



## ESL Podcast 467 – Buying Men’s Shirts

### GLOSSARY

**fitting room** – a small room with a door where one can try on clothing in a store before deciding whether to buy it

\* In this store, you can take only eight pieces of clothing into a fitting room at a time.

**dress shirt** – a nice men’s shirt, appropriate for work in an office, with buttons down the front that hold the two sides together

\* He usually wears very casual clothes, so it was nice to see him wearing a dress shirt for a change.

**to fit** – to be the right size for one’s body; to appear appropriate on one’s body

\* These pants don’t fit me. They’re too big in the thigh and too short.

**sleeve** – the part of a shirt that covers one’s arm from one’s shoulder down to the middle of one’s arm or one’s wrist

\* He has really long arms so most shirtsleeves are too short for him.

**form fitting** – tight; cut to fit closely against one’s body, showing the shape of one’s body.

\* She is very uncomfortable with her weight, so she never wears form fitting clothes.

**roomy** – big; with a lot of extra space

\* I like this jacket because it’s roomy and I can move around easily when I’m wearing it.

**on the (something) side** – a little bit too (something); with a tendency to be too (something)

\* The car was a little bit on the expensive side, but they decided to buy it anyway.

**collar** – the part of a shirt that lies against one’s neck, often closed with a button under one’s chin

\* He forgot to button his collar before he put on the tie.

**loose** – not held in place; able to move

\* This shelf is loose. Can you please get a screwdriver to fix it?

**tight** – held in place; not able to move

\* Those jeans are so tight that he can’t even sit down while wearing them!



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**cuff** – the piece of fabric at one’s wrist, usually with a button to close it over one’s wrist

\* It was too hot, so she unbuttoned her cuffs and rolled up her sleeves.

**to fall** – to hang; to rest without support from below

\* This necklace falls just above the top of her dress.

**V-neck** – with an opening in the shape of the letter “V” for one’s neck and head to go through

\* She forgot to put sunscreen on her chest when she wore a V-neck shirt, so she got sunburned.

**crew neck** – with a round opening that lies next to one’s neck for one’s neck and head to go through

\* He wears a crew neck T-shirt underneath his dress shirts every day.

**short-sleeve** – a shirt with fabric that covers one’s arm and reaches from one’s shoulder to the point halfway between one’s shoulder and elbow

\* Why are you wearing a short-sleeve shirt in the winter? You must be cold!

**long-sleeve** – a shirt with fabric that covers one’s arm and reaches from one’s shoulder to one’s wrist

\* If you’re cold, put on a long-sleeve shirt.

**oversized** – too big; bigger than necessary

\* Many fast food restaurants sell oversized portions of French fries.

**room** – space; an area with nothing in it

\* They were excited to move from their small apartment into a home with more room for their five children.



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### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Which of these would you expect to see on a dress shirt?
  - a) A crew neck.
  - b) Short sleeves.
  - c) Cuffs.
  
2. What was wrong with the last shirt that Eddie tried on?
  - a) It was too form fitting.
  - b) It was too big.
  - c) It was too small.

### WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

#### **fit**

The verb “to fit,” in this podcast, means to be the right size for one’s body: “After she had her baby, none of her clothes fit correctly.” As a noun, a “fit” can be a match between two things, or the way that two things work well together: “His job isn’t a good fit for him, so he has decided to leave the company.” A “fit” is also a short period of time when one cannot control what one says or does, often because one is very angry: “She had a fit when she came home to such a messy house.” A “fit of laughter” is uncontrollable laughing that happens when something is very funny: “The girls had a fit of laughter and had to leave the classroom.” Finally, the word “fit” can also mean to be in good physical health: “He’s very fit since he runs at least five miles every day.”

#### **to fall**

In this podcast, the verb “to fall” means to hang or to rest without support from below: “The long skirt falls to her ankles.” The phrase “to fall under (something)” means to be part of a group or category: “This project falls under the responsibility of the marketing department.” The phrase “to fall short of (something)” means to not meet expectations, or to be less than expected: “The number of participants fell short of what they had planned for.” The phrase “To fall by the wayside” means to stop being used or done: “Their plans to expand their business fell by the wayside when the economy started doing poorly.” Finally, the phrase “to fall flat” means to not be received well, especially when talking about a performance or speech: “The comedian’s show fell flat. The audience didn’t laugh even once!”



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**CULTURE NOTE**

There are many types of men’s shirts “besides” (in addition to) the ones described in today’s podcast. A “tank top,” for example, is a shirt that has no sleeves. Instead, there are thin “strips” (narrow pieces) of fabric that go over the man’s shoulder and hold the front and back of the shirt onto the man’s body.

When the tank top is white and has a very large opening for the neck and arms, it is sometimes called a “wife-beater shirt.” This is a very informal and “insulting” (rude) expression. It is based on the “stereotype” (the unfair way that people think about a group of people) of men who wear these shirts. In the U.S., these white tank tops have traditionally been worn by certain types of “laborers” (people who do work with their hands), and this insulting term is used to show negative views of how laborers may behave toward their wives.

A “muscle shirt” is like a form fitting T-shirt or tank top, but the strips that go over the shoulders are wider than those on a regular tank top. The shirt is designed to let the man “show off” (let other people see something that one is proud of) the muscles in his “torso” (upper body). Men who spend a lot of time lifting weights at the gym often wear muscle shirts.

A “Hawaiian shirt” is a loose shirt with buttons down the front and short sleeves. The fabric has bright colors and a large “print” (a repeated design on a piece of fabric) of tropical flowers, “palm trees” (tropical trees), or sailboats.

A “polo” shirt is a short-sleeve shirt that has a collar and just a few buttons at the neck. The buttons don’t go all the way down the front of the shirt, but they do need to be undone so that the shirt can be pulled over the man’s head.

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Comprehension Questions Correct Answers: 1 – c; 2 – b



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**COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT**

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 467: Buying Men’s Shirts.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 467. I’m your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in the beautiful City of Los Angeles, California.

Go to our website at [eslpod.com](http://eslpod.com) and download a Learning Guide for this episode to help you improve your English even faster. We also have some additional courses in daily and business English including our new Introduction to the United States course, which we think you’ll be interested in.

This episode is called “Buying Men’s Shirts.” It’s a dialogue between Francesca and Eddie using a lot of vocabulary that you would need to know to buy a shirt for a man. Let’s get shopping!

[start of dialogue]

Francesca: Hurry up! Come out of that fitting room so I can see how the dress shirt fits.

Eddie: The first one didn’t fit at all. The sleeves were too short and it was too form fitting. I like my shirts to be on the roomy side. I’m trying on the second one.

Francesca: Come on, let me see. Okay, I think this one fits you pretty well. The collar is the right size, not too loose or tight. The cuffs on this one fall at just the right place, don’t you think?

Eddie: Yeah, it’s fine.

Francesca: Try on the T-shirts.

Eddie: Okay, but I’m not trying on the fancy ones with a V-neck. I like my T-shirts the old-fashioned way – with a crew neck.

Francesca: All right, but try on the short-sleeve and the long-sleeve ones, too. Hurry up.



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Eddie: Hold on, I’m changing as fast as I can. Oh, geez. I’ve heard of oversized T-shirts, but this is ridiculous.

Francesca: Let me see. You’re right. You’ve got enough room in there for two people!

[end of dialogue]

Our dialogue begins with Francesca saying to Eddie, “Hurry up (meaning go faster)! Come out of that fitting room so I can see how the dress shirt fits.” A “fitting room” is a small room with a door where you can try on clothing. You can take off your clothing that you are wearing, in a store, and put on the new clothing – the clothing you are deciding whether you are going to buy or not. Usually, the fitting room has a mirror so you can look at yourself. Most stores that sell clothing have fitting rooms; sometimes they’re called “dressing rooms,” but “fitting room” is the more common expression.

Francesca says that she wants Eddie to come out so she can see the dress shirt and how it fits. A “dress shirt” is a nice men’s shirt, something that you would wear for work in an office, something a little more formal, usually with buttons down the front. The verb “to fit,” when we’re talking about clothing, means to be the right size for your body. So if someone says, “These pants don’t fit, they’re too small,” what they are saying is the pants are not right for me, I can’t wear them, they’re not the right size – because I’m so fat, you see! “Fit” has a couple of different meanings in English; take a look at our Learning Guide for some additional explanations.

Eddie says, “The first one didn’t fit at all.” It didn’t fit him; it wasn’t the right size for him. He says, “The sleeves were too short and it was too form fitting.” The “sleeve” is the part of the shirt that covers your arms, from your shoulder to, usually, your wrist, right above your hand. Sometimes, if it’s a “short-sleeve shirt,” the sleeve only goes down to right above your elbow. He says the shirt is too form fitting. Something that is “too form fitting” means it’s too tight; it fits against your body too closely, usually showing the shape of your body better. But if you don’t have a body that is in good shape, well, you really don’t want anyone to see it, so form fitting is a bad thing if you don’t have a good body, and a good thing if you do. Eddie says, “I like my shirts to be on the roomy side.” “Roomy” means lots of extra space, big. The expression “to be on the (something) side,” in this case “on the roomy side,” means to be a little bit (this particular adjective), so a little bit roomy – a little bit on the roomy side. You could say, “That car is a little bit on the expensive side,” meaning it’s too



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expensive. Eddie says to Francesca, “I’m trying on the second one.” “To try on” means to put, in this case, a piece of clothing on you to see if you like it or not.

Eddie is still inside the fitting room; he’s talking to Francesca over the door. Francesca says, “Come on, let me see.” She wants to have him open the door and come out so she can see him. Then she says, “Okay, I think this one fits you pretty well. The collar is the right size, not too loose or tight.” The “collar” is the part of the shirt that is that is up against your neck, often closed with a button. To be “loose” means that you are able to move it back and forth; there’s a lot of room. To be “tight” means not to be able to move something back and forth, to be too small. She’s saying that the collar is not too loose and not too tight. “The cuffs,” she says, “on this one (on this shirt) fall at just the right place.” The “cuff” (cuff) is at the very end of your sleeve on a formal or dress shirt. Usually there’s a button to close the sleeve, or on a very formal shirt you can wear what are called “cufflinks,” which are little pieces of metal that you put on and it serves the same function as a button. Francesca says the cuff falls at just the right place. To “fall,” here, means to hang, to rest without any support below. What she’s really saying here is that the cuff goes down to the right length; it’s the right length for his arm. “Fall” has several different meanings in English; take a look at our Learning Guide for some more explanations

Eddie says, “Yeah, it’s fine.” Then Francesca says, “Try on the T-shirts.” Eddie says, “Okay, but I’m not trying on the fancy ones with a V-neck. I like my T-shirts the old-fashioned way – with a crew neck.” “T-shirts” are informal shirts, or shirts, usually white, that you wear underneath a formal shirt. They can be either “V-neck,” meaning that the collar, the part by the neck, goes down in the shape of a “V” in front, or they can be “crew (crew) neck,” which means that they’re perfectly round. So we have V-neck T-shirts and crew neck T-shirts. Don’t confuse “crew neck” with another expression, “crew cut.” A “crew cut” is when you have your hair cut very short, like is often common for men when they go into the army. The government cuts their hair in a crew cut – very short hair. This is a “crew neck,” meaning a round collar on a shirt or on a T-shirt.

Francesca says, “All right, but try on the short-sleeve and long-sleeve ones, too.” As we said earlier, a “short-sleeve shirt” is a shirt where the sleeve only goes down beyond the shoulder, between the shoulder and the elbow. A “long-sleeve shirt” is a shirt where the sleeve goes all the way down to the wrist, down to the hand.

Eddie says, “Hold on, I’m changing as fast as I can.” Francesca wants him to go faster. Then he says, “Oh, geez (oh, goodness – oh, dear). I’ve heard of oversized T-shirts, but this is ridiculous.” Something that is “oversized” is



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something that is bigger than necessary, something that is too big. Eddie is using another common expression in daily conversation: “I’ve heard of (something), but this is ridiculous.” “I’ve heard of it snowing outside, but this is ridiculous. There is five feet of snow on the ground.” That form of an expression is used to express how you think this is excessive – this is unusual, this situation.

Francesca says, “Let me see. You’re right. You’ve got enough room in there for two people!” Francesca agrees with Eddie that the shirt is too big; it’s oversized. She says he has enough room – enough space in there for two people, that’s how big the shirt is.

Now let’s listen to the dialogue, this time at a normal speed.

[start of dialogue]

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Francesca: Come on, let me see. Okay, I think this one fits you pretty well. The collar is the right size, not too loose or tight. The cuffs on this one fall at just the right place, don’t you think?

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[end of dialogue]

We like our scripts on the interesting side, that’s why we have our scriptwriter, Dr. Lucy Tse, writing for us. Thank you Lucy.

From Los Angeles, California, I’m Jeff McQuillan. Thank you for listening. Come back and listen to us next time on ESL Podcast.

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