

air<sup>1</sup>

S1 W1

/eə \$ er/

noun

1 **gas** [uncountable] the mixture of gases around the Earth, that we breathe:

*Let's go outside and get some fresh air.*

*You need to put some air in the tyres.*

in the air

*There was a strong smell of burning in the air.*

→ a breath of fresh air [AT BREATH](#) (2)

2 **space above the ground the air**

the space above the ground or around things:

into the air

*Flames leapt into the air.*

through the air

*He fell 2,000 metres through the air without a parachute.*

3 **planes**

a) **by air**

travelling by, or using, a plane:

*I'd prefer to travel by air.*

b)

relating to or involving planes:

*the victims of Britain's worst air disaster*

**Air travel** was growing rapidly.

**air traffic** congestion

*His brother died in an **air crash**.*

4 **be in the air**

a)

if a feeling is in the air, a lot of people feel it at the same time:

*There was a sense of excitement in the air.*

b)

to be going to happen very soon:

*Change is in the air.*

**5 | appearance** [singular] if something or someone has an air of confidence, mystery etc, they seem confident, mysterious etc:

**air of**

*She had an air of quiet confidence.*

*She looked at him with a determined air.*

**6 be up in the air**

if something is up in the air, no decision has been made about it yet:

*Our trip is still very much up in the air.*

**7 be on/off (the) air**

to be broadcasting on the radio or television at the present moment, or to stop broadcasting:

*We'll be on air in three minutes.*

**8 | music** [countable] a simple tune, often used in the title of a piece of CLASSICAL music

**9 airs** [plural] PROUD

a way of behaving that shows someone thinks they are more important than they really are:

**put on airs/give yourself airs**

*Trudy is always putting on airs.*

*an actor with no **airs and graces***

**10 be walking/floating on air**

to feel very happy

→ HOT AIR,

ON-AIR,

→ **clear the air** AT CLEAR<sup>2</sup> (15),

→ **disappear/vanish into thin air** AT THIN<sup>1</sup> (15) ,

→ **out of thin air** AT THIN<sup>1</sup> (16)

## COLLOCATIONSense 1 adjectives

fresh *She opened the window to let in some fresh air.*

clean *London's air is cleaner than it has been at any time since 1585.*

warm/ hot *Warm air rises and is replaced by cooler and denser air. |*

*I felt a sudden rush of hot air.*

cool/ cold *The air had turned a little cooler.*

crisp (= pleasantly cool) *the crisp autumn air*

clear *I looked up to the stars in the clear night air.*

damp/ humid *Damp air causes condensation.*

polluted *The air in Mexico City is heavily polluted.*

stale (= not fresh and often full of smoke) *The room was full of stale air and tobacco smoke.*

the air is thin (= there is less oxygen because you are in a high place) *People cannot live up there because the air is too thin and there is not enough oxygen to breathe.*

the morning/ evening/ night air *He stepped out and breathed in the cold morning air.*

the sea/ mountain/ country air *the salty smell of the sea air*

the still air (= air in which there is no wind) *Smoke from the chimneys hung in the still air.*

## air + NOUN

air pollution *Most air pollution is caused by cars.*

the air quality *The air quality is very poor on hot days.*

the air pressure *The air pressure had dropped.*

## phrases

a breath of air *I went outside for a breath of air.*

a rush/blast/stream of air *There was a cold rush of air as she wound down her window.*

a current of air *The birds are able to glide on a current of warm air.*

## verbs

breathe in the air *She breathed in the cool mountain air.*

fight/gasp for air (= try to breathe with difficulty) *He clutched his throat as he fought for air.*

let in some air (= let fresh air into a room) *It would be nice to open the door and let in some air.*

put air into something (= fill a tyre, balloon etc with air) *I need to put some air in the tyres.*

### Word origin

Sense 1-7, 9:

**Date:** 1200–1300

**Language:** Old French

**Origin:** Latin *aer*, from Greek

Sense 8:

**Date:** 1500–1600

**Origin:** Probably a translation of Italian *aria*; → [ARIA](#)

# air<sup>2</sup>

verb

**1 | opinion** [transitive] to express your opinions publicly:

**air your views/grievances/complaints etc**

*Staff will get a chance to ask questions and air their views.*

**2 | tv/radio** [intransitive and transitive] to broadcast a programme on television or radio:

*KPBS airs such popular children's programs as 'Barney' and*

*‘Sesame Street’.*

*The program is due to air next month.*

**3 | room** [transitive] (*especially BrE*),  
**air something out** (*AmE*)

to let fresh air into a room, especially one that has been closed for a long time

**4 | clothes** [intransitive and transitive] (*especially BrE*),  
**air (something) out** (*AmE*)

to put a piece of clothing in a place that is warm or has a lot of air, so that it smells clean:

*I’ve left my sweater outside to air.*

→ AIRING,

→ **air your dirty laundry** AT DIRTY<sup>1</sup> (7)

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*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*

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