



ESL Podcast 1061 – Shopping for Men’s Shoes

GLOSSARY

tennis shoes – athletic shoes; comfortable shoes that are worn for running and playing sports, with shoelaces

* If the hike is just a few miles, you can probably just wear tennis shoes.

dress shoes – nice-looking shoes that are worn for professional work and for special events

* Do you have any green dress shoes that would match this dress?

worn out – showing signs of age and wear; looking old because something has been used a lot

* The cushions on the couch are starting to look worn out. Let’s replace them.

loafers – leather shoes with a simple shape, a flat heel, and a rounded toe, sometimes with decorations on top, but without shoelaces

* These loafers are really comfortable. I like that I can put them on without worrying about tying them.

to break (something) in – to use a new thing, especially shoes, for a short period of time every day so that it becomes more comfortable and is no longer brand new

* I wish I’d broken in those shoes before the first day of work, because by the end of the day, my feet were in a lot of pain.

to have a say – to express one’s opinion and be part of the decision-making

* Should grandparents have a say in how their grandchildren are raised?

oxfords – leather shoes with a simple shape, a flat heel, and a mostly-rounded toe with a slight point, with shoelaces over the middle part of the foot, but not all the way down to the toes

* The professor always wears a wool sweater, plaid pants, and oxfords.

patent leather – very shiny leather, often used for shoes and purses

* Wow, these patent leather boots would look great with your new skirt!

lace – shoelaces; a fabric or leather strip or cord that is woven through small holes on the opposite sides of a shoe, with the ends tied together, to hold the shoe to the foot

* Sheila’s shoe came untied and she tripped over the laces.



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not to mention – a phrase used to emphasize something, especially when listing many reasons for something

* I can’t go to the party tonight, because I have to make dinner for the kids, clean the house, and study, not to mention prepare for that big presentation tomorrow.

hideous – very ugly; extremely unpleasant to look at

* That paint color is hideous! Why did they choose it for their living room?

to get a rise out of (someone) – to make someone react with anger or annoyance, especially because one thinks that reaction is funny or entertaining

* Blake only makes those jokes to get a rise out of you. He knows they annoy you.

sandals – shoes that are worn in warm weather and have just a few straps connecting the bottom of the shoe to the foot, designed to show a lot of skin and to be comfortable in hot temperatures

* Sandals are great for the beach, but they really aren’t appropriate for a fancy restaurant.

boots – very tall shoes that cover part or all of the leg, often with a long zipper on the side

* Marea loves fall, because in the cooler temperatures, she can wear boots with skirts.

to fasten – to connect or close something, especially with a button or snap

* How can we fasten the suitcase to the roof of the car?

Velcro – a plastic object that has one half with small loops and one half with small hooks so that the two halves stick together but can also be separated and reused, often sewn onto clothing or other types of fabric

* Jimmy hasn’t learned how to tie his shoes, so he only wears shoes with Velcro.

taste – the style of things that one likes, especially when referring to whether they are appreciated by other people

* Mima has terrible taste in boyfriends. The last few have been criminals and cheaters.

cousin – the son or daughter of one’s uncle or aunt

* I hope my sister has a baby soon, so that our kids will have a cousin.



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Which of these shoes are best for walking a long distance?
 - a) Tennis shoes
 - b) Loafers
 - c) Oxfords

2. What does Beth mean when she says, “I was just trying to get a rise out of you”?
 - a) She wants to make Curran laugh.
 - b) She wants to annoy or anger Curran.
 - c) She wants to make Curran spend a lot of money.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

lace

The word “laces,” in this podcast, means shoelaces, or a fabric or leather strip or cord that is woven through small holes on the opposite sides of a shoe, with the ends tied together, to hold the shoe to the foot: “Those shoes would look a lot better with brown laces instead of white ones.” “Lace” refers to fancy cloth that has patterns (designs) made from many small holes, often made by hand, and often used in women’s clothing: “Hanging some lace curtains would make the living room feel more feminine.” Finally, the phrase “to be laced with (something)” means to have some faint quality: “When Hannah died, our tears of sadness were laced with relief that her suffering was finally over.”

boot

In this podcast, the word “boots” means very tall shoes that cover part or all of the leg, often with a long zipper on the side: “These high-heeled boots are glamorous and sexy, but almost impossible to walk in.” When talking about a car, a “boot” is a heavy metal object that police officers put on the wheel of a car so that it cannot be moved: “We parked in the no-parking zone for only ten minutes, but when we got back to the car, we found that there was a boot on the front wheel.” Finally, the phrase “to get/give the boot” means to be fired or to fire someone from a job: “If the merger is approved, a lot of employees are going to get the boot.”



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CULTURE NOTE

Buster Browns and Mary Janes

In the early 1920s, Buster Brown was a popular “comic strip” (a series of humorous drawings that appear in the newspaper every day) about a boy named Buster Brown, his girlfriend Mary Jane, and a dog.

The Brown Shoe Company “bought the rights” (paid to have permission to use copyrighted materials) to the Buster Brown name. Many of their shoes had a “label” (a small piece of fabric or a stamp with information about what something is, what size it is, and where it was made) showing Buster Brown and his dog. The company also organized special events where a boy dressed as Buster Brown would go to the stores and “appear” (be seen in) advertising materials. The stores also gave away Buster Brown comics to customers.

The company also began selling Mary Jane shoes, and soon the name was being used to refer to the style of shoes rather than just the company’s “brand” (a name used by a company to sell its products). Mary Janes are simple shoes with a rounded toe and a single strap across the top of the foot, often fastened with a “buckle” (like the piece that connects the two ends of a belt) or a button. Mary Janes are usually made of black leather, and today, they are popular with little girls who wear formal or dressy clothing. In countries with school uniforms, it is common for girls to wear Mary Janes every day. The shoes used to be worn by boys, too, but now that is uncommon.

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



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 1,061 – Shopping for Men’s Shoes.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 1,061. I’m your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

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On this episode, we’re going to listen to a dialogue between Curran and Beth about buying shoes for a man. Let’s get started.

[start of dialogue]

Curran: I like these tennis shoes. I need a new pair.

Beth: We’re here to buy you some dress shoes for attending Chelsey’s wedding. You can’t go wearing those worn-out loafers, and you need time to break them in.

Curran: All right. Just pick whatever you think is suitable and let’s go.

Beth: Don’t you want to have a say in what you wear? I think these oxfords are nice. What do you think?

Curran: Great. I’m a size 10 and a half. I’ll try them on and we’ll go.

Beth: You can’t just buy the first pair of shoes you see. How about these?

Curran: Those patent leather shoes? They have purple laces. Well, if you think they’re okay . . .

Beth: No, they’re not. These shoes are totally wrong for the occasion, not to mention hideous. I was just trying to get a rise out of you so you’ll pick the shoes you like.

Curran: But I don’t care what I wear. Just pick a pair.



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Beth: No, you pick.

Curran: Fine. How about these?

Beth: No, they’re not dressy enough. They look more like sandals than dress shoes.

Curran: Then how about these?

Beth: Those boots? Definitely not.

Curran: Okay, these then.

Beth: Those shoes fasten with Velcro. Are you kidding me?

Curran: Okay, why don’t you just tell me what my taste should be and I’ll buy what you want me to buy?

Beth: And leave you with no say in your own purchase? What kind of cousin would I be if I did that?

[end of dialogue]

Curran begins our dialogue by saying to Beth, “I like these tennis shoes. I need a new pair.” Beth and Curran are out shopping for, or looking to buy, some shoes for Curran. Curran says he likes these “tennis shoes.” “Tennis shoes” are sometimes called “athletic shoes,” or in some parts of the U.S., “gym shoes.” Basically they are comfortable shoes that are worn for playing many different kinds of sports, as well as for running.

Beth, however, says, “We’re here to buy you some dress shoes for attending Chelsey’s wedding. You can’t go wearing those worn-out loafers, and you need time to break them in.” “Dress (dress) shoes” are nice-looking shoes. Shoes that, I guess you could say, a woman would wear with a dress. However, we use the term “dress shoes” for both men and women to describe a very nice pair of shoes – shoes you could wear to a formal event.

Beth and Curran are there at the shoe store to buy Curran some dress shoes for attending, or going to, a wedding – Chelsey’s wedding. Beth says, “You can’t go wearing those worn-out loafers.” When we say something is “worn (worn) out,” we mean it’s old and it looks old. Often we use this expression for things that you



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can no longer use, or no longer work properly, or are no longer appropriate for certain things.

Beth is saying that Curran’s loafers are worn out. “Loafers” (loafers) are leather shoes that have a flat bottom to them – what we would call a “flat heel,” which is the back bottom of a shoe – that are considered somewhat informal. Usually loafers don’t have little strings that you use to tighten the shoe in front. We call those little strings “shoelaces.” Loafers don’t have shoelaces, so they’re very easy to put on and take off.

Beth says that Curran is going to need time “to break them in.” “Them” here refers to the new shoes. But what does it mean to break in new shoes? “To break in” here means to wear something, especially shoes, for a while so that they’re comfortable. As you probably know, when you buy a new pair of shoes, sometimes it takes a while for your feet to get comfortable in the shoe itself so that the shoe feels good and is easy to wear.

“To break in shoes,” then, is to wear these shoes usually for a little bit of time every day until you can wear the shoes without any discomfort. “To break in” as a phrasal verb has a very different meaning in English as well, which is to steal – to go in, usually to a house or to a building, and to steal things, to rob things from that place. But here it’s not used to refer to anyone stealing anything, but rather to wear shoes until they are comfortable.

Curran says, “All right. Just pick whatever you think is suitable and let’s go.” Curran is telling Beth that she should pick something that she likes and that’s what Curran will buy. Beth says, “Don’t you want to have a say in what you wear?” “To have a say in” something is to have an opinion – to express, more importantly, your opinion and be part of the decision. Beth is surprised that Curran wants her to pick his shoes.

She then says, “I think these oxfords are nice.” “Oxfords” (oxfords) are leather shoes with a very simple shape that have shoelaces on top of them, but not all the way down to the toes. You may be confused because the word “Oxford” is usually used to describe a famous university in England, but here it’s used to describe a kind of shoe. If you look up “oxfords” with an “s” at the end in a dictionary, you’ll see the definition of this kind of shoe.

Beth says, “What do you think?” “Do you like the shoes?” she’s asking Curran. Curran says, “Great. I’m a size 10 and a half. I’ll try them on and we’ll go.” Curran just wants to try on the shoes and leave. Beth says, “You can’t just buy the first pair of shoes you see. How about these?” Beth wants Curran to look at more



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shoes, different kinds of shoes, before he makes a decision. She shows him another pair of shoes.

Curran says, “Those patent leather shoes?” “Patent (patent) leather” is a very shiny leather that’s often used for shoes and for purses that women, for example, would typically wear – small bags that a woman would have to put all of the things that women have that they want to take with them. Patent leather is a popular material for shoes. Curran, however, is not quite sure about this pair of shoes that Beth is suggesting.

He says, “They have purple laces.” “Laces” (laces) refers to shoelaces – the string or cord that we use on the top front part of the shoe to tighten it, to make sure that your foot stays in the shoe. Curran says, “Well, if you think they’re okay . . .” Beth then replies, “No, they’re not.” She’s testing Curran, I guess, trying to get Curran to see that he has to take this decision seriously, so she suggests a pair of shoes that are clearly not appropriate for a wedding.

She says, “These shoes are totally wrong” – meaning completely wrong – “for the occasion,” for the event, “not to mention hideous.” “Hideous” (hideous) means horrible – in this case, horrible looking, terrible looking. Something that’s really ugly would be hideous. Beth says these shoes are hideous. She uses the expression “not to mention” (mention). “Not to mention” is a common phrase in conversational English that is used to place emphasis on something, especially when we are listing reasons for something.

For example, someone may ask you to go out to dinner at a restaurant, but you can’t go, and so you start telling the person why you can’t go. “Well,” you say to the person, “I need to do my homework, and my brother is coming to visit, not to mention I also have to wash my clothes tonight.” You’re giving the person different reasons, and then you’re emphasizing one of those reasons. That’s how we would use “not to mention.”

Beth says, “I was just trying to get a rise out of you so you’ll pick the shoes you like.” “To get a rise (rise) out of” someone is to make someone react – especially in anger, or perhaps in annoyance – usually because you think that reaction is going to be funny or entertaining. When you try to get a rise out of someone, you’re trying to get the person angry, but for a funny reason or a funny purpose – at least, you think it’s funny. Curran says, “But I don’t care what I wear. Just pick a pair.”

Curran is telling Beth to pick a pair of shoes for him. Beth says, “No, you pick.” Curran says, “Fine. How about these?” Beth says, “No, they’re not dressy



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enough.” “Dressy” here means formal. “They look more like sandals than dress shoes.” “Sandals” (sandals) are shoes typically worn in warm weather that are not a complete shoe. Sandals are usually open in the back, or at least part of the foot is exposed, so you can see a lot of the skin on your feet.

You can wear socks over your feet with sandals, but they’re most commonly worn without socks. They’re usually found at the beach, for example. They’re not appropriate for a formal event like a wedding. Curran says, “Then how about these?” Beth says, “Those boots? Definitely not.” Boots” (boots) are very tall or high shoes that come up high on your leg. Boots, once again, are not considered formal shoes, and therefore not appropriate for a wedding. Curran says, “Okay, these then.”

Beth says, “Those shoes fasten with Velcro. Are you kidding me?” “To fasten” (fasten) means to connect something together, usually with a button or some other small device on the cloth itself like a “snap” (snap). “Velcro” (Velcro) is a plastic material that you are able to put together so that it stays; you don’t have to tie it. The two parts of the Velcro hook together and are able to keep something together – to hold something together or to connect something together. There are some shoes that instead of shoelaces have Velcro on them. But once again, those shoes are not appropriate for a wedding.

Curran says, “Okay, why don’t you just tell me what my taste should be and I’ll buy what you want me to buy.” Curran is telling Beth that she needs to tell him what his taste should be. “Taste” (taste) here refers to the kinds of things that you like. You can talk about your “taste in food” or your “taste in clothing.” It doesn’t refer necessarily to something you eat. That’s also the use of the verb “to taste” – to put something in your mouth and to get a sense of the flavor of the food.

But it means much more generally the kinds of things that you like. It could refer to any kind of object or activity that you like. Curran is telling Beth, “Just tell me what you like” – what you think I should buy – “and I’ll buy it.” Beth, however, says, “And leave you with no say in your own purchase? What kind of cousin would I be if I did that?” Beth, even though she doesn’t like anything that Curran has selected, does not want to tell Curran what to buy.

That’s why she says, “And leave you with no say in your own purchase?” – in the thing that you are about to buy. “What kind of cousin,” she asks, “would I be if I did that?” Your “cousin” (cousin) refers to the son or daughter of either your aunt or your uncle. Your “aunt” is your mother or father’s sister. Your “uncle” is your mother or father’s brother. So, it’s the child of one of your aunts or uncles.



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

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[end of dialogue]

Our scriptwriter, Dr. Lucy Tse, is a wonderful writer, not to mention a wonderful person. Thank you, Lucy.

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

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