

Talk About Clothes in English – Video

In this lesson, you can learn how to talk about clothes and fashion in English.

Can you describe the clothes you like to wear in detail? Do you know how to compliment (<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/compliments>) someone on their style? In this lesson, you'll learn how to do these things and more.

Let's start with the basics: what are you wearing right now?

1. How to Describe Clothes

Justin: Hello, Molotov Fashions, how can I help?

Maria: Hi! Yeah, I made an order online, but there's a problem with it.

J: I'm sorry to hear that. What's the problem exactly?

M: I ordered a floral-print silk scarf, but you've sent me a patterned wool scarf (<https://www.thoughtco.com/english-vocabulary-for-clothing-4018201>) instead.

J: I'm sorry to hear that. What was your order number?

M: 5633BQ

J: Let me see... Yes, I see it now. So, you can return the silk scarf using the label you received in your package. I see you also ordered a striped cotton top. Did that arrive okay?

M: Actually, no! You sent me a plain denim shirt.

J: Oh, I am sorry! We really messed that up. So, you can return those two items, and we'll send out your leather jacket and your velour tracksuit.

M: Leather jacket?! Velour?! What are you talking about? Look, maybe I'll just return the items for a refund.

J: Of course. I'm sorry, our computer systems are a little unreliable.

M: You don't say.

In this dialogue, you heard different words to describe patterns and materials. Can you remember any?

You saw these words for patterns:

floral-print
patterned
striped
plain

There's one common pattern which is missing. Do you know it?

You could also have *check* ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Check_\(pattern\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Check_(pattern))) clothing, for example a *check shirt*. You can say *check* or *checked*—the meaning is the same.

You can use *print* with many different things. For example, you could have a *fruit-print dress*, or an *eagle-print T-shirt*.

You can use *patterned* for any clothing which has some kind of pattern which doesn't fit any of the other words.

What about materials? Can you remember the words from the dialogue?

You heard these words for materials:

silk

wool

cotton

denim

leather

velour

Velour is a kind of soft material. It's not so common.

If you're talking about clothes and you want to describe the pattern and the material, put the pattern first. For example:

a floral-print silk scarf

a plain denim shirt

a striped cotton top

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/mohammad-faruque-190942-unsplash.webp>)

Now, it's your turn to practice! Pause the video and make three sentences to describe your clothing. Include the pattern and the material. You can say your sentences out loud, or write them down.

Do you need a review of clothes vocabulary? Watch this Clothes Vocabulary lesson from Clark and Miller (<https://www.clarkandmiller.com/clothes-vocabulary-names-of-clothing-in-english/>).

Ready? Let's move on.

2. Talking About Fit and Style

J: So, what do you think?

M: It's okay, but it's a little loose, and the sleeves aren't long enough.

J: Would you like to try a smaller size?

M: But then the sleeves will be even shorter! I think I need to try something else.

[...]

J: How's that one? It looks like a good fit to me!

M: Hmm... It's a little tight around the shoulders.

J: I think it goes well with your shoes. Did I mention that we have a 20% discount today?

M: I'm not sure about the style, either. It's a little too hipster for me.

J: Would you like to try something else?

M: No, I don't think so. Thanks for your help.

When you buy new clothes, of course you want them to fit well and look good.

But, sometimes they don't fit well. They might be too tight or too loose.

Maybe it's just too big or small in one place. Then, you could say something like:

It's tight around the shoulders.

It's too big around the waist.

Notice how you say *the shoulders* and not *my shoulders*.

What other problems could you have with how clothes fit? Do you remember what happened in the dialogue?

You could also say:

The sleeves aren't long enough.

The collar is too tight.

Useful words here are *too* and *enough*. You can use them to express similar ideas, like this:

The sleeves aren't long enough.

The sleeves are too short.

With these phrases, you can talk about fit, but what about style?

If something doesn't match your personal tastes, you could say something like:

It's too (<http://grammarist.com/usage/to-too/>) casual for me.

It's too old-fashioned for me.

It's too fancy for me.

When the shop assistant in the dialogue was trying to persuade me to buy something, he said:

It goes well with your shoes.

This is one way to say that something looks good on someone. You could also say something like:

It suits you.

It matches your eyes.

We have a question for you: what's your personal style? Do you prefer smart clothes, or casual? Plain, or colourful? Let us know in the comments!

Next, let's look at some more ways to compliment someone on their clothing.

3. How to Compliment Someone's Clothes

M: Is that a new shirt?

J: Yeah! Do you like it?

M: I do! It looks good on you.

J: Thanks!

M: It makes you look much slimmer.

J: What do you mean?

M: I mean... I just... I like the fit; that's what I meant to say.

J: Hmm.

M: Don't be so moody! You look very smart. You should wear smart clothes more often. It's a good look for you!

J: I'll try to find more clothes that make me look slimmer, then.

M: Oh, don't be ridiculous.

So, if you want to compliment someone on their clothes, what can you say?

You can use phrases you heard before, like *it suits you*, but in the dialogue you heard some more phrases, such as:

That looks good on you!

It's a good look for you.

You could also comment on a particular aspect of the clothing:

I like the fit!

I like the style!

I like the colours!

You can also make a more personal compliment, like this:

It makes you look slimmer.

You look very smart.

You can use these phrases in different ways. For example:

It makes you look younger.

You look very elegant.

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/elegant-woman.webp>)

Now, you can describe clothes in detail, talk about the fit and style of clothes, and compliment people on their clothes in English.

There's one more thing we have to show you.

4. Clothing Phrasal Verbs

J: Are you ready?

M: Don't tell me you're going like that!

J: What do you mean?

M: It's a formal event. You need to dress up. Go get changed!

[...]

J: This okay?

M: No! You need to put on a tie. And take off those awful shoes.

J: But these are the only shoes I have!

M: You are a nightmare! Well, we have just about enough time. We'll stop at the shop on the way and buy you some black shoes.

J: What if they don't fit? I need time to try them on before I buy them.

M: You should have thought about that earlier.

There are many phrasal verbs connected with clothing. Can you remember the ones you heard in the dialogue?

There are simple verbs, like *put on* and... Wait, what's the opposite?

Did you say *put off*? We hope not! The opposite of *put on* is *take off*.

If you need to put on some different clothes, then you need to *get changed*.

There are other verb phrases with *get*, like *get dressed* or *get undressed*.

If you're shopping for new clothes (<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/clothes-shopping>), you should certainly *try them on* before you buy them, to make sure they fit and look good.

And finally, if you're going to a formal event, you'll need to *dress up*. *Dress up* means you put on your smartest, nicest clothes, usually for a special occasion.

Keep practicing with this Oxford Online English lesson on phrasal verbs (<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/phrasal-verbs>).

Now, we have a question for you: what's the best place to buy clothes in your city? Tell us where to go in case we visit! You can share your ideas in the YouTube comments.

Thanks for watching!