SCHOLASTIC

What You Need to Know about English Expressions

Focus on building mastery of expressive English

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About the Writer

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A

about

about to or just about to

You are **about to** or **just about to** do something when you are just going to do it:

- *I was **about to** go to bed.*
- *He was **about to** leave when the phone rang.*
- *The meeting is **just about to** start.*

how about ...? See at **how**.

it's about time (too)! and **about time (too)!** See at **time**.

just about See at **just**.

what about ...? See at **what**.

above

above all

You say **above all** to show that something is more important than other things:

- ***Above all**, we must protect the children.*
- *They need food, clothing and, **above all**, water.*
- *In this business, we value safety **above all**.*

absolutely

absolutely!

You say **absolutely**! when you strongly agree with what somebody has said:

- *'I think our team was the best.'*
  *'**Absolutely**!'*

Language Help

The American expression **you bet!** or **you bet your life!** has the same meaning:

- *'I think our team was the best.'*
  *'**You bet your life**!'*

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- *'Shall we offer him the job, then?' 'Yes, **absolutely**!'*
- *'Do you agree with the decision?' 'Oh, **absolutely**!'*

absolutely not!

You use **absolutely not!** to say 'No' in a strong way, or to strongly deny or disagree with something:

- *'Aren't you coming swimming with us?' **'Absolutely not!'***
- *'Such violence is never acceptable.' **'Absolutely not!'***
- *'Is that true?' **'Absolutely not!'***

accident

by accident

You do something **by accident** when you do it unexpectedly, without trying to or planning to:

- *I found the answer to the question **by accident**.*
- *Our coats are very similar and I took his **by accident**.*
- *We met again, **by accident**, at the gym.*

Language Help

You can also use **by chance** to express this meaning:

- *We met again, **by chance**, at the gym.*

addition

in addition to

Something that you have **in addition to** what you already have is an extra thing:

- *Today we have a choir practice **in addition to** the usual play rehearsal.*
- ***In addition to** the weekly fee, there is an annual membership charge.*
- *She teaches English, **in addition to** working at the library.*

advantage

take advantage of

You **take advantage of** an opportunity when you use it:

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Exercises

Exercise 1

Fill in the missing idiom in each of the following sentences using the list given below:

in the middle of	*it's about time*	*as soon as*	*no longer*
just a minute	*little by little*	*from now on*	*for ever*
first thing	*the other day*		

1. Steve has to drive to the airport _____, as his plane leaves at 8 a.m.
2. I waited outside the shop and went in _____ it opened.
3. It seems like we moved here just _____ but it was actually two years ago.
4. The school bus leaves in 15 minutes so _____ you got ready.
5. Keith has a new girlfriend now, though he promised to love me _____!
6. I'm _____ making dinner, so I can't read you a story now.
7. She's a very timid cat but she's learning to trust me _____.
8. I'm sorry but the Dixon family _____ live here.
9. I will be your driving instructor _____ because Tom has now retired.
10. Could you wait _____ while we check your account details?

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Answers

Exercise 1

1. first thing
2. as soon as
3. the other day
4. it's about time
5. for ever
6. in the middle of
7. little by little
8. no longer
9. from now on
10. just a minute/second

Exercise 2

1. getting dressed
2. get the door/answer the door
3. next door
4. Good morning
5. Is something the matter?
6. It's a good thing
7. do me a favour
8. give her a ring
9. out of order
10. find fault with

Exercise 3

1. in charge of
2. of course
3. for once
4. in case
5. on time
6. on the whole
7. out of control
8. in time
9. without fail
10. in any case

Exercise 4

1. lost
2. shook
3. paying
4. shook and take
5. set
6. lowered
7. take
8. jump
9. change
10. moving

Exercise 5

1. take part
2. takes place
3. it's about time
4. in shape
5. had better
6. take a risk
7. little by little
8. chances are
9. all set
10. by the time
11. How about
12. you never know

Exercise 6

1. thank goodness
2. no need
3. right away
4. for goodness' sake
5. that's not the point
6. it's just as well
7. it's a wonder
8. there's no way
9. no problem
10. before you know it

Exercise 7

1. side by side
2. upside down
3. in half / in two
4. out of place
5. high and low
6. face to face
7. next door
8. in sight
9. on top of
10. far away / far off

Exercise 8

1. good at
2. boiling hot
3. broke his promise
4. hardly any
5. hang on
6. no way/certainly not/over my dead body
7. no wonder
8. well done
9. lower your voice
10. all the time

Exercise 9

1. in any case
2. or anything
3. What do you mean?
4. from now on
5. on the way
6. something like
7. what with
8. not really
9. that's enough
10. so far

Exercise 10

1. Not at all/You're welcome/(It was) my pleasure
2. your best bet
3. Take it from me
4. get a move on
5. worth it
6. That's all there is to it
7. I wouldn't
8. It's a wonder
9. make use of
10. made sense

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