

## New Growth.

Those of you who have followed my podcast for a few years will know that I'm obsessed with gardening. Trees, bushes, flowers, vegetables, seeds, and even soil get me all excited. After a long, dull winter, it's time to spring into(1) life. People have been telling me, "Anna, it's too early to dig; the ground is still too cold," "you can't transplant anything now," "you have to wait to put (2)seeds in the ground." But, I've been doing all of that. I don't always 'go by the book'(3), sometimes feelings and instinct can be more accurate. Anyway, about one month ago, I got out the chainsaw. You know, a woman can have a wonderful time with a chainsaw. Using a chainsaw is usually the domain of men, like war, and boxing. However, as I told my husband, "It's not rocket science(4), you know." It really is quite simple, if you're careful. I cut down a large area of 30 year old bushes, then dug up(5) the huge roots. I've transplanted blueberry bushes there, and planted a lot of bulbs. My plan is to have a mass of flowers. Also, I've started flower seeds in containers on my kitchen window. They have all sprouted(6), and look like happy, little faces, all in a row. When they are bigger, I'll put them in this newly planted area and show you photos of all the pretty and colorful growth.

1. 'To spring into life' means to jump or leap into life. The verb can be used by itself to imply enthusiasm.

a. I had a good night's sleep, so when I woke up, I sprang out of bed.

b. The basketball players will spring into action when the game starts.

2. 'You have to wait to put...' this is a string of three verbs, as you can see. The sentence could have been written as 'You have to wait before putting...'. We often use the phrase 'to wait to + verb'.

a. You need to wait to go outside; it's still raining.

b. They'll have to wait to order their meal; the restaurant is very busy.

3. 'To go by the book' is a set phrase that means to follow the normal pattern of behavior, or what is generally recommended or taught.

a. The strategies for taking exams that we learn are helpful. It's best to go by the book to get a good result.

b. The artist doesn't go by the book when he uses color.

4. 'It's not rocket science' is also a set phrase that means 'It's not very difficult'.

a. I can build a shed; it's not rocket science.

b. Of course you can make dinner; it's not rocket science.

5. 'To dig up' the preposition 'up' implies that you're not just digging a hole, but you are removing, 'pulling up', 'lifting up' something from the ground. If you were digging a hole without removing anything, we would just use 'to dig'.

a. We must dig up the rocks before we can plant the trees.

b. I accidentally dug up a water pipe!

6. 'To sprout' is similar to 'to spring' but it refers to a plant emerging from a seed. It can be used figuratively.

a. The onions have sprouted.

b. Those children have really sprouted; they're getting big!

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questions or comments, email me at [acupofenglish@hotmail.com](mailto:acupofenglish@hotmail.com).