Has the suit and tie had its day? Maybe, says M&S

Level 1 • Pre-intermediate / Intermediate

1 Warmer

Find and underline the following clothes in the article.

Decide whether they are formal or casual (informal) and write them onto the word wheels.

Look up the meaning of any words you do not know.

How many of these clothes do you own?

- blazer
- bomber jacket
- cardigan
- jeans
- sports clothes
- suit
- tailored trousers
- tie
- smart shirt
- tracksuit

formal

casual

2 Key words

Match the key words with the definitions. Then find them in the article to read them in context. The paragraph numbers will help you.

- occasions
- tailored
- outfits
- dress code
- fall

1. reduction ______________________ (para 1)
2. made in a way that fits the shape of a person’s body ______________________ (para 2)
3. times at which something special happens ______________________ (para 2)
4. a set of rules about what you should wear ______________________ (para 3)
5. sets of clothes that are worn together ______________________ (para 6)
6. put things together ______________________ (para 8)
7. a feeling of admiration that you have for someone because of what they do or who they are ______________________ (para 9)
8. used for saying that something happens even though something else might have stopped it from happening ______________________ (para 10)
9. the raised areas at fashion shows that the models walk along ______________________ (para 11)
10. people who you want to be like ______________________ (para 11)
Has the suit and tie had its day? Maybe, says M&S

Sarah Butler
5 October, 2019

1 Because of a 7% fall in suit sales, Marks & Spencer, the UK’s biggest seller of men’s clothes, is reducing the space in its stores for suits and formal clothes.

2 Sales of ties are down by nearly 6% and blazers and formal jackets fell by 10%. The typical British man no longer has to wear a jacket, tie and tailored trousers to the office. And he often doesn’t wear a suit for formal occasions.

3 City banks such as Goldman Sachs and JP Morgan have relaxed their dress code to be more like Facebook and Apple, where employees wear more casual clothes.

4 Suit sales in Britain have reduced every year by more than £100m since 2015. Now British men only spend an average of just £102 for each suit they buy.

5 Even James Bond doesn’t always wear a suit these days. Bond actor Daniel Craig wore a cardigan and a bomber jacket in the last two Bond films.

6 Chloe Collins, an analyst at GlobalData, says younger men are more interested in fashion. Young fashion shops are also helping men find more interesting formal outfits.

7 Men are now spending less money on workwear and clothes for a big night out but more on sports clothes and smart daywear.

8 Many people have less money to spend on suits. Men might buy a blazer, some smart shirts and a pair of tailored trousers and then combine them with jeans or a cardigan, which they can wear both at home and in the office.

9 Eric Musgrave, author of a book about suits, says the suit is still important. He says you can see this when world leaders meet. “The suit is still a signal you are powerful and someone who gets respect. It is the uniform of people who run the world.”

10 Despite the fall in sales of suits, the UK suit market is still worth nearly £400m a year. Brian Brick, chief executive of Moss Bros, a UK shop selling men’s clothes, says younger people still buy an expensive suit for a special occasion. It’s the everyday suit that has become less popular.

11 Teo van den Broeke, style and grooming director of menswear magazine British GQ, thinks suits are not dead and might soon make a comeback. He mentions the menswear catwalks at Balenciaga and Gucci and male fashion role models such as young actor Timothée Chalamet and older men such as David Beckham.

12 He says that a suit “is much better on a date or a job interview than a tracksuit. No man over 18 looks good in that at any time.”

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3 Comprehension check

Choose the correct words to complete the sentences.

1. Marks & Spencer is making less / more space in its shops for suits and formal clothes.
2. Most British men have to / do not have to wear a suit and tie to work these days.
3. Many banks have introduced stricter / more relaxed dress codes for their employees.
4. The average amount of money that a British man spends on suits each year is £100 / £102.
5. Daniel Craig always wore / didn’t always wear formal clothes in the last two James Bond films.
6. Young fashion shops are offering men more / fewer fashion options than they used to.
7. Young men are spending more / less money on sportswear than they used to.
8. Male politicians wear / do not wear a suit to show that they are powerful.
9. Young men are still / no longer buying expensive suits for special occasions.
10. Men’s fashion experts say that the suit will never / probably become popular and fashionable again.

4 My opinions

a. Decide whether you agree or disagree and add the number you choose to each statement to show your opinion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 = disagree</th>
<th>2 = mostly disagree</th>
<th>3 = no opinion</th>
<th>4 = mostly agree</th>
<th>5 = agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A man should wear a suit on a first date.</td>
<td>Male politicians should wear a suit to an international conference.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men should wear a suit to a job interview.</td>
<td>A young man should wear a suit to his graduation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect my male bank manager to wear a suit.</td>
<td>A man should wear a suit to the funeral of a family member.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect my male doctor to wear a suit.</td>
<td>A man should wear a suit to a colleague’s funeral.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The groom should wear a suit to his wedding.</td>
<td>A teacher should wear a suit to class.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male wedding guests should wear a suit.</td>
<td>A head teacher should wear a suit to a parent–teacher meeting.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyers should wear a suit to court.</td>
<td>I expect James Bond to wear a suit.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b. Compare your answers with a partner.
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Discussion

a. Answer these questions and discuss your answers.

• To what kind of occasions do you think someone should wear a suit?
• When did you or your partner last buy a suit?
• How much money would you or your partner spend on a suit?
• Do you think that people respect someone more when they wear a suit?
• Do people regularly wear a suit to your place of work?
• What do you usually wear to work?
• Does your workplace have a dress code?

b. The article mentions some fashion role models. In your opinion, which celebrity is currently the best-dressed man and the best-dressed woman?
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KEY

1 Warmer

Formal: suit, tie, tailored trousers, blazer, smart shirt
Casual: sports clothes, tracksuit, jeans, cardigan, bomber jacket

2 Key words

1. fall
2. tailored
3. occasions
4. dress code
5. outfits
6. combine
7. respect
8. despite
9. catwalks
10. role models

3 Comprehension check

1. less
2. do not have to
3. more relaxed
4. £102
5. didn’t always wear
6. more
7. more
8. wear
9. still
10. probably