike)

5. I keep trying to tell Andrew how to do his job, but he never listens to me. It finally became obvious that he doesn't want my advice. (figure out)

Make the expressions your own

3 Write five true sentences about yourself. Describe times when you suddenly realized or understood something. Use five different verb phrases from Exercise 1.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____