

# COLLOCATIONS & MORE METAPHORS

## THE ORIGINS OF THE METAPHOR

Humans see the world as a constant source of inspiration for our communication and for our languages. Therefore, both nature and culture form the origins of the metaphors.

In our [Facebook Live Lesson](#) published on the [29.8.2020 on My Personal English Coach's page](#) we dig into the metaphors built around the 4 elements that everything in nature is made up of : earth, water, fire and air.



### Fire



A **heated discussion or heated debate** is one that is very intense, often with negative emotions like anger.

If someone has a **fiery temper**, it means that when they get angry, they get VERY angry, and could possibly explode. There's also the expression '**tempers flared**' to describe a situation when people began to get angry. The verbs **kindle** and **spark** describe the act of starting fires. "Kindle" is usually used for starting positive things – something can **kindle interest/enthusiasm/hope** – and "spark" is usually used for starting negative things – something can **spark outrage/controversy**.

### Water



You can say that ideas are **flowing** or **conversation is flowing** to describe when it is proceeding easily and naturally. Water metaphors are often used to describe **the movement of groups of people** – you can say that **people poured/streamed** into the stadium (to describe continuous movement of large groups of people) or that **people trickled into the church** (when only a few people come, occasionally). The expressions **waves of disappointment** or **waves of sadness** refer to strong feelings.

### Air



If there's fog, it is difficult to see, so we use the adjective '**foggy**' to say: **unable to think clearly; confused**: My memory is a little foggy. In a similar way, we can use the adjective '**clouded**': **to make someone confused, or make something more difficult to understand**: When it came to explaining the lipstick on his collar, he found that drink had clouded (= confused) his memory. **Out of a clear sky** (or out of the blue) means with **no prior indication that something could happen**. In an unexpected way. If you say that you are **blown away** by something, or if it **blows you away**, you mean that **you are very impressed by it**. [informal] I was blown away by the tone and the quality of the story

### Earth



It's difficult for a plant to grow in soil that has a lot of rocks. So if something **gets off to a rocky start**, it means that it encountered many problems in the beginning. **From the ground up** means from the very beginning, completely, thoroughly: We've had to learn a new system from the ground up. If you **carry the world before you**, you **have great success in a short period of time**: I'm sure he will improve the company—he's the kind of guy who always seems to carry the world before him. **Common ground** means **opinions or interests shared by each of two or more parties**: "artists from different cultural backgrounds found common ground"

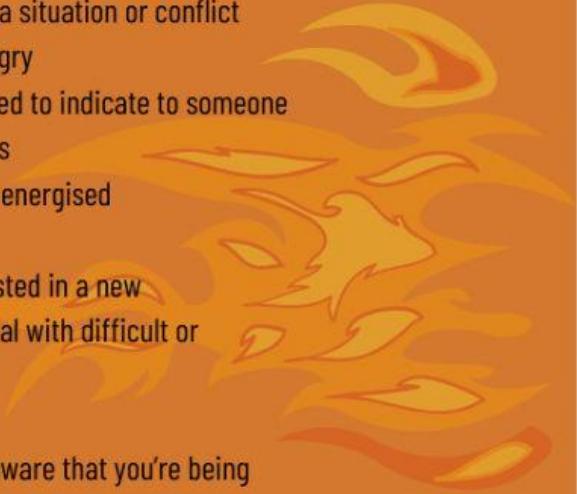
# FIRE METAPHORS

## 4 ELEMENTS

The ancient Greeks believed that there were four elements that everything was made up of: **earth, water, air, and fire**. This theory was suggested around **450 BC**, and it was later supported and added to by Aristotle. The idea that these four elements – earth, water, air, and fire – made up all matter was **the cornerstone of philosophy, science, and medicine for two thousand years**. The elements were “pure” but could not be found in that state on earth. Every visible thing was made up of some combination of earth, water, air, and fire.

## Study The Metaphors

- To add fuel to the fire – to intensify a situation or conflict
- To breathe fire – to be extremely angry
- Fire away! – an expression that's used to indicate to someone that they can begin asking questions
- Fired-up – enthusiastic, stimulated, energised
- On fire – excited, on a roll
- a baptism of fire – being pushed/tested in a new experience/position by having to deal with difficult or unexpected circumstances
- Burning – intense
- Ears are burning – subconsciously aware that you're being talked about
- get on (or along) like a house on fire = have a very good and friendly relationship. "Gav and my Aunt Janice got on like a house on fire"



## Match the missing phrases with the sentences below

1. This course was a true..... for Suzanne. She had never been asked to teach Spanish to Italian students before!
2. Your ..... must be .... - my friend and I have been talking about you all morning!
3. Joseph and I ..... He likes the same kind of music as I do and is a fierce defender of animal rights.
4. I have been ..... all day - can you believe that she refused to apologise after all she had done?!

ears burning  
breathing fire  
got on like a house on fire  
baptism of fire



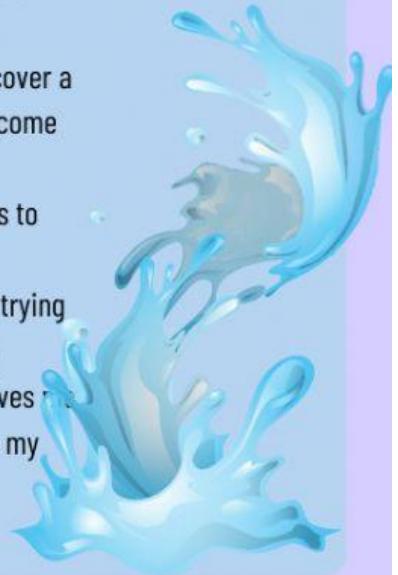
# WATER METAPHORS

## WHY IS WATER SO IMPORTANT?

All plants and animals need water to survive. There can be no life on earth without water. Why is water so important? Because 60 percent of our body weight is made up of water. Our bodies use water in all the cells, organs, and tissues, to help regulate body temperature and maintain other bodily functions. Because our bodies lose water through breathing, sweating, and digestion, it's crucial to rehydrate and replace water by drinking fluids and eating foods that contain water.

### Study The Metaphors

- Not Hold Water= if a statement or belief doesn't hold water, it means it has some flaws and is probably not completely true or correct. His argument just doesn't hold water. It's all based on emotions, not on facts.
- Test The Waters= to test the waters means trying to discover a little more about a situation before you go ahead and become very involved. Before I decided to become a full-time photographer, I tested the waters by doing a few projects to see if I'd enjoy the work.
- Keep Your Head Above Water= this idiom means you are trying very hard to survive financially, or you are barely able to handle a lot of work which is almost too much. My boss gives me so much to do that I have to work weekends just to keep my head above water.



### Match the missing phrases with the sentences below

1. As soon as Ed came to the bar, the conversation started ....
2. I worked with her over the last month and she made a lot of valid points. However, her views on climate change really.....
3. Before we launch this product, we should definitely ...
4. The pandemic made the him struggle just to ....

test the waters  
keep his head above water  
don't hold water  
flowing



# AIR METAPHORS

## Study The Metaphors

### HOW TO AIR OUT YOUR HOUSE PROPERLY

Over the years, you've probably heard countless of songs about lack of air, well, without it, you cease to exist. Air is essential for sustenance of life for both plants and animals. You can live on days on end without food or a couple of days without water, but without air, you're nothing. As you're aware, oxygen is a vital element and fresh air is everywhere enabling you to breathe without inhibition. Since time immemorial, people have been encouraged to take time out and go for a walk.

- as light as air - very light
- castles in the air - daydreams, unattainable aspirations
- disappear into thin air - used to refer to the state of being invisible or non-existent.
- in the air - collectively felt by multiple people
- on/off the air - on/off radio or television
- out in the open air - in public
- to air one's dirty laundry - to share private information publicly
- to appear out of/disappear into thin air - to suddenly materialise/disappear
- to clear the air - to defuse a tense situation through conversation
- to float on air - to feel joyous, to be in a very good mood
- to get some fresh air - to go outside
- to give yourself airs - to behave snobbishly

## Match the missing phrases with the sentences below

1. When she finally said 'yes', he felt like he was ....
2. She told him she was pregnant and he just vanished ....
3. The vote on the new law made everybody anxious. You could feel it ....
4. Oh, come on, let's not invite him. He's been .... since his promotion.
5. After studying English all day, I really need to...

giving himself airs  
 into thin air  
 in the air  
 floating on air  
 get some fresh air

