

Catch Word #103 – A light bulb moment

Transcript

- Harp: Hello everyone. This is Harp.
- Maura: And Maura.
- Harp: And we're here bringing you another Culips English learning podcast.
- Maura: That's right. So, if you've never been, and if you have been, go again, to our website, Culips.com. That's C-U-L-I-P-S.com.
- Harp: Yes, because there you can find all our older episodes and you can also become a member. Because when you're a member, you have access to the Learning Materials, which includes a detailed explanation, complete transcript, and even a quiz.
- Maura: That's right. So, check it out. Now, today's episode is a Catch Word episode, and that's where we look at different slang and expressions, we give you lots of explanations and examples so that you can start to understand these when you hear them and start to use them too.
- Harp: Exactly. And today, we're going to be looking at three expressions related to having an idea, a sudden idea or a sudden realization.
- Maura: Right. Because sometimes an idea, a really good idea, just **comes to us**, like **from nowhere**, just in any given moment. And so we have a bunch of different expressions to explain that phenomenon.
- Harp: All right. Let's get started.
- Maura: So, what is our first expression?
- Harp: Our first expression is **a light bulb moment**.
- Maura: Right. **To have a light bulb moment**.
- Harp: Yes. **To have a light bulb moment**.
- Maura: And a **light bulb** is...
- Harp: The little bulb in your lamp or in your light fixture and when you turn it on, it makes your room bright.

Maura: And in general, in English, when we talk about having a sudden inspiration or really smart idea, we talk about **bright** and **light**. So this expression, **to have a light bulb moment**, means that you suddenly had a really interesting, smart idea.

Harp: Yeah, exactly. Or you had a sudden realization. You realized something that you didn't realize before.

Maura: Right. Like maybe you couldn't figure out how to fix your television and then you had **a light bulb moment** and you figured out what you needed to do to fix it.

Harp: Yes, exactly. And just to help you remember this expression, if you see on a cartoon and there's a character and all of a sudden they have **a light bulb moment**, they actually sometimes in cartoons have a little light bulb above their head.

Maura: Yup. And that symbolizes that they've suddenly **come up** with a really smart idea.

Harp: Yeah. All right, let's use this expression, **a light bulb moment**, in an example.

Maura: All right. Let's do it.

Maura: So why are you smiling so much today?

Harp: You know how hard I've been working on that new advertising campaign?

Maura: Yeah.

Harp: Well, last night we were working till so late on the project, we just couldn't think of an idea. We were **brainstorming**, we were trying to think of new logos. We just couldn't **come up** with anything.

Maura: So what happened?

Harp: Well, this morning, when I was brushing my teeth, I had **a light bulb moment**. I know what to do now.

Maura: Oh, that's great! It's funny how it is like that sometimes, eh? You work so hard and then it just **comes to you**.

Harp: Yeah. Just **out of nowhere**, it **came**. It was awesome.

Maura: So, there's an example where somebody had **a light bulb moment**.

- Harp: Yes, exactly. All of a sudden, they had a **bright** idea.
- Maura: Sometimes they **come from nowhere**, sometimes they **come** as a result of a lot of work, too.
- Harp: Yup, exactly. Should we give one more example with this expression?
- Maura: Let's do it.

- Maura: Come on, let's go.
- Harp: I can't find my keys. I'm sorry, just give me a second. I need to find them.
- Maura: Well, where do you think you left them? I'll look too.
- Harp: Well, I normally leave them on the table, but I looked on the table, I looked under the table, I looked around the table. I can't find them. Just give me a second, maybe they're over here in my jacket.
- Maura: Okay. Are they there?
- Harp: No, they're not here. Oh, wait! I had a **light bulb moment**! I left them in the door.
- Maura: Let me check. Yup, here they are.
- Harp: I can't believe I forgot them there. I'm so silly.
- Maura: That's a dangerous place, too, be careful.
- Harp: I know, I know.

- Maura: So, there's an example where someone had a sudden realization about something. She couldn't find her keys, and then suddenly she remembered where they were.
- Harp: Yes, exactly. So let's move on to our next expression.
- Maura: All right. So first we had **a light bulb moment**, and now what's the second expression?
- Harp: And the next expression is **to dawn on**.
- Maura: Right. **To dawn on**. And usually, you talk about something **dawning on me** or you, or a person. It **dawns on someone**.
- Harp: Yes. And dawn is the time of day when the sun is about to rise and the sun starts rising for a new day.

- Maura: So, it's the same idea as **a light bulb moment** because there's a sense of light. When the sun is rising, there's a lot of sunlight and light really means knowledge or some brilliant idea. So when something **dawns on you**, it means that you have a new understanding or a new idea about something.
- Harp: Exactly. So it's very similar to **a light bulb moment**. When something **dawns on you**, or it **dawned on me**, it means that you had a sudden idea or a sudden realization.
- Maura: So when something **dawns on a person**, this means that they understand it or they have a sudden understanding of something.
- Harp: Yes, or they have a new idea. It **dawned on me** to do something this way.
- Maura: Okay. So, let's give some examples with **to dawn on**.
- Harp: Let's do it.

- Maura: Hey, did you see the price of gas today?
- Harp: It's so expensive.
- Maura: I know. It's so expensive. I really feel like **I'm getting gouged at the pump**.
- Harp: I know and I'm trying to save money right now.
- Maura: I know. It's getting so expensive to drive in to work. I mean, I don't know what I'm gonna do. It's just almost getting to be not worth it.
- Harp: I know. But, hey, it just **dawned on me**.
- Maura: What?
- Harp: Well, we're both coming from the same direction. Maybe we should **carpool**.
- Maura: Hey, you know, that's not a bad idea. Then we could split the cost of gas and probably save a lot of money that way.
- Harp: I think this is a good idea. Let's try it out tomorrow.
- Maura: All right.

- Maura: So, there's an example where an idea **dawned on someone** and they **came up** with a really great idea to **carpool**, which is to drive together somewhere and use one car.
- Harp: Yes. Should we do one more example?

Maura: Let's do another one with **to dawn on**.

Harp: I'm so excited about the party this weekend.

Maura: It's gonna be so fun. I'm pumped.

Harp: I know, me too.

Maura: Yeah. So, do you think we have everything? Like, we got together, we talked about it. Do you think we're missing anything?

Harp: No, I think we have everything.

Maura: Yeah, yeah, I think so. I hope we're not missing anything.

Harp: No, I think we'll be fine.

Maura: Oh my gosh! It just **dawned on me**.

Harp: What?

Maura: Well, we're not gonna have anything to eat on. We gotta buy paper plates or something.

Harp: You're right. I can't believe we forgot that.

Maura: I'll pick them up later today.

Harp: Good plan.

Maura: Disaster averted.

Harp: So in that example, we were both really excited for a party. We thought we had all our preparation done, and then it **dawned on Maura** that we forgot a major component, the paper plates.

Maura: Sometimes it's like that too, you know. When you're so excited about something, you don't remember all the details.

Harp: Yes, definitely.

Maura: Okay. So we looked at **a light bulb moment** and then **to dawn on**. Now, what's the last expression today?

Harp: The last expression is **brainwave**.

Maura: All right, so **brainwave, to have a brainwave**.

Harp: Yeah. So this is used in almost the exact same way. **To have a brainwave** means that you have a new idea or you have a sudden realization.

Maura: Great. So, if you're in any circumstance, maybe you've been working hard or maybe it just suddenly **comes to you**, but you have a really great idea or you realize something that you never thought before.

Harp: Yeah, you have a **brainwave**.

Maura: Okay, great. So, let's give some examples with **a brainwave**.

Harp: Let's do it.

Harp: Hey, what do you wanna do this weekend?

Maura: Well, I don't know. You know, what I'd really like to do is go apple picking, but it's so far.

Harp: I know. The bus **takes forever** to get there.

Maura: I know. It's really too **out of the way**.

Harp: Well, you know, I just had a **brainwave**.

Maura: What's that?

Harp: Why don't we invite Kim and Monica and we can all rent a car together? It won't be that expensive.

Maura: I would love to. I really wanna go apple picking.

Harp: Let's do it.

Maura: All right. Awesome.

Maura: So, in that example, there was a **brainwave**. There was a great idea to rent a car and solve the problem, and then everyone could go apple picking.

Harp: Yeah, exactly. They had a sudden idea.

Maura: Right. So, let's give one more example with **brainwave**.

Harp: Hey, what's wrong? You look really tired.

Maura: Yeah, no, I'm fine, but I was just up late doing my calculus homework and I feel really tired.

Harp: Oh no. Did you finish it all?

Maura:	I did, but you know, I was working on this one really difficult problem for like an hour. I couldn't figure out what to do. And then out of nowhere , I had a brainwave and I was finished the problem in like five minutes after I figured it out.
Harp:	At least you figured it out in the end.
Maura:	Yeah. I'm tired, but I'm happy it's done.
Harp:	I'm sure.

Maura: So, there's an example where someone had a **brainwave**. This time, after a lot of work and trying to figure it out, the idea or the realization of how to solve the problem **came to that person**.

Harp: Okay. So let's do a quick recap. Today we started with **a light bulb moment**.

Maura: And then we talked about **to dawn on**.

Harp: And then we finished with **to have a brainwave**.

Maura: So, don't forget to go to our website, Culips.com, that's C-U-L-I-P-S.com, and check out all we have to offer, including becoming a member.

Harp: I just had **a light bulb moment**.

Maura: What is it, Harp?

Harp: Everyone should join our Facebook page.

Maura: I think that's an excellent idea.

Harp: Me too.

Maura: Okay. We'll talk to you next time. Bye everyone!

Harp: Bye everyone!

Detailed Explanation

(From) out of nowhere

From nowhere, **out of nowhere**, and **from out of nowhere** all have the same meaning and can be used in the same way. All these expressions are used to say that something happened suddenly and unexpectedly. It's like saying that something happened so fast that we cannot tell where it **came from**. It **came from nowhere**.

Maura and Harp use these expressions a few times in this episode. This is because ideas and realizations sometimes happen suddenly and quickly. The ideas and realizations seem to **come from nowhere**.

Here's another example with **(from) out of nowhere**:

Sandy: When we were playing in the yard yesterday, Paul suddenly came running out of the bushes.

Will: Yeah. It was as if he **came from out of nowhere**.

Bright/light expressions

As we say in this episode, **bright** and **light** are often used to mean that something or something is smart, or that some new knowledge or understanding has been gained. This is true in the expression *to have a **light bulb moment***. Another common expression that we use in this episode is *to have a **bright idea***.

Here's a list of some other expressions with **light** or **bright** that are connected to having a realization or learning something new:

To see the light	Bright as a button
To shed light	A bright person
In light of	

To have a light bulb moment

To have a light bulb moment means to have a really great idea or realization, often about something that solves a problem. Like Harp says in this episode, in cartoons, a character is often shown as having a light bulb over their head when they suddenly have a good idea.

Here's one more example with **a light bulb moment**:

Wendy: I couldn't think of how to repair my window, and had given up when I suddenly had **a light bulb moment** and fixed it.

Kelan: I'm glad you figured it out.

To come up with something

To come up with something means to think of an idea, usually an original or creative one. A person can **come up** with an idea or **come up** with a plan, or just about anything one can think of. When you have a light bulb moment, you **come up** with something.

Here's an example with **to come up with something**:

Don: Did you **come up** with a new advertising campaign for the new Johnston project?

Julian: Nope. I haven't **come up** with anything. I need to think about it more.

Bert: Patricia couldn't **come up** with anything when I asked her what she might want for her birthday. Sorry.

Theo: That's Okay. I'll just have to think of my own idea for her gift.

To brainstorm

Someone can **brainstorm** alone or with a group of people. **To brainstorm** is to think of different ideas about one specific subject or area. Usually when people **brainstorm**, they should be able to express many different ideas. In groups, **brainstorming** usually happens as a discussion, and alone a person would write down all their ideas and edit through them at the end.

When people **brainstorm**, they might have a bright idea, or a light bulb moment. Sometimes great ideas are thought up when people are **brainstorming**. Other times, after hours of **brainstorming**, you still haven't come up with the great idea you need!

Here's an example with **to brainstorm**:

Pina: I don't know how we should conduct our new marketing campaign.

Bernard: I'll help you think of some ideas. We can get together tonight and **brainstorm**.

To come to you

Here's another expression that means that a person has a realization or a sudden great idea. If something **comes to you**, it means that you have an idea or understanding, often suddenly and from out of nowhere. Maura says, "It just suddenly **comes to you**" to explain how someone might have a great idea or realization when they are not trying to.

Brent: Wow, this cake you've made is delicious. Where'd you get the recipe?

Pamela: I made it up when I was making the cake. It just **came to me** to add more cinnamon.

Jasmine: I have no idea what I'm going to name my baby if it's a girl.

Rebecca: Don't worry. A name will **come to you** when you see her.

To dawn on someone

When something **dawns on someone**, it means, like the other similar expressions, that someone has a realization or great idea. *Dawn* is the morning time, when the sun rises and brightens up the world. The verb *to dawn* literally means to begin to grow light as the sun rises. The expression **to dawn on someone** relates to the use of *light* to mean new understanding.

Here's another example with **to dawn on someone**:

Hannah: I thought my new television was broken, and then it **dawned on me** that I had forgotten to plug it in.

Elaine: That's hilarious.

To get gouged at the pump

To get gouged at the pump means to pay a lot for gas for your car. *To gouge* means to dig or scoop out, like dirt in the ground or even when a part of your body is deeply cut. When someone talks about being gouged, it can be used in a slang way to mean that they had to pay a lot of money.

Here's an example with *to be/get gouged*:

Nathan: How was your trip?

Michael: It was all right. We got gouged at our hotel, though. That place was so expensive.

Whenever you hear the expression **at the pump**, people are talking about the gas station. The place where you put the gas in your car is called *the pump* or *the gas pump*, and the verb is *to pump gas*. When we put this all together, you can see that **to be gouged at the pump** means to have to pay a lot of money for gas.

Here's an example using the full expression:

Leon: Is gas expensive in Canada right now?

Mark: It's not too bad compared to the prices in other countries, but lots of Canadians feel that they're **getting gouged at the pumps**.

To carpool

To carpool is to drive to a destination with other people. Instead of people driving in their individual cars, they get together and drive using one car to get to where they want to go. In Canada, we have **carpool** parking lots, where the people who are not driving can park their cars, and **carpool** lanes, where people with more than one person in a car can drive, which usually has less traffic.

To pool means to bring resources together and use them. There is often a better use of resources, like a car, when people work together.

Here's another example using *to pool*:

Olivia: Let's pool all the money we would spend on cabs together, and rent a limo!

Shane: That's a fun idea!

To have a brainwave

Here's the last of our expressions meaning to have a great idea or realization. **To have a brainwave** means to suddenly get a smart idea or have a realization, just like *to have a light bulb moment* and *to dawn on someone*.

Here's an example with **to have a brainwave**:

Finn: I can't think of a way that we can all get together this weekend. There's not enough room in Jim's car to bring everyone.

Derek: I just **had a brainwave**. Why doesn't Jim pick up Carly and Simon can take the bus downtown? Then we can all meet up for a drink.

To take forever

When we say that something **takes forever**, it means that it lasts a long time. We've done an episode in the past about how people in English-speaking cultures, and many other cultures around the world, like to exaggerate when they speak.

In one of the example dialogues in this episode, Harp says that the bus **takes forever** to get to the place she wants to go. This means that the bus takes a very long time to arrive at the destination.

Here are a couple more examples with **to take forever**:

Mandy: My computer always **takes forever** to start. I think I might need a new one.

Cameron: Or maybe you just need to clean it up a bit. Let me have a look.

Bonnie: Are you ready to go yet? You always **take forever** to get ready.

Shannon: I'm ready now! Sorry for making you wait.

Out of the way

When someone or something is described as **out of the way**, it means that the distance from where you are to the other location is far. If there's a way you are travelling, like from your house to an amusement park, and someone does not live between those two places, their location can also be described as **out of the way**.

In this episode, Maura says that the place to go apple picking is **out of the way**. This means that it is far from where they are. They don't have a car, so to get to the apple picking is not easy.

Here are a couple more examples with ***of the way***:

Harry: Can we pick up Jane on the way to the club tonight?

Gavin: Does she have another way of getting there? Her place is pretty **out of the way**.

Luke: I wanted to go to the outlet mall on the way back from our trip to New York City. Is it on our way?

Nora: It's actually quite **out of the way**. It would take about 40 minutes extra to get there.

Quiz

1. From out of nowhere, there was a knock at the door.

What does the above sentence mean?

- a) The knock was fast and expected.
- b) The knock was sudden and unexpected.
- c) The knock was planned but unexpected.
- d) The door was sudden and unexpected.

2. John just had a _____ moment and solved the problem.

Please fill in the blank.

- a) light bulb
- b) light fixture
- c) bubbly
- d) bright

3. Valerie: My cat's been sick and I can't figure out how to get her to start eating again. Can you _____ any ideas?

Please fill in the blank.

- a) come into
- b) come to
- c) come up with
- d) come up

4. What are people doing when they discuss creative and original ideas for a new project?

- a) mind blowing
- b) brainstorming
- c) raining
- d) head thrashing

5. When something dawns on you, it means you have a new understanding of it.
What is the noun *dawn*?
- a) the beginning of the day
 - b) the end of the day
 - c) the middle of the day
 - d) midnight
6. What does the expression *to get gouged at the pump* mean?
- a) to hurt yourself at the gym
 - b) to work a lot at the gym
 - c) to pay a cheap price for gas
 - d) to pay a lot for gas
7. Pete and Travis drive to work together every day. They both have cars, but drive together to save on gas money.
What is this called?
- a) car-driving
 - b) carpooling
 - c) harpooning
 - d) gassing
8. Which of the following expressions means to have an idea or realization?
- a) to have a brain fart
 - b) to have a brain freeze
 - c) to have a heat wave
 - d) to have a brainwave
9. The frozen pie is taking forever to bake.
What does this mean?
- a) The pie is very old.
 - b) The pie is taking a long time to bake.
 - c) The pie is ready.
 - d) The pie is completely frozen.

Answers:

1.b 2.a 3.c 4.b 5.a 6.d 7.b 8.d 9.b