



11B | Dress codes

SPEAKING

1 Work in groups. Discuss the statements.

- People judge you by the clothes you wear.
- Clothes are more important for women than men.
- It's important to look smart at work and when you go out.
- Young people dress differently from older people.

VOCABULARY: clothes

1 Match pictures A–S to the words in the box.

boots cardigan dress jacket jeans jersey
 scarf shirt shorts skirt socks suit
 sweatshirt tie top trainers trousers T-shirt
 underwear



Most large companies and organizations in the UK have an official dress code. This is a document that details the clothes you can and can't wear to work. Dress codes vary according to the company and the sector.

Formal business wear

Companies operating in the financial and legal sectors often operate a formal dress code. This means men must wear dark suits with a shirt and tie. Women must wear equally formal clothes. They usually wear a skirt suit or trousers and jacket in dark colours.

Casual business

This is the dress code favoured by most companies in the UK. It is more relaxed, but still fairly formal. You can't wear jeans or sports clothes. Men must wear shirts with collars, but they don't have to wear ties. Women can wear sandals in the summer, but men have to wear shoes. Shorts are strictly off-limit for everyone, as are sports shoes or beach sandals.

Informal

Some companies have no written dress code. These are often in the creative sector. Employees can decide how they want to dress. Some people choose jeans and a T-shirt. Others choose to dress more formally. This can be confusing. It's difficult to know what is expected when you're new to your job. The best thing is to dress conservatively to begin with and then find your own style as you get to know the company and the rest of the staff.

In all areas of work where you come into contact with the public, it is always best to dress in a way that shows respect and a serious attitude, no matter what your company dress code is.

**2** In exercise 1, which word(s) ...

is always singular/uncountable? _____
are always plural? _____

3 Work in pairs. Which of the clothes in exercise 1 do you wear to work? Describe what you wore to work today. Are there days when you dress more formally or informally for work? Why?**READING****1** Read an online article about dress codes in offices in the UK. Why was it written, 1, 2 or 3?

- 1 to inform
- 2 to amuse
- 3 to complain

2 Read the article again and answer the questions.

- 1 Do men and women have the same dress code?
- 2 Which sectors have the most formal dress code?
- 3 Why is it confusing when there is no dress code?

3 Work in pairs. Discuss the question.

- Are dress codes the same in your country?

GRAMMAR: modals of obligation (present time)

We use *must* or *have to* to talk about the rules and things that are necessary.

Men **must** wear shirts with collars.

Men **have to** wear shoes

We use *don't have to* to say that something is not necessary (but it is possible or allowed).

They **don't have to** wear ties.

When we ask about rules, we usually use *have to*, not *must*.

Do you **have to** wear a suit and tie to work?

We use *can* to say that something is possible or allowed.

Women **can** wear sandals in the summer.

We use *can't* to say that something is not possible or not allowed.

You **can't** wear jeans or sports clothes.

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1 Complete the texts with the correct verb form.

- 1 I work in a very relaxed atmosphere. All our contact with clients is online or on the phone, so I (1) *can / can't* wear what I want. I (2) *have to / don't have to* worry about dress codes.
- 2 I like wearing formal clothes to work. In our office we (3) *have to / can't* dress quite formally. Men (4) *don't have to / must* wear ties, but they (5) *have to / can't* wear shirts. I like changing out of my work clothes when I get home. I (6) *can / can't* be myself. It helps me relax.
- 3 I changed job recently. In my old job we didn't really have a dress code. Now I (7) *have to / can* wear dark suits and white shirts and serious ties. I really don't like it! And I (8) *have to / don't have to* spend more money on my clothes now too.

2 Which person do you identify with most in exercise 1? Why?**3** Work in pairs. Discuss the rules in the place where you work. Talk about the topics in the box.

clothes times of work days off responsibilities
other rules parking onsite

3 Think about what you discussed with your partner in exercise 2 and try to complete all the sentences below. If necessary, speak to your partner from exercise 2 again.

- 1 *I can leave work at 5 o'clock on Fridays and she can, too.*
- 1 I can _____ and she/he can, too.
- 2 I can't _____, but she/he can.
- 3 She/He can _____, but I can't.
- 4 I have to _____ and she/he has to, too.
- 5 I have to _____, but she/he doesn't.
- 6 She/He doesn't have to _____, but I do.