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## ESL Podcast 483 – Using Hair Products and Accessories

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### GLOSSARY

**prom** – a large, formal dance for students who are finishing high school

\* Natali's boyfriend took her to the prom and they danced the entire evening.

**to style** – to give one's hair a particular appearance or shape

\* Wachira doesn't have time to style her hair in the morning, so she just ties it back after washing it.

**shampoo** – a liquid soap used to wash one's hair

\* They bought a special baby shampoo so that it wouldn't hurt their daughter if a little bit got in her eyes.

**conditioner** – a liquid put on one's clean hair after it has been washed to make it softer, healthier, or easier to comb, and that is usually washed out

\* If Chelsea doesn't use conditioner, it's really difficult to brush her curly hair.

**gel** – a thick liquid that is put on one's wet hair to make it stay in a particular position or style

\* Some guys like to make their hair stand up by using gel.

**mousse** – a liquid that has a lot of small air bubbles in it and is put on one's wet hair to make it look thicker or to make it stay in a particular position or style

\* Renee always puts mousse in her hair before drying it.

**hairspray** – a liquid that is sprayed on dry hair so that it doesn't move and stays in a particular position or style

\* Francesca used so much hairspray that her hair didn't move at all in the wind.

**hairdryer** – a small machine that is held in one's hand and blows hot air, used to dry one's hair after it has been washed

\* My mother told us to use a hairdryer to dry our hair. Otherwise, our heads will be cold if we go outside with wet hair.

**roller** – a small, round piece of plastic, sometimes heated, that a small section of one's hair is wrapped around for a period of time to make the hair curly

\* Let's put rollers in your straight hair to make it curly for the dance!

**curling iron** – a small machine that is held in one's hand and has a long, round piece of metal that gets very hot so that small sections of one's hair can be wrapped around it and heated until they curl

\* Be careful not to burn your neck with the curling iron!



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**flat iron** – a small machine that is held in one's hand and has two flat pieces of metal that get very hot so that small sections of one's hair can be pressed between them and heated until they become straight

\* Her curly hair looks a lot longer after she uses a flat iron.

**brush** – a piece of wood or plastic that is held in one's hand and has many small, pieces like hairs that are used to clean something or to separate individual pieces of one's hair

\* Some brushes work better on straight hair than on curly hair.

**comb** – a flat piece of wood or plastic that is held in one's hand and has many small pieces all in one row that are used to separate individual pieces of one's hair

\* He quickly ran a comb through his hair before the interview.

**bobby pin** – a small, thin piece of metal that is folded in half so that it is open on one end, where hair is placed inside to keep it in a particular position or style

\* She must have had hundreds of bobby pins in her hair on her wedding day.

**elastic band** – a small, round piece of cloth-covered plastic that stretches (becomes larger) and is wrapped around one's hair to hold it in a particular position or style

\* All the girls on the basketball team use elastic bands to hold their hair out of their eyes.

**barrette** – a small piece of plastic, wood, or metal that opens and closes at one end so that hair can be held inside, used to hold one's hair in a particular position or style, but with something pretty on the top side for everyone to see

\* The baby pulled on his mother's barrette and she said, "Ow, that hurts!"

**transformation** – a big or important change; a major change

\* In the past few years, this company has undergone a transformation from a small, family-owned business to an international corporation.

**(one is) as ready as (one will) ever be** – a phrase used to show that one is ready to do something and is a little bit nervous or worried about it, but no amount of preparation will make those feelings go away

\* Keith is nervous about asking his girlfriend to marry him, but he's as ready as he'll ever be.



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### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Which of these things would be used in the shower?
    - a) Conditioner.
    - b) Mousse.
    - c) Hairspray.
  2. Which of these things uses electricity?
    - a) A flat iron.
    - b) Bobby pins.
    - c) Barrette.
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### WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

#### **roller**

The word “roller,” in this podcast, means a small, round piece of plastic, sometimes heated, that a small section of one’s hair is wrapped around for a period of time to make the hair curly: “How long will I need to keep these rollers in my hair before it gets curly?” A “paint roller” is a tool with a long, round piece that moves in circles so that one can put a lot of paint on a wall easily: “It’s easy to paint a big room with a roller.” A “high roller” is a gambler, or a person who has a lot of money and likes playing games where a lot of money can be won or lost: “Many hotels in Las Vegas give free hotel rooms to high rollers.”

#### **brush**

In this podcast, the word “brush” means a piece of wood or plastic that is held in one’s hand and has many small pieces like hairs that are used to clean something or to separate individual pieces of one’s hair: “Don’t forget to pack your hairbrush and toothbrush.” “Brush” can also refer to many plants and small trees: “There was a lot of brush there, so it was difficult to walk on the trail.” “The brush-off” is behavior where one is not nice and shows that one is not interested in speaking with or being with another person: “He called to ask her out on a date, but she gave him the brush-off.” Finally, the phrase “to brush (something) off” means to move one’s hand against something gently to clean small pieces of something else off of it: “After eating, he brushed small pieces of food off his shirt.”



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### CULTURE NOTE

Some hairstyles are “classic” (traditional and well-liked) and “timeless” (never out of style), but others are “fads” (things that are very popular for a short period of time).

Women with a “bob cut,” also called a “bob,” have hair cut straight across below their ears and above the shoulder. It hangs down, often “parted” (with a line through one’s hairs) on one side. Recently the “a-line bob” has become very popular, where the hair in a bob is longer in the front and shorter in the back.

A “pixie cut” is a woman’s hairstyle with very short hair and a lot of gel. Usually the “bangs” (shorter pieces of hair that hang over one’s forehead) are “spiked,” or made to look like sharp points.

Some men like to have spiked hair, too. The “mohawk” is a men’s haircut where the hair on the side of one’s head is very short or “shaven off” (bald; without hair) and the hair on the top of the head is long. Men put gel in the long hairs on top to spike them so they stand up in the air.

Another men’s haircut, the “rattail” is not common now, but it was very popular in the 1980s. A man with a rattail has short or normal hair, but there is one small section at the bottom of his head, above the neck, that is very long. It looks a little bit like a rat’s tail.

A “crew cut” is the hairstyle given to men in the army, with no hair on the sides and very short hair on the top. A “buzz cut” is a men’s hairstyle where all the hair has been cut extremely short and one can see the “scalp” (the skin on one’s head).

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Comprehension Questions Correct Answers: 1 – a; 2 – a



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**COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT**

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 483: Using Hair Products and Accessories.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 483. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Our website is eslpod.com. Go there and download a Learning Guide for this episode. The Learning Guide is an 8- to 10-page guide that will help you improve your English even faster.

This episode is called "Using Hair Products and Accessories." It's about a woman – a girl, who goes to get her hair done by someone who is a professional "hair stylist," someone who cleans and fixes your hair. Not surprisingly, we'll be introduced to a lot of vocabulary that is related to getting your hair done, especially for a woman. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Danny: You're going to the prom. How exciting! How should we style you hair?

Clarissa: I'm really not sure. I was hoping you would have some ideas.

Danny: I do, but first we need to see if we have the right tools. Let's look in your bathroom. Here's some shampoo and conditioner, but where are the gel, mousse, and hairspray?

Clarissa: Here, they're on this shelf. Here's a hairdryer and some rollers, too. Do you think we'll need the curling iron or the flat iron?

Danny: I'm not sure, but put them here, just in case. Okay, now I need a brush and comb, and some bobby pins. We'll need some elastic bands, too, to pull your hair back.

Clarissa: Here, they're all in this drawer.

Danny: Oh, this is a pretty barrette, but we won't need it for tonight. Okay, ready for the transformation?

Clarissa: I'm as ready as I'll ever be.



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Danny: Okay, let the fun begin!

[end of dialogue]

When I was growing up the 1960s and 70s, men who wanted to get their hair cut professionally by someone went to what we called the “barber.” Women who wanted to have their hair cut or “styled,” have their hair in a certain way, would go to a place called the “hair dresser.” The barber was usually a man, almost always; the hairdresser was either a woman or a man. Now, we have what are called “hair salons,” and these are essentially places where mostly women but some men also go to get their hair cut and styled. There are still barbers that only men go to, usually. I don’t go to either one, of course, it’s no longer necessary!

Danny begins our dialogue by saying to his young friend Clarissa, “You’re going to the prom. How exciting!” The “prom” (prom) is a large formal dance in American high schools, usually for those who are in their last two years of high school: juniors and seniors. Almost every high school has a prom; it’s a very big, important dance that a man asks a girl – a boy, really, asks a girl to go to this formal dance. Not everyone goes to prom. If you are shy and ugly like me, well, you sit at home and you watch television – sad, I know!

Danny says, “You’re going to the prom. How exciting! How should we style your hair?” “To style,” as a verb, means to keep your hair a particular appearance or a shape. To color it, to make it shorter, to make it longer, that would be to style one’s hair. Clarissa says, “I’m not really sure. I was hoping you would have some ideas.” So, she’s asking Danny for his ideas. Danny says, “I do, but first we need to see if we have the right tools.” He says, “Let’s look in your bathroom.” Notice Clarissa did not go to a hair salon; she asked her friend Danny to come over and help her with her hair. Danny says, “Here’s some shampoo and conditioner, but where are the gel, mousse, and hairspray?”

We have several vocabulary words related to taking care of your hair; the first one is “shampoo.” “Shampoo” is a liquid soap that you use to clean your hair – to wash your hair. “Conditioner” is a different liquid that you put on your hair after it’s clean to make it softer, healthier, easier to style, easier to comb. A “gel” is a thick liquid that you put in your hair to make it stay in a certain position. If you want the front of your hair to go straight up, then you would use gel; this thick liquid would allow the hair to stick straight up, kind of like a punk rocker in the 1980s. “Mousse” (spelled mousse) is also a liquid, but it is one that is very light; it actually has small air bubbles in it. You put in your hair to make your hair look



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thicker; you can also use it sort of like a gel, to make it stay in a certain position. “Hairspray” is a liquid that you spray on dry hair. Normally, mousse, gel, and conditioner are used when the hair is wet. Hairspray is used when the hair is dry to make sure that the hair doesn’t move.

Clarissa answers Danny, “Here, they’re on this shelf. Here’s a hairdryer and some rollers, too.” A “hairdryer” is a small machine that blows hot air on the hair to dry it, after you wash it and put whatever other liquids you’re going to put on there. “Rollers” are small, round pieces of plastic – a small plastic tube that you wrap your hair around. It’s what women use to make curls in their hair, where the hair curls around in a little ball. That is a “roller.” Sometimes the roller is actually heated; sometimes it’s just plastic. These are also called “curlers” – rollers, that is, are also called “curlers.” “To curl,” as a verb, means to form a circle with something that is otherwise flat. You can curl up a piece of paper; you can take a piece of paper and make it into what looks like a long tube.

Clarissa also asks Danny, “Do you think we’ll need the curling iron or the flat iron?” A “curling iron” is a small machine that is heated. It has a long piece of metal, like a stick of metal, that gets very hot, and it allows you to curl the hair, to make them into small circles by putting it into your hair. The hair goes around the curling iron. An “iron” is generally a piece of metal that is hot that is used normally to make something flat, such as if you have a shirt and you want the shirt to be completely straight, without any wrinkles, you would use a clothes iron. Well, this is a curling iron. There’s also the little machine you can use called a “flat iron.” A “flat iron” is a machine that you hold in your hand that has two flat pieces of metal that get very hot. So you put the hair in between the two pieces metal to make the hair straight. So a curling iron takes the hair and makes it into a round circle; a flat iron takes the hair and makes it flat or straight.

Danny says, “I’m not sure, but put them here, just in case,” just in case they need them. “Okay,” he says, “now I need a brush and comb, and some bobby pins.” A “brush” is a piece of wood or plastic that you hold in your hand that has many small pieces – they’re kind of like hairs, they’re usually like pieces of plastic but they could also be metal – that you use to make your hair straight or to make your hair go in a certain way. A “comb” is similar, but it’s flat and it just has one row of these individual, we call them, “teeth” that a man can use to straighten his hair – or a woman. Combs and brushes are used to make the hair go in a certain direction. Both the word “brush” and the word “roller” have different meanings in English in addition to the ones we talked about here. Take a look at our Learning Guide for this episode for some additional explanations.





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“Bobby pins” are small, thin pieces of metal that are folded in half; they have an opening at one end where you can put the hair to keep it in a particular place. For example, if you’re a woman or girl and you have some short hair in the front of your head and you want that hair to not be in your way, you want to put it back on your head, you can use a bobby pin to keep it there. Bobby pins are not usually easy to see; they’re small and are the same color as your hair. They allow you to put your hair up into different positions. When I was a kid, we used to use them like paper clips to keep pieces of paper together. For some reason, my mother never liked that!

Danny goes onto say, “We’ll need some elastic bands, too, to pull your hair back.” An “elastic band” is a small, round piece of plastic that stretches – it becomes larger. You can put it around your hair to keep it in a certain position. For example, if you wanted your hair to stick straight back in what we would call a “ponytail,” then you could use one of these elastic bands.

Clarissa says, “Here, they’re all in this drawer,” all of the things that Danny is looking for. Danny says, “Oh, this is a pretty barrette, but we don’t need it for tonight.” A “barrette” is a small piece of plastic, wood, or metal that opens and closes at one end. It’s similar to a bobby pin, it allows you to put your hair in a certain position, but it is bigger and it is easier to see on the head. Danny says, “Okay, ready for the transformation (are you ready for this big, important change)?” Clarissa says, “I’m as ready as I’ll ever be.” This is a phrase used to show that you are ready to do something but you’re little worried; you’re a little nervous about it but there isn’t any more preparation that you can do, you just want to go ahead and do it: “I’m as ready as I’ll ever be.” Danny says, “Okay, let the fun begin!”

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

[start of dialogue]

Danny: You’re going to the prom. How exciting! How should we style your hair?

Clarissa: I’m really not sure. I was hoping you would have some ideas.

Danny: I do, but first we need to see if we have the right tools. Let’s look in your bathroom. Here’s some shampoo and conditioner, but where are the gel, mousse, and hairspray?

Clarissa: Here, they’re on this shelf. Here’s a hairdryer and some rollers, too. Do you think we’ll need the curling iron or the flat iron?





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Clarissa: Here, they're all in this drawer.

Danny: Oh, this is a pretty barrette, but we won't need it for tonight. Okay, ready for the transformation?

Clarissa: I'm as ready as I'll ever be.

Danny: Okay, let the fun begin!

[end of dialogue]

The script for this episode was written by someone who knows a lot more curling irons, bobby pins, and barrettes than I do, Dr. Lucy Tse.

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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