The Flatmates
Episode 68:
Is the Cat Ill?

Teacher’s pack
Lesson plan and student worksheets with answers

BBC WORLD SERVICE
LEARNING ENGLISH
Level: Intermediate and above
Language: Dialogue; Idioms with 'up' and 'down'
Aims: Listening skills – Understanding a short dialogue
Language skills – Text reconstruction
Idioms with 'up' and 'down'

Lesson length: Approximately 90 minutes

Materials: Lesson stages
Student worksheet

Preparation: Before the lesson:
- Make enough copies of the student worksheet so that there is one for every student.
- (Optional) make enough extra copies of the jumbled dialogue (student worksheet task 1) so that there is one copy per pair / small group of students. Cut the dialogues into strips to make the re-ordering task easier.
- (Optional) make enough extra copies of the idioms and meaning matching activity (student worksheet task 3) so that there is one copy per pair / small group of students. Cut the idioms and definitions into strips to make the matching task easier.
- Make sure you have available the audio for The Flatmates episode 68.
TEACHERS NOTES: LESSON STAGES

A Stimulate student interest
Generate interest by showing them the image from episode 68 (below, and available at:
http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/flatmates/episode68/index_blank.shtml)
Make sure you use the ‘hide the text’ feature and scroll up so that students can not read the
dialogue or see the vote.

Ask students:
• Who are these people? (Tim, Alice and Helen, and Kitty the cat).
• Where are they? (in the living room of the flat)
• Look at Helen’s face. How is she feeling? (sad / unhappy / depressed)
• Why does she feel that way? (elicit some possible reasons but do not confirm or deny
  anything at this stage)

B Pre-teach essential vocabulary
Write the words on the board, eliciting spelling as you write. Make sure students copy the
boardwork into their notebooks. Model and drill the correct pronunciation of the words: elicit and
show the word stress of each item and word class, if appropriate.

blimey
an expression of surprise or annoyance, used mainly in British English

a bloke
an informal term for ‘a man’

C Pre-listening: prediction
Give out the student worksheet (or cut-up dialogues if you have prepared any). Students work in
pairs or small groups to order the dialogue.

D Listening (episode 68)
Tell students they are going to listen and check their answers. Play the audio (without showing the
text): available at:
http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/flatmates/episode68/index_blank.shtml
Play a second time if necessary; check answers as a class. Have students act out the dialogue in
groups of 3.
E  Language focus
Ask students to look again at the dialogue and underline all the expressions with ‘up and down’. Ask them if they know any more.

F  Language focus
Students match the idioms with ‘up’ with their definitions (task 2 on the student worksheet; or give them cut up versions if you can. Students can check their answers by looking at the next page of their worksheets (also available at http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/flatmates/episode68/languagepoint.shtml). Feedback as a class and drill the idioms.

KEY: 1-F  2-D  3-G  4-A  5-E  6-I/B  7-I/B  8-K  9-C  10-H  11-J

G  Practice
Students do task 3 on their worksheets (also available at http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/flatmates/episode68/quiz.shtml). Feed back as a class.

H  Further practice
Students complete the follow-up dialogue (task 4), using as many ‘up’ and ‘down’ idioms as possible. They then act out their dialogues for the rest of the class, who can count the number of idioms in each dialogue while they listen.
ANSWER KEY

Task 1

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
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<td>Tim: Right. Why’s that?</td>
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Re-ordered version

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10  Tim: Right. Why’s that?

11  Alice: Tim! You’re such a bloke, aren’t you!

Task 2  
KEY: 1-F  2-D  3-G  4-A  5-E  6-I/B  7-I/B  8-K  9-C  10-H  11-J

Task 3  
Answers
1. Buy David the book about the Olympics. He loves sport, so it’ll be…
   a. up his street - Correct – it’ll be an ideal present for him.
   b. down his road - Wrong – you need an idiom with ‘up’.
   c. up his avenue - Wrong – this is the wrong type of road.
   d. down his avenue - Wrong – you need an idiom with ‘up’.

2. I gave the old man some money because he looked…
   a. on the up and up - Wrong – this means he is successful, so why give him money?
   b. down at his uppers - Wrong – the preposition is wrong in this idiom.
   c. down at heel - Correct – he looked poor & uncared for, so I gave him some money.
   d. up on his heels - Wrong – the correct idiom uses ‘down’.

3. Jenny never wastes money on silly things. She’s really…
   a. up-to-the-minute - Wrong – she is not fashionable, she is practical.
   b. down in the mouth - Wrong – she is not unhappy, she is practical.
   c. got her head in the clouds - Wrong - you need the opposite meaning.
   d. down-to-earth - Correct – she is a practical person who doesn’t waste money.

4. Tim’s too busy to help me. He’s…
   a. up to his nose in work - Wrong – you need a different body part.
   b. up to his ears in work - Correct – he is too busy to help.
   c. down to his toes in work - Wrong – you need an idiom with ‘up’.
   d. down in the mouth about work - Wrong – you need an idiom which shows that he is busy, not sad.

5. My grandmother loves going … memory…
   a. up / street - Wrong – the preposition is wrong, and this is the wrong type of road.
   b. down / alley - Wrong – this is the wrong type of road.
   c. up / boulevard – Wrong – the preposition is wrong, and this is the wrong type of road.
   d. down / lane - Correct – she loves talking about the past.

6. Her business is doing well; it’s …, but she still seems sad and…
   a. on the up and up / down in the dumps - Correct – she is successful, but unhappy.
   b. down memory lane / down in the mouth - Wrong – the first idiom should show that the business is successful.
   c. on its uppers / down at heel - Wrong – the first idiom should show that the business is successful; the second idiom should show that she is sad.
   d. on the up and up / up-to-the-minute - Wrong – the second idiom should show that she is sad, not fashionable.
**Task 1: Prediction**
Number the lines of dialogue so that they are in the correct order. Some of them have been done for you.

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**Task 2: Language work:** Match the idioms with their meanings.

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<th>Idiom</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. What's up? <em>What's up with Helen at the moment? She seems really upset.</em></td>
<td>A. to be getting increasingly successful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To be up someone's street <em>Ask Sarah that question about football. It's right up her street: she's been a fan for ages.</em></td>
<td>B. to be sad or miserable</td>
</tr>
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<td>3. To be up to my/the ears <em>Tim can't help her because he is up to his ears in/with work.</em></td>
<td>C. to be or look untidy and uncared for</td>
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<td>4. To be on the up and up <em>His life has been on the up and up since he published his first book. Now, he's making a film in Hollywood.</em></td>
<td>D. to be ideal for someone, or be related to something which someone knows a lot about</td>
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<td>5. To be up-to-the-minute <em>These are up-to-the-minute statistics, and they show that the rush hour starts at 4.30, not 5.</em></td>
<td>E. to be the most recent or latest; to be very fashionable</td>
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<td>6. To be down in the dumps <em>Helen's been down in the dumps since Michal went to Poland.</em></td>
<td>F. What's the matter or problem?</td>
</tr>
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<td>7. To be/look down in the mouth <em>Helen looks really down in the mouth at the moment, doesn't she? Yes, she does. I think she's missing Michal.</em></td>
<td>G. To be really busy or occupied with something, so that you have little free time</td>
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<td>8. To be down-to-earth <em>My sister's very down-to-earth. She always buys me useful presents – like kettles and tools. She never buys me anything silly and fun.</em></td>
<td>H. to be very poor</td>
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<td>9. To be/look down at heel <em>He seemed well-educated, but looked so down at heel. His clothes were scruffy and he needed a haircut.</em></td>
<td>I. to be or look sad and unhappy</td>
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<td>10. To be down on one's uppers <em>David's really down on his uppers at the moment. He lost his job, and he can't pay the rent for his house anymore.</em></td>
<td>J. to look back into the past, in a nostalgic and warm way</td>
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<td>11. To go down memory lane <em>I love school reunions. They're a lovely chance to go down memory lane.</em></td>
<td>K. to be realistic or practical; to not be a dreamer</td>
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**Idioms**

Idioms use language metaphorically. This means that the meaning of an idiom is not the same as the meanings of the individual words in the idiom. For example, if you ‘go down memory lane’, it means you think about the past (the metaphorical meaning), not that you walk down a street called ‘Memory Lane’ (the literal meaning).

Idioms are **fixed groups of words**. This means that the wording of an idiom can not be changed. For example, you can say ‘go down memory lane’, but you can’t say ‘go down memory street’.

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**Idioms with ‘up’**

**To be up**: ‘What’s up?’ means: ‘What’s the matter or problem?’ This is often used when someone is upset or behaving strangely.

- What’s up with Helen at the moment? She seems really upset.

This idiom is also used as an informal greeting.

- Hey David, what’s up man? ‘Just the usual. How’re you doing?’

**To be up someone’s street**: to be ideal for someone, or be related to something which someone knows a lot about.

- Ask Sarah that question about football. It’s right up her street: she’s been a fan for ages.

**To be up to my/the ears**: to be really busy or occupied with something, so that you have little free time:

- Tim can’t help her because he is up to his ears in/with work.

**To be on the up and up**: to be getting increasingly successful.

- His life has been on the up and up since he published his first book. Now, he’s making a film in Hollywood.

**To be up-to-the-minute**: to be the most recent or latest; to be very fashionable.

- These are up-to-the-minute statistics, and they show that the rush hour starts at 4.30, not 5.
Idioms with ‘down’

**To be down in the dumps: to be sad or miserable.**
This idiom refers to an old use of the word ‘dumps’, which was used to refer to a sad piece of music.

- Helen has been down in the dumps since Michal returned to Poland.

**To be/look down in the mouth:** to be or look sad and unhappy.
To be down in the mouth means that someone's expression is sad; they are definitely not smiling.

- Helen looks really down in the mouth at the moment, doesn't she? -Yes, she does. I think she's missing Michal.

**To be down-to-earth:** to be realistic or practical; to not be a dreamer.
In some ways, this idiom is the opposite of ‘to have your head in the clouds’ (to be unrealistic).

- My sister's very down-to-earth. She always buys me useful presents – like kettles and tools. She never buys me anything silly and fun.

**To be/look down at heel:** to be or look untidy and uncared for.
This is an idiomatic reference to the condition of someone's shoes, when they are very worn and need replacing or repairing.

- He seemed well-educated, but looked so down at heel. His clothes were scruffy and he needed a haircut.

**To be down on one's uppers:** to be very poor.
This is another idiomatic reference to the condition of someone's shoes. It means that their shoes have lost the sole and heel, only the top (upper) part of the shoe remains.

- David's really down on his uppers at the moment. He lost his job, and he can't pay the rent for his house anymore.

**To go down memory lane:** to look back into the past, in a nostalgic and warm way.

- I love school reunions. They're a lovely chance to go down memory lane.
Task 3: Language practice 1

For each of the six questions choose the one correct answer.

1. Buy David the book about the Olympics. He loves sport, so it’ll be...
   a. up his street
   b. down his road
   c. up his avenue
   d. down his avenue

2. I gave the old man some money because he looked...
   a. on the up and up
   b. down at his uppers
   c. down at heel
   d. up on his heels

3. Jenny never wastes money on silly things. She’s really...
   a. up-to-the-minute
   b. down in the mouth
   c. got her head in the clouds
   d. down-to-earth

4. Tim’s too busy to help me. He’s...
   a. up to his nose in work
   b. up to his ears in work
   c. down to his toes in work
   d. down in the mouth about work

5. My grandmother loves going... memory...
   a. up / street
   b. down / alley
   c. up / boulevard
   d. down / lane

6. Her business is doing well; it’s..., but she still seems sad and...
   a. on the up and up / down in the dumps
   b. down memory lane / down in the mouth
   c. on its uppers / down at heel
   d. on the up and up / up-to-the-minute

Task 4: Language Practice 2

Helen has taken the cat to the vet. She comes back to the flat. What does she say to Alice and Tim? What is their reaction? Look at the dialogue below and continue it. Try to use as many idioms with ‘up’ and ‘down’ as possible. When you have finished, you can act out your dialogue for the class.

Helen: Hi guys.

Alice: Hi Helen, where have you been?

Helen: Kitty and I have been to see the vet, haven’t we Kitty?

Tim: So, what’s up with her then?

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