

HOW TO TALK ABOUT FASHION  
in ADVANCED ENGLISH



M A D E F O R  
T U S T Y L E

ENGLISHDIGITALACADEMY.COM

In this ebook you will find the transcript from Kerin and Elisa's podcast lesson, but that's not all!

We've made some notes for you to help you understand what we are talking about! This will also help you improve your English vocabulary.

You'll find some useful wordlists at the end and a little area just for you to take some notes. Enjoy!

*Love from,  
Kerin & Elisa*  
=♡=



Highlighted in pink are words that might be new for you



Highlighted in green are expressions, idioms and phrasal verbs that will help you sound more fluent and natural when you speak English



Highlighted in salmon pink are words that you are probably familiar with; that you know in a passive way. However you may not use them when you speak



# HOW TO TALK ABOUT FASHION IN ADVANCED ENGLISH



by KERIN GOODALL  
& ELISA SAVIGNANO



[English Digital Academy](#)

K-Hi Elisa!

E- Hi Kerin! How are you?

K- Very well thank you! I'm delighted to be doing this lesson with you! How are you?

E - Yeah, I'm great! I'm really looking forward to this too, because I love talking about fashion!

K- So, Elisa this is why I wanted to do this lesson with you, firstly because you're my favourite teacher and colleague, but also because I know you love fashion and clothes ... So my first question to you is, are you fashionable? What's your style?

E - Yeah I love fashion! Or should I say I love buying clothes, accessories and so on! Yeah, I mean, I've always been really into clothes and taken pride, let's say, in how I dress and how I look, even when I was a young girl - like, from a really young age I already knew what I liked, and I always used to argue with my mum over outfits!

K - Did you?!

E - Yeah, 'cause, she would pull out all these really girly clothes, and outfits ...

K - Oh, I can't imagine you in girly clothes!

E - Exactly! And I would be like, 'No mum! I want to wear jeans and a t-shirt!' So, that started at a really really young age.

fashionable - adj

to be in fashion

What's your style?

A way to ask someone how they like to dress

To be into something - idiom

If you're into something, it means you really like it

Note the collocations!

take pride IN

argue WITH someone OVER something

oufit - noun

a set of clothes worn together, especially for a particular occasion

girly - adj (DEROGATORY)

characteristic of or appropriate to a girl



Emm, I wouldn't say I'm 100% trend-driven as I really take into consideration also what suits me, my body shape and my personality, but I do love putting together outfits and going shopping! I find it hard to define my style, let's say, as I think I could fall into various categories - I'd say, I'm classic but definitely not tailored, ... elegant but yet some days I love casual, comfortable clothes and I have girly days too! And then days where I wear baggy jeans, a t-shirt and trainers. So,....it's hard to say.

K - Yeah, yeah! No, I would say that you definitely express yourself through what you're wearing, maybe depending on your mood, as well or even what you're doing that day, if you're going to work, obviously you dress in a different way, but no matter the look, you always look smart.

E- Yeah, you're probably right! What about you?

K- Mmm, it's a difficult qu ... I mean I love clothes, I love looking at pictures of clothes, especially pictures of celebrities, it's kind of a guilty pleasure! Ehm, but fashion ... I think I see fashion very much as a creative outlet ... thinking of designers like; Alexander McQueen, Vivienne Westwood ... you know, they're really creative ..., artists, I would say.

E - And you've definitely got that artistic, creative side, so ...

K - Yeah, maybe that's what attracts me to that. Or like, I think of fashion as being iconic, I think of Chanel or Mary Quant, ... you know? So, I definitely love looking at fashion! ...I mean, did you watch Sex and the City?

E - Oh gosh yes!

K - Exactly! So for me, a big part of that was waiting to see what Carrie's outfit was gonna be on that episode.

E - That was like the most important part of watching Sex and the City! I remember actually, my friends and I we used to like decide who was who, like Carrie, Charlotte, Samantha ... based on our styles ...

K - Who were you?

E - Well ... I was not really any of them, because I think, obviously, Carrie's style is super out-there,

K - Quirky

E - Exactly! Samantha very provocative, and that's not me, but Charlotte was maybe too tailored ...

K - and a bit prim and proper!

E - Exactly! And I'm definitely not Miranda, so... yeah

K - You look a bit like Charlotte!

E - That's what my friends used to say! But I did have friends who really fit in the role of Miranda, Samantha, Carrie even, ... so, yeah, it was fun!

trend-driven - adj

influenced by trends

to suit (someone) - verb

make you look attractive

body shape - noun

the general shape of your body/figure

to put together - phrasal verb

to assemble / create

smart - adjective

neat, chic, trim,  
fashionable

a guilty pleasure - expression

activity or piece of media that someone enjoys but might be embarrassed by if other people found out

a creative outlet - noun

a means of expression

gonna be - spoken English / slang

going to be

Note the collocations!

- express yourself THROUGH
- attracts me TO
- fit IN the role OF

out-there - adj

extreme or unusual

quirky - adj

unusual, eccentric, original, odd

prim and proper - adj

precise and formal person (doesn't wear casual clothes)



K - When I was younger, I was definitely Carrie, but not now!

E - You've got the blonde curly hair as well!

K - Yeah, exactly! Yeah, but I mean, going back to your ... what we were talking about, I think for myself ... I'm more of a comfy, I'd rather be comfortable than fashionable.

Don't get me wrong, I care about what I look like, and I won't wear something just because it's functional, but I do have to be comfy! And I think the older I get the more this is true. I literally can't remember the last time I wore heels....

E - Gosh, absolutely, I mean, I think I was more willing to make sacrifices when I was younger, so whether it be wearing uncomfortable heels, or

K- ...or going out without a jacket on!

E - Oh God! I couldn't do that now! Especially since I've been living in Italy as well!

K - I know! The colpo d'aria!

E - Esatto! That's a sin!

K- No, I totally agree, when I was younger I'd make sacr... I'd push my feet into really uncomfortable shoes and I'd be ok with that, whereas now, no!

E - Totally! Same for me.

K - No I think now, you know, I'm in my forties, so I think fashion means something different now, to me. And it probably means good quality clothes - I want to dress in a way that my clothes fit me properly, that are flattering to my body type, to wear the colours that suit me - I love patterns, vibrant prints, but I rarely wear them, I prefer subtle, plainer clothes. Yeah, so I want to feel comfortable and when I feel comfortable, I feel confident. So probably, style is more important to me than fashion

E - Definitely, me too - I mean my wardrobe is black, ... a few different shades of grey, a bit of white... and maybe I'll throw some vibrant colours in the summer in there and that's about it

K- Yeah, no, I'm the same! I remember sending you a picture one day, to say I was really proud of myself because I had bought three tops and none of them were black!

E-Oh God! I remember that, and there was like a red one!

K - Yeah! In my wardrobe, you can spot that top immediately!

E - It stands out.

K - Yeah, but I have to say I'm really excited that we're in autumn now, 'cause I love this time of year.

Don't get me wrong!

- expression

Used when you think someone might not understand what you say, or be upset by it

I was more willing to ...

I was more ready / eager / prepared to

Note the collocations!

- MAKE a sacrifice
- proud OF

to go out with (or without) something on - expression

to wear (or not wear)

flattering - adj

enhances someone's appearance

pattern - noun

a repeated design (floral, geometric etc)

print - noun

a pattern applied to the fabric (not woven in)

subtle - adj

(pronounced: suh-tl)  
delicate, precise, quiet

plain - adj

not decorated or embellished.  
Simple, basic

my wardrobe - expression

to mean my clothes (the clothes in my wardrobe)

to spot - verb

to see

to stand out - phrasal verb

to be very noticeable



E - Oh my God! Me too! I'm so over wearing sandals and summery dresses!!!! I can now wear a light jacket or a cardigan (what we call a cardigan), it's so nice.

K - Yes! Oh, listen, that's a great expression you just used: I'm so over it! I'm so over sandals and summery dresses

E- Yeah, to mean I'm fed up of it, I'm not interested in it anymore. So you could use it to talk about trends for example. 'I'm so over skinny jeans!' ....although I will never, ever, be over skinny jeans!

K- mmmmm .... I have to admit I'm partial to a pair of skinny jeans - or even better jeggings!

E- Oh! In fact I love the jeggings you're wearing today!

K- Oh, do you like them?!

E - Yeah, they're really nice.

K - Thank you! I would actually live in these if I could! Yeah, I just, I love autumn, or fall as our American cousins would call it, because personally I prefer the clothes in autumn. I just feel everything is comfier. And what about you? What season do you like best, Elisa? Which wardrobe do you like best?

E - Mmmm... good question. Well....yeah.... I would definitely say autumn/winter ... I love wearing layers.... So my ideal outfit would be a pair of skinny jeans, boots...

K- Oh, what kind of boots?

E - Well, with skinny jeans, I'd definitely say an ankle boot. A blouse, a thick-knit cardigan ...

K- Ok, and what about accessories?

E- Well...depending on the length of the blouse, if I were wearing a long blouse or shirt, then I'd probably wear a waist belt

K - Mmm, okay, so a waist belt just means pulled in around your waist, right?

E- Yeah, so basically it's a belt that you wear around your waist rather than lower down on the hips - they look great with shift dresses, or oversized shirts and so on

K - Okay, yeah, you look great when you wear that look.

E - Oh, thank you!

K - Yeah, you do! Actually I totally remember the first I met you ...

E - No way!

K - Yeah, as in I still remember what you had on ...

E - Really?

K - Yeah, and you just looked so professional.

E- What did I have on? I don't remember that!

to be over something - idiom

\*as explained by Elisa  
"I'm fed up of it, I'm not interested in it anymore."

to be partial to - expression

to like something a lot

layers - noun

a way of dressing using many garments that are worn on top of each other

ankle boot

a boot that reaches the ankle

thick-knit - adj and noun

1. knitted from thick yarn
2. an item of clothing knitted from thick yarn

oversized - adj

baggy, bigger than usual

to have on - phrasal verb

to wear

K- So you were wearing like a ... actually it was quite a tailored black **blazer**... but what I clearly remember is that you had these amazing **glasses** - and they had like a bar across the front, I thought you were really chic and it made you look really fashionable.

E- Oh, they were my Gucci glasses! I loved them -yeah they had like this leopard print bar!

K - They were fa.... You don't wear them anymore?

E - No, 'cause I have a new pair now, and so....

K - I like these too!

E - Yeah, these are Gucci's too! I have to say, when it comes to glasses,

K - You're a Gucci girl!

E - Gucci! Yeah! So... what about you Kerin? What's your favourite season?

K - I mean, well, I mean, I suppose winter isn't the most fashionable season - if you think of heavy jumpers, or Americans would say **sweaters**, heavy jumpers sometimes aren't that flattering.

E - Mhm, but then again some knitwear, depending on the style, can look **pretty cool** and if you play around with colour and style, jumpers can be **trendy**.

K - That's true! I mean I love wearing a **black polo neck**! I always imagine I'm French!

E - With a **beret** and a **baguette**!

K - Yeah, you know! Especially when my hair is really blonde, I love that look! ... And I do love a chunky knit jumper, I have to admit.

E- Oh, **chunky knit**, there's a nice description! So, chunky means like thick or heavy - and we use it to describe jumpers, but not only, like jewellery for example, chunky earrings or a chunky necklace!

K- Yeah, so that's a really good adjective to use to describe clothes and jewellery. So, I don't think it has to look too bulky. And I think if you pair a chunky knit jumper with skinny jeans or tights even, if it's long enough...

E- oh or with **leather leggings**! Me and you do love a pair of leather leggings!

K- We do, don't we?! I think sometimes we look like twins!

E- Yeah, in the winter sometimes we really do, I think in the summer not so much, but definitely in the colder season, we are identical sometimes!

K - It's true! Our students must think we are clones!

E - Apart from the hair colour!



sweater - noun (American English)

jumper / pullover

pretty (cool) - adverb

quite, rather

to play around with - phrasal verb

experiment with / try out

polo neck - noun

jumper with a high neck

beret - noun

round, flattish cap

chunky - adj

\*as explained by Elisa

bulky - adj

too big, awkward

to pair with - verb

to combine

a pair of - noun

a set. E.g. a pair of trousers, glasses, leggings etc

K - Yeah! But I mean, look, I think I've answered your question. I definitely prefer autumn/winter season, for me, it means dress... you know, I can dress for my body shape... it's easier because I have ~~sleeves~~, trousers, belts, jackets - whatever you need to flatter your body without worrying about overheating!

E - Absolutely!

K - Listen, before going on, I want to just recap on a few things we've said. So what we want to do today is help our listeners talk about fashion in a rich way. Expanding your vocabulary past the basic terms. We've prepared a download with the vocabulary from this conversation, but I'd like to point a few things out here.

Elisa mentioned, you said, a 'light jacket'. Obviously jacket is a jacket! We know what a jacket is, but we would call this an "umbrella term". Which is a word that covers a broad category of things, so when I say a light jacket, I'm imagining perhaps a denim jacket, or a bomber jacket or a blazer even. Not a coat or a heavy winter jacket, or a ski jacket or anything.

E - Exactly, so if I'd just simply said 'jacket' it would have been lacking in description. And I said 'cardi'!!! I have a feeling that's very British English, by the way ... I can't imagine an American saying 'cardi'

K - Mmm, no you're right! We'll have to ask one of our American friends! But I don't think they would say that. So what is a cardigan?

E - Okay, so a cardigan is a collarless jumper that opens down the front. Jumper or knitwear would be an umbrella term too, right? So, a jumper is a pullover, or sweater, to use the American English.... Do you ever say sweater Kerin?

K - Mmm ...no. No, I don't. I obviously know what it means, but I don't use it myself. Do you?

E - Well, I mean, when I say the word jumper, I think of like, a thick knit whereas I see a sweater like a lighter pullover, but I'm not sure that's how the Americans use the term ...

K - I'm pretty sure Americans don't say 'jumper' I think they say sweater.

E - Yeah, I think I agree with that.

K - Yeah I agree, when I think of 'jumper' I think of something quite warm

E - Yeah, definitely. And so, polo neck - you said polo neck! Which is the word you would use for a jumper with a high neck that folds over itself, right, around the ...

K - around the neck ...

E - uhm .... but don't the Americans call that a ~~turtleneck?~~

K - Yeah! Yeah they do, they call it a turtleneck ... which makes sense!

E - Yeah! I suppose so. K - Okay, so some differences in American English and British English, I mean there are many, but just to touch on a few there. And there are two adjectives that we used in this conversation that I want to highlight. The first adjective is fashionable. The meaning is clear: something that is fashionable is 'in fashion', or 'on trend'.

E - Yep, and we can say simply something is 'in' without fashion: so sportswear is really 'in' right now

K - Exactly! However, I often hear my students saying, like using fashion as an adjective when it's not.

E - Yes, they do do that.

K - So, for example, I don't like that bar. It's not very fashion. X

E - Yeah, or sometimes they say: Oh, it's so fashion! X

K - Right, exactly, so, this is incorrect because fashion is a noun and it would be correct to say: It's so fashionable! Or It's not very fashionable. Or even, you could say, it's unfashionable ... so that's just a word to watch out for. ✓ ✓

E - Right. Good. And the other one? The other adjective?

K - Flattering. Flattering is a word that I don't hear very often, I think it's advanced English, and it basically means very attractive, so if you say something's flattering, it looks good (on someone), or it suits a person. So you could say for example, "That dress is really flattering on you". So instead of overusing beautiful, because in English we don't use that word as often as we do in Italian.

E- No, we don't. We use it much more in the Italian language.

K- So, you know, of course you can say; "That dress is beautiful" so it's not incorrect, but perhaps to sound a bit more fluent, you might say something like, "That dress is really flattering", or "you look stunning" ....

E - Mm-hm.. Or gorgeous! Or: "What a doll!"

K - Yeah, yeah. Exactly! So a few nights ago, we were at dinner with some friends and one of our friends was telling us that she'd bought a new pair of trousers. Do you remember this? And she asked us: I don't know if I have to say ~~trousers~~ or ~~pants~~....?

E- Ah, yeah! And so we explained that in American English they are called pants, in British English, pants means ~~underwear~~. So we call them trousers. You also have to be careful with that when you're speaking to a British person!

K- So once we'd ~~cleared that up~~, I asked "What kind of trousers did you buy?"

E - And she was like, "ummm ... I don't know. I don't know how to describe them."

K- This is what we spoke about before. Trousers is the umbrella term. But it's not really really descriptive. Now, when in doubt, use the umbrella term - but when you want to get more specific, it's helpful to have a larger vocabulary.

E- Yes, because what she had actually bought was a pair of ~~navy wide leg joggers~~! Much more descriptive than just saying trousers.

K - Yeah, in fact, when she said trousers, I imagined black trousers for work, I don't know why!

E - Yeah, tailored trousers. Me too.

K - Yes, so as you move into advanced English, you can start really ~~drilling down~~ and using more precise vocab.

Elisa, I'm going to ~~put you on the spot~~! How many different types of bags can you think of?!

E- Mm, okay, .. well let me think! So.... a ~~clutch bag~~, eh, a ~~tote bag~~, a ~~shopper~~, a ~~rucksack~~,

K - Oh a rucksack! I would have said ~~backpack~~...

E - Or a backpack! Absolutely ...can you think of any more Kerin?!

K - eem ... well a ~~handbag~~!

E- Oh gosh yeah, a handbag! Obviously! Oh yeah, what the Americans would call a ~~purse~~

K - Oh that's something that always confuses me - Elisa explain the difference!

to clear something up -  
phrasal verb

to remove doubts, confusion,  
or wrong ideas

wide leg - adj

Trousers that have very wide  
legs throughout their whole  
length

joggers - noun

loose trousers made of a  
stretchy fabric

to drill down - phrasal verb

to look at or examine  
something in depth

to put someone on the spot -  
expression (informal)

force someone into a  
situation in which they must  
make a difficult decision or  
answer a difficult question

E- Right, yeah, so in British English, a handbag is a bag of course, and a purse is where we keep our money and credit cards. Whereas, for the Americans, a purse is a handbag....

K - Exactly ... so what do they call a purse?!

E - Well I imagine they call it a wallet?! But for me a wallet is a man's purse.

K - Yeah, for me too.

E - Right?

K - Okay. Well, that's another questions we can ask our American friends!

E- Definitely.

K - So you get the idea! More specific words enriches your vocabulary. Also, learning these terms is super helpful if you shop online in English.

E- Oh yes!

K - Which we do a lot of!

E - Absolutely!

K - And you know, a really cool way to pick up this kind of vocabulary is to choose a website, an English online shop, like Topshop or Selfridges ... something like that, and click on the clothing tab in the menu, you'll get a drop down menu. The items that you find here are the umbrella terms; swimwear, dresses, skirts etc. Click on a category and you'll see all the images with all of the descriptions, it's a really nice way to broaden your vocab!

E- Yeah! Just try not to buy everything you see, 'cause there is that risk!

K- That's definitely, definitely a risk!Ok, well Elisa, thank you so much for having a good natter with me about fashion!

E- Oh you're welcome it's been so much fun. And I feel like we need a shopping day out now.

K- Oh we absolutely do! Let's get organising that.

E - We will do!

purse (Br English)



wallet



handbag (Br English)  
purse (Amr English)

# Bags & Shoes



## UMBRELLA TERM: BAG

- Handbag** • our 'everyday bag'; a small bag for money, keys, make-up,
- Purse** • watch out with this one! In American English, a purse is a handbag. Whereas in British English a purse is for keeping money in (a wallet)
- Backpack** • a bag carried on the back, usually of cloth with many pockets and straps that go over your shoulders, used to carry things (think camping or bag for school)
- Satchel** • a rectangular (usually leather) bag with a long strap
- Evening bag** • a small handbag made of rich fabric or beaded, ornamented, etc., used for formal or dressy occasions, usually in the evening
- Clutch** • type of evening bag; small flat bag without handle or straps
- Bumbag** • a small bag attached to a long strap that you fasten around your waist, used for carrying money, keys
- Wristlet** • a small handbag with a short carrying strap resembling a bracelet
- Tote bag** • a large and often unfastened bag with parallel handles that emerge from the sides of its pouch

## UMBRELLA TERM: SHOES

- Flats** • footwear which is not high-heeled (can include sandals, ballet pumps, slingbacks, loafers and so on)
- Loafers** • slip on shoe without a fastening
- Sandals** • a light shoe for summer, held on to the foot by straps
- Thongs** • type of open shoe where the strap goes between the big toe and the toe next to it (flip-flops)
- Mules** • shoe with no back
- Heels** • shoes that are high-heeled
- Going out shoes** • shoes for formal or dressy occasions, usually in the evening
- Trainers** • (British English) a type of light, comfortable shoe that can be worn for sport or casual fashion
- Sneakers** • (American English) trainers
- \*Boots** • type of shoe that covers the whole foot and part of the leg (\*Boots could be considered an umbrella term too; ankle boots, chelsea boots, knee-high boots ... )



# My Fashion Vocab

Add words & expressions from the podcast that you like and want to learn.

**ADJECTIVES**

**CLOTHES**

**COLLOCATIONS**

**EXPRESSIONS I LIKE**



© 2020 Kerin Goodall, English Digital Academy, Florence

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or modified in any form, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.



[www.englishdigitalacademy.com](http://www.englishdigitalacademy.com)

