

Dressing for success

Level: Pre-intermediate upwards

Timing: 90 minutes plus

Material needed: One copy of the student worksheets and Vocabulary record per student

Group size: Any

Overview

This lesson plan for both pre-experience and in-work business students is based around an adapted article from *Business Spotlight* Issue 6/2012. The article is about the importance of appropriate dress for certain business occasions. The tasks allow the students the opportunity to discuss what is appropriate and inappropriate when dressing for different occasions.

The tasks in the worksheets encourage the students to learn and use new business vocabulary and functional language, and also to practise useful business skills such as discussing, planning and presenting a strategy.

The teacher's notes provide suggestions for teaching and learning strategies as well as ideas on how to present the tasks in the classroom, any necessary answer keys and extension tasks (for in class or as homework).

Warmer

These questions are aimed at introducing the topic of styles of dress as well as the appropriate level of dress for certain occasions and events. It also gives the students a chance to talk about the potential social embarrassment or unintentional insults that may occur as a consequence of wearing what is deemed as 'inappropriate dress'. Some examples have been given below but accept any suggestions at this stage and don't reveal the answers.

Key (suggested answers):

Formal dress: tuxedo, evening gown. Informal dress: jeans, T-shirt. Business: suit, shirt, tie. Smart casual: ironed jeans, tailored jacket. Traditional: wedding dress, morning suit. Sunday best: a slightly old-fashioned term used to describe your best clothes that you wear for special occasions.

Key words

This task is divided into two parts. The first part requires the students to write the key words next to the definitions; the second part requires them to use these words to fill the gaps in the article. The definitions are not in the order that the words appear in the article.

Key:

A: 1. dress trousers; 2. mid-heel; 3. outfit; 4. ironed; 5. challenging; 6. appearance; 7. elegantly; 8. liberation; 9. delegation; 10. likewise; 11. upmarket; 12. customs

B: 1. liberation; 2. outfit; 3. upmarket; 4. challenging; 5. elegantly; 6. likewise; 7. delegation; 8. appearance; 9. customs; 10. dress trousers; 11. ironed; 12. mid-heel

Understanding the article

By discussing these questions in pairs the students will be able to show that they understand the content of the article. If they have any questions about the language or contents of the article, these will probably come to light during the discussion part of this task.

Key:

- 1. Munich, Germany and Hanoi, Vietnam*
- 2. around the time of Labour Day on 1st May*
- 3. the Vietnamese minister of tourism*
- 4. because of the high temperature and heat*
- 5. He wanted to know why 'rich' westerners always wear T-shirts and shorts. The implication is that only poor people would wear these kinds of clothes in Vietnam.*
- 6. a (local) woman who works for the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism*
- 7. the author was not sure what she meant by 'smart casual' as the term has different meanings to different people*
- 8. The author asked other people in his international delegation what 'smart casual' meant. One man and his wife who travel a lot were able to explain it and the delegates discovered that they all had something appropriate in their suitcases. They all looked both smart and casual at the lunch.*

Teaching and learning strategy: Listen and react (almost) immediately

Even simple tasks such as gap fills or comprehension questions can be set as pair work. The immediate benefit for you as the teacher, and consequently the students, is that if you listen

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carefully to their discussions you will be able to make a note of any language errors or confusion which can be dealt with (almost) immediately by opening these issues up to the whole group. You will also be able to find out whether any part of the article has not been fully understood. These gaps in knowledge or understanding can be dealt with before you move onto the next tasks, making the remainder of the lesson more enjoyable and rewarding for everyone.

Discussion

Students will probably have different answers to these questions as a lot will depend on age, type of company and their personal style. This should hopefully lead to further discussion, the outcome of which could be integrated into the tips for people visiting their country.

Research and presentation

Working either in pairs or alone, the students should choose one of the cities listed (or another that they often travel to on business or may need to travel to in the future) and find out the appropriate style of dress in the three situations mentioned. They should share their findings and sources of information with the other students.

Writing

Students should read the *Did you know?* information about Vietnam and write three pieces of information about their country or area. This task can be set as homework as it may require a little research and thought. The students could share their tips in the following lesson.

Extension

If the students haven't previously done so, get them to create a country file for the country where you work. The various sections can be divided up amongst the students and put together into one document.

Vocabulary record

Here, students should be encouraged to record all the new and useful vocabulary they have learned during the lesson, not only in the form presented in the article but also in related forms.

Related topics on onestopenglish

For follow-up lessons on the same or related topics go to the following lesson plans in the Business section on onestopenglish:

Business Spotlight: Great expectations

<http://www.onestopenglish.com/business/business-spotlight/great-expectations/550766.article>

You may also find topical and relevant *Guardian* news lessons here on onestopenglish:

<http://www.onestopenglish.com/skills/news-lessons/>

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1 Warmer

a. What clothes do you associate with the terms below?

formal dress
smart casual

informal dress
traditional

business
Sunday best

b. Have you ever found yourself dressed 'incorrectly' in a formal or business situation? If so, describe what you were wearing.

c. Have you ever been to a formal or business occasion where someone else was dressed 'incorrectly'? If so, describe what he / she was wearing.

2 Key words

a. Match the key words with their definitions.

b. Use the key words to complete the gaps in the article.

appearance

dress trousers

likewise

challenging

elegantly

mid-heel

customs

ironed

outfit

delegation

liberation

upmarket

1. a style of pants (American English) intended as formal or semi-formal wear. They may be worn with a matching suit jacket _____
2. the part underneath the back of a shoe, neither very high, nor very low _____
3. a set of clothes that are worn together _____
4. made smooth by a heated hand-held instrument _____
5. difficult to deal with or achieve _____
6. the way that someone or something looks _____
7. attractively, beautifully _____
8. the act of freeing a place or people _____
9. a group of people who represent a country, government or organization

10. in the same way, or in a similar way _____
11. very expensive, fashionable and intended for people from a high social class

12. traditional things that people do _____

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by Eamonn Fitzgerald

Everybody wears their Sunday best on the most important national holiday of the year. But how do you dress correctly when it is 40 degrees in the shade? EAMONN FITZGERALD has the answer.



1 The biggest day of the year in Vietnam is 1st May. "International Labour Day", as the Vietnamese call it, is a public holiday and everyone celebrates revolution, _____ [1], Ho Chi Minh and Karl Marx by wearing their best clothes. But on 1 May this year, the noon temperature in Hanoi was 40 °C and the terrible heat made the task of picking the right _____ [2] very difficult. As I was part of a delegation that had been invited to lunch in an _____ [3] restaurant by the minister of tourism, the decision about what to wear was even more _____ [4].

2 When it comes to doing business, Vietnam is a formal, conservative culture, and dressing "correctly" is essential for creating the right impression with one's partners. "You Westerners are so rich," an official said to me, "but why do you always wear T-shirts and shorts?"

3 Not everyone in the West is rich, of course, and T-shirts and shorts are ideal for relaxing in warm weather. But there was no point in discussing this with someone from a society in which men and women dress very _____ [5] and expect everyone else to do _____ [6]. It's at moments like this that one needs local style advice, and I was lucky to have the help of Mai-Phuong Nguyen, who works for the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. "Smart casual," she suggested in excellent English.

4 But what is "smart casual"? No one in our delegation, which, apart from one woman, consisted of men from Argentina, Switzerland, the Philippines, Ireland, South Korea, Germany, South Africa, Indonesia and the UK, could agree on the exact meaning of the term. Francois Stroebel from Cape Town, a member of the

_____ [7] who has spent years in the marketing industry, understands image and _____ [8], culture and _____ [9], so I was certain that he would know.

5 "For men," he said, "_____ [10] or _____ [11] jeans, a belt, a long-sleeve shirt, leather shoes and dark socks will put you in the 'smart-casual' category." His wife, Andre-Louise, added that trousers or a skirt, a belt, a blouse, a jacket and _____ [12] or flat shoes should be part of a smart-casual outfit for women.

6 Funnily enough, everyone in the delegation discovered they had the necessary pieces in their suitcases. In the end, despite the heat, we all looked smart and casual at lunch with the minister on May Day in Hanoi.

EAMONN FITZGERALD, is a technology journalist and a social-media consultant based in Munich, Germany. He recently returned from a business trip to Vietnam.

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Country file: Vietnam



GENERAL

Official name: Socialist Republic of Vietnam
Nationality: Vietnamese
Capital city: Hanoi 2.317 million (2009 est.)
Main cities: Ho Chi Minh City 5.880 million, Da Nang 770,911, Hai Phong 769,739, Can Tho 731,545 (2009 est.)
Official language: Vietnamese
Country telephone code: +84
Internet domain: .vn
Time zone: Indochina Time (ICT) = Central European Time + six hours (winter) / five hours (summer)
Currency: dong (€1 = about VND 26,000)

POLITICS

Type of government: communist state
Head of state: President Truong Tan Sang (since July 2011)
Head of government: Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung (since June 2006)

ECONOMY (IN US\$)

GDP (at purchasing power parity, PPP): \$303.8 billion (2011 est.)
GDP (PPP) per head: \$3,400 (2011 est.)
GDP real annual growth: 5.9% (2011 est.)
Unemployment: 2.3% (2011 est.)
Population below the poverty line: 14.5% (2010 est.)

PEOPLE

Population: 91,519,289 (July 2012 est.)
Population growth rate per year: 1.054% (2012 est.)
Age structure: 0–14 years: 25.2%; 15–64 years: 69.3%; 65 years and over: 5.5% (2011 est.)
Life expectancy: 72.41 years (2012 est.)
Infant mortality rate: 20.24 deaths / 1,000 live births (2012 est.)
Religions: Buddhist 9.3%, Roman Catholic 6.7%, none 80.8% (1999 census)

DID YOU KNOW?

- You can drink the world's most expensive coffee in Vietnam, where it is called ca phe chon. Local civet cats eat only the best coffee beans, which are then fermented by their digestive enzymes. These beans, collected from the cats' faeces, make a smooth, strong, dark drink that tastes like chocolate and costs up to \$30 a cup.
- The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is planning a single market for Asia. Its Economic Community (AEC) will start life on 1st January 2015, and, with 10 countries and over 600 million people, it will be a major international economic force. ASEAN's secretary-general as of 2013, Le Luong Minh, is Vietnamese.
- Dao Hop Thinh, 25, an entrepreneur and single, has set up the firm Love School, which offers courses on how to find the perfect partner, in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and Da Nang. "I think that establishing a relationship is similar to shopping because people only ever want to buy what they are attracted to," the pragmatic Thinh told Viet Nam News.

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3 Understanding the article

Use information from the article to answer these questions. Discuss your answers in pairs.

1. Where does the author live and which city did he visit?
2. When did the author go there?
3. Who issued the invitation?
4. Why was it difficult for the author to choose the correct clothes to wear?
5. What did one local official want to know about the way westerners dress? Why?
6. Who first gave the author tips about dressing correctly?
7. What was the problem connected with the tip?
8. What happened in the end?

4 Discussion

Discuss the questions below.

- What do office employees typically wear to work in your country?
- How would you describe the style of dress in your company or department?
- What tips would you give to first-time business visitors to your country or company so that they 'create the right impression' with what they wear?

5 Research and presentation

Choose one of the places from the box below. Ideally, you should choose a city that you travel to on business or that you may travel to in the future.

Dubai	Paris	Moscow	Tokyo	Beijing	Buenos Aires
Jakarta	Helsinki	Madrid	Sydney	New Delhi	Chicago

Do some research about your chosen city and give recommendations as to what business people (both men and women) should wear in the following situations:

- a. a company meeting
- b. an evening restaurant invitation
- c. an informal weekend invitation

6 Writing

Read the *Did you know?* information about Vietnam and write three pieces of information about your country or area.

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Vocabulary record: Dressing for success

verb	noun	adjective (+ opposite)	adverb (+ opposite)
delegate			
	impression		
		relaxing	
			elegantly

Vocabulary record

