

The Art of Describing Fashion: ESL Vocabulary

When we describe clothing in English, we don't just throw adjectives together in any order. To sound natural, we follow a specific sequence. Use the guide below to master your fashion descriptions.

The Fashion Adjective Guide

1. **Opinion:** Stylish, hideous, tacky, elegant.
2. **Size:** Oversized, tight, long, small.
3. **Color:** Navy blue, emerald green, crimson.
4. **Texture/Pattern:** Velvety, shiny, checkered, striped, ripped.
5. **Material:** Cotton, leather, silk, nylon.

Section 1: Fashion Vocabulary Match

Instructions: Match the clothing items and styles on the left with their correct definitions on the right.

Fashion Term	Definition
1. Button-up shirt	a. Trousers that have intentional holes or frayed edges.
2. Checkered skirt	b. A top with a collar and a full line of buttons down the front.
3. Ripped jeans	c. Clothing that has been specifically cut to fit a person's body perfectly.
4. Tailored suit	d. A garment featuring a pattern of regular squares.
5. Vintage jacket	e. A piece of clothing from a previous era, often high quality.
6. Tacky accessory	f. Something that looks cheap, flashy, or lacks good taste.

Section 2: Reorder the Adjectives

Instructions: Unscramble the adjectives in the parentheses to create a natural-sounding sentence.

Remember: **Opinion > Size > Color > Pattern/Texture > Material.**

1. He bought (leather / brown / stylish / a) jacket for the concert.
○ Answer: He bought _____ jacket.
2. She is wearing (cotton / white / beautiful / a / long) dress.
○ Answer: She is wearing _____ dress.
3. Why did you buy those (green / hideous / oversized) sneakers?
○ Answer: Why did you buy those _____ sneakers?
4. I need (silk / blue / a / striped) tie for the wedding.
○ Answer: I need _____ tie.
5. They found (velvety / small / purple / two) cushions in the boutique.
○ Answer: They found _____ cushions.

Section 3: The Fashion Critic

Instructions: Describe the outfits below using at least **three** adjectives in the correct order. Pay close attention to comma usage (use commas between multiple adjectives of the same category, but generally not between adjectives of different categories like size and material).

1. **Describe your favorite winter outfit:**

2. **Describe what a "Fashion Disaster" looks like to you:**

3. **Describe a "Red Carpet" gala dress or suit:**

Answer Key

Section 1: Vocabulary

1. **b** | 2. **d** | 3. **a** | 4. **c** | 5. **e** | 6. **f**

Section 2: Reordering

1. **a stylish brown leather** (Opinion > Color > Material)
2. **a beautiful long white cotton** (Opinion > Size > Color > Material)
3. **hideous oversized green** (Opinion > Size > Color)
4. **a striped blue silk** (Pattern > Color > Material)
 - o Note: While the standard rule places color before pattern, in fashion, "striped blue" is often treated as a compound color-pattern. However, following the strict guide: Opinion > Color > Pattern > Material is also acceptable (e.g., a blue striped silk tie).
5. **two small purple velvety** (Number > Size > Color > Texture)

Section 3: Sample Descriptions

1. I love wearing a **stylish long navy wool** coat with a **soft grey cashmere** scarf.
2. A fashion disaster is a **tacky oversized neon yellow** tracksuit.
3. She wore an **elegant floor-length crimson silk** gown to the event.

Teacher's Tip on Commas: We typically do not use commas when the adjectives belong to different categories (e.g., "expensive leather jacket"). Commas are used when adjectives are from the same category and are coordinate (e.g., "a cheap, tacky shirt").