

Dress Codes

“Dress how you want to be addressed.”

—Author unknown

Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. What are some different types of dress codes?
2. What happens when people don't follow dress codes at work or school?
3. Do you prefer to dress formally or informally at social events, work, and school?



B. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many meanings and words as you can before you read. You can check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| ___ 1. appropriate | a) to dress informally |
| ___ 2. attire | b) to make sure the rules are followed |
| ___ 3. dress down | c) to cause a person to feel bad or self-conscious |
| ___ 4. cut and dry | d) clothing |
| ___ 5. business casual | e) not realistic or useful |
| ___ 6. embarrass | f) informal attire that looks neat and tidy for work |
| ___ 7. enforce | g) right or proper for a situation |
| ___ 8. impractical | h) unfair or unequal due to race, gender, economic status, etc. |
| ___ 9. distracting | i) causing people to lose focus |
| ___ 10. discriminatory | j) clear, obvious |

Reading

DRESS CODES

The right to bare arms and legs

1. Just like clothes and bodies, dress codes come in many shapes and forms. Dress codes are guidelines for employees, students, or attendees about what is considered **appropriate** or acceptable **attire**.
2. Dress codes can be helpful when planning an outfit for a social event. Attendees know to dress up in formal gowns and tuxedos for a black tie* event. If a wedding invitation says beach casual, guests know to **dress down** in khaki shorts or sundresses.
3. Other dress codes aren't as **cut and dry**. One of the most common dress codes in the Western world is **business casual**. At some workplaces, business casual means it's okay to wear dark jeans with a collared shirt or blouse. At others, it means it's fine to go without a tie or jacket. Addressing dress code issues in a business environment isn't easy. Is it worth **embarrassing** or losing an employee over what they choose to wear?
4. Dress code debates often heat up in the summer months when students and employees naturally want to stay cool and comfortable. How can schools **enforce** dress codes when they don't have air conditioning? Why can't men wear shorts if it's acceptable for women? Is it **impractical** to ask women to cover their shoulders or arms? How long must dresses, skirts, or shorts be to be considered "appropriate"?
5. Some teachers and administrators say that dress codes are essential in schools, because girls often wear clothes that are too **distracting**. In contrast, many students and parents complain that school dress codes embarrass girls and make them feel uncomfortable about their bodies. Some argue that requiring special clothing at school is also economically and culturally **discriminatory**. Is it a teacher's role to act as the fashion police?

Comprehension

Discuss these questions in pairs, and write the answers in your notebook.

1. What is the article mainly about?
2. What types of clothing are mentioned in this reading?
3. What does the article say about black tie events?
4. Why does the article mention the beach?
5. Why do dress code debates often heat up in the summertime?
6. What types of discrimination are mentioned?

***Note:**

BLACK TIE

For a "black tie" event, a man wears a black tuxedo with a black tie and a woman wears a long evening gown.

WHITE TIE

A "white tie" event is even more formal. A man wears a white shirt, a white vest, and a white bow tie with his tuxedo. A woman wears evening gloves and sometimes a scarf with her gown.

Vocabulary Review

A. Recognizing Vocabulary

Which word from page 1 is described in the sentence?
More than one option may be possible.

#	Sentence	Word
1	He isn't allowed to wear shorts because he's a man.	
2	You look nice in anything that you wear.	
3	We don't wear suits. Just wear nice pants and a collared shirt.	
4	The wedding is on the beach. Wear a sundress and sandals.	
5	It doesn't make sense to wear long pants in this hot weather.	
6	She said the words on my shirt prevent other students from getting their school work done.	
7	The rule is simple. Jeans are only allowed on Fridays.	
8	They can't make me change my clothes. It's my body.	

B. Sentence Completion

Complete the sentences using vocabulary from page 1.
You may need to change the word forms.

1. According to tradition, black clothing is _____ attire for a funeral.
2. Those running shoes with the blinking lights are _____. She can't wear them at school.
3. His _____ was not suitable for meeting the CEO. He should have worn a jacket.
4. We _____ on Fridays, but we still aren't allowed to wear short shorts.
5. I _____ my employee when I said her dress was too short. She quit soon after that.

Adverb Clauses

CAUSE & EFFECT

A. Introduction

Adverb clauses of cause and effect indicate why something happens. They start with adverbs such as *because*, *since*, *as*, and *in order to*.

There are two different ways to write or say sentences with adverb clauses. Note the punctuation differences when writing.

Adverbs	Examples
Because	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because it was a black tie event, I rented a tuxedo. • I rented a tuxedo because it was a black tie event.
Since	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since they got married on the beach, we wore shorts and sandals. • We wore shorts and sandals since they got married on the beach.
As	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As it was 30 degrees out, our boss told us not to worry about the dress code. • Our boss told us not to worry about the dress code as it was 30 degrees out.
In order to <i>(more formal)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to comply with the dress code, I put a sweater over my tank top. • I put a sweater over my tank top in order to comply with the dress code.

B. Practice

Write sentences with adverb clauses that show cause and effect. Use the prompts. The prompts tell you which vocabulary, adverb, and sentence position to use.

- Ex. (Because / gloves) Because it was a white tie event, I wore gloves with my gown.
- (Since / business casual) _____
 - (In order to / long gown) _____
 - (shorts / as) _____
 - (sweater / because) _____
 - (Because / jacket) _____

Discussion

1. Should students be involved in creating an appropriate dress code?
2. Is it possible to avoid discrimination when creating a work dress code?
3. Does a school dress code help prepare students for the real world, or is it impractical to try to tell teens what is appropriate?
4. Should jeans be allowed in an office environment?
5. What types of workplaces still require formal business wear (suit jackets, ties, dresses, stockings) for everyday work?
Are formal dress codes outdated?
6. Some restaurants and bars require female staff to wear impractical shoes and revealing attire.
How do you feel about this type of dress code?

Group Work

AN IDEAL DRESS CODE

Work in a small group. Design a high school dress code. Be prepared to defend your dress code to a committee made up of students, parents, and teachers.

Listening

Fill in the blanks as you listen to the recording.

DRESS CODES

The right to bare arms and legs

1. Just like clothes and bodies, dress codes come in many shapes and forms. Dress codes are guidelines for employees, students, or attendees about what is considered _____ or acceptable _____.
2. Dress codes can be helpful when planning an outfit for a social event. Attendees know to dress up in formal gowns and tuxedos for a _____ event. If a wedding invitation says beach casual, guests know to _____ in khaki shorts or _____.
3. Other dress codes aren't as _____. One of the most common dress codes in the Western world is _____. At some workplaces, business casual means it's okay to wear dark jeans with a collared shirt or blouse. At others, it means it's fine to go without a tie or jacket. Addressing dress code issues in a business environment isn't easy. Is it worth _____ or losing an employee over what they choose to wear?
4. Dress code debates often heat up in the summer months when students and employees naturally want to stay cool and _____. How can schools _____ dress codes when they don't have air conditioning? Why can't men wear shorts if it's acceptable for women? Is it _____ to ask women to cover their shoulders or arms? How long must dresses, skirts, or shorts be to be considered "appropriate"?
5. Some teachers and administrators say that dress codes are essential in schools, because girls often wear clothes that are too _____. In contrast, many students and parents complain that school dress codes embarrass girls and make them feel uncomfortable about their bodies. Some argue that requiring special clothing at school is also economically and culturally _____. Is it a teacher's role to act as the fashion police?

Answer Key

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson, students read about dress codes at work, school, and social events. They learn about why these codes exist and how they can be discriminatory. Student review related vocabulary and design their own high school dress code.

TEACHING TIPS:

See Discussion Starters Teaching Guide (<https://esllibrary.com/courses/72/lessons/>) for a variety of ways to use the reading.

LEVEL: Int

TIME: 1.5–2 hours

TAGS: dress code, dress codes, rights, high school, workplace, formal wear, casual wear, business, discrimination, discussion, adverb clauses, clothing, fashion

Pre-Reading

A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

Have students work in small groups or as a class. Ask students if they agree with the quote. What does this quote imply?

B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. g | 3. a | 5. f | 7. b | 9. i |
| 2. d | 4. j | 6. c | 8. e | 10. h |

Reading (and/or Listening)

Ask if your students understand the play on words in the subtitle. Point out the difference between two very different debates: “the right to bear arms” (the right to own and use a gun) and “the right to bare arms” (the right to wear what you want, including sleeveless shirts). Read individually, in small groups, or as a class. You can also play the listening as your students read along. A gap-fill version of the reading is available on page 6. Help your students with vocabulary and expressions that they are unfamiliar with.

Comprehension

1. The article is mainly about different types of dress codes and how they can be helpful, impractical, and even discriminatory.
2. The types of clothing mentioned in the reading are gown, tuxedo, khakis, sundress, jeans, collared shirt, blouse, tie, jacket, dress, skirt, and shorts.
3. The article says that at black tie events, people know to dress up in formal wear. (Having a dress code on an invitation is helpful.)
4. The article mentions a beach wedding as an example of an event that asks people to dress down in more casual wear that is appropriate for the beach.
5. The dress code debate often heats up in the summertime because people want to wear clothes that are cool and comfortable, but dress codes may not allow this at schools and businesses.
6. Gender discrimination, economic discrimination, and cultural discrimination are mentioned.

(continued on the next page...)

Answer Key cont.

Vocabulary Review

A. RECOGNIZING VOCABULARY

Answers may vary.

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| 1. discriminatory | 5. impractical |
| 2. attire | 6. distracting |
| 3. business casual | 7. cut and dry |
| 4. dress down | 8. enforce |

B. SENTENCE COMPLETION

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. appropriate | 4. dress down |
| 2. distracting | 5. embarrassed |
| 3. attire | |

Adverb Clauses

A. INTRODUCTION

Have your students review the grammar for adverb clauses of cause and effect. Then assign the practice questions.

If your students need more help with adverb clauses, visit this blog post: <http://blog.esllibrary.com/2017/05/18/adverb-clauses/>

B. PRACTICE

Answers will vary. Here are some example answers:

- Since customers don't enter the office, business casual is appropriate.
- In order to match my date's tuxedo, I wore a long gown.
- I wore shorts and a tank top as it was a hot day.
- I gave her a sweater to cover up because she wore a sleeveless blouse.
- Because it was a formal meeting, I wore a suit jacket.

Discussion

Answers will vary.

Can be done individually or in small groups or pairs.

Group Work

This task can be done in small groups or pairs. Invite the groups to come up one at a time to present their proposed dress code to a committee of students, teachers, and parents. (The committee will be your class. Divide the class equally so that there is an equal representation of students, teachers, and parents.) After each group has shared its proposal, take a vote to decide on the most appropriate high school dress code. Voters should remain in character (i.e., vote how an average parent, teacher, or student might vote). Personalize these Voting Ballots for this activity:

<https://esllibrary.com/resources/2312>.

Listening

- appropriate, attire
- black tie, dress down, sundresses
- cut and dry, business casual, embarrassing
- comfortable, enforce, impractical
- distracting, discriminatory