
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

The English We Speak

To turn something upside down



This is not a word-for-word transcript

Neil

Hello, welcome to another edition of The English We Speak. I'm Neil.

Helen

Hi, everyone. I'm Helen.

Neil

Helen, what are you doing Helen? Are you looking for something?

Helen

Yes, I am. I'm looking for my earring; it's a present from my mum.

Neil

Oh. When did you last see it?

Helen

A minute ago. I looked in the mirror before I came in to the studio. I'm sure I was wearing it.

Neil

Em, I'll help you look under the table for it. But I don't think you'll find it by turning the place upside down. Be calm. Let's leave the chairs on the floor.

Helen

I'm not turning the chairs upside down, they are too heavy. I just want to check underneath them.

Neil

When I say 'turn the place upside down', what I mean is you are making the studio very messy.

Helen

I am sorry. Ugh, I found it. It's under the desk.

Neil

Phew, what a relief. I don't think we'd be allowed back in the studio if we literally turned the studio upside down.

Helen

So to 'turn something upside down' means to make the place really messy because you're trying to search thoroughly for something. Here are some examples.

Examples

I turned my house upside down and I still couldn't find my car keys.

I don't care if you have to turn the place upside down. You've got to find my wedding ring.

Neil

Well, let's tidy up before the studio managers come back and turn our lives upside down.

Helen

Let's do that!