

Teaching activities: School uniform

Level:	B1–B2
Skills:	reading, listening, speaking, writing
Interaction:	individual, pairs, small groups
Time:	65–90'

Learning objective: By the end of the session, learners will be better able to describe clothing.

In the activities, learners read and listen to a short text about school uniform. They then highlight the adjectives in the text and use them to describe school uniforms. Finally, they draw and write about their ideal school uniform.

These activities use a text taken from our secondary learning course *Shining Lights* but offer additional exercises to support the text. To learn more about *Shining Lights* and download a sample, please visit cambridge.org/shininglights.

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Student worksheet

A. Discuss the questions.

- What do you wear to school?
- Is it different to what you wear at other times? In what ways?
- Do you like what you wear to school? Why/why not?

B. Write a list of advantages and disadvantages of wearing a school uniform.**C. Listen to Eddie talking about his experience of wearing a school uniform. Does he think uniforms are a good idea or not?****D. Read the text* and decide whether the statements below are true or false.**

Eddie and Sora went to school in England for a year. Here, Eddie tells us how his opinion about school uniforms has changed.

When Sora and I started at our English school, we didn't like the uniform. Sora had to wear a heavy woollen skirt and I had a formal shirt and a striped tie. It was uncomfortable! My trousers felt too baggy, and my shirt felt too tight. At first, we thought that English schools were old-fashioned, but then we learned that school uniforms are common all over the world. Students wear them in most of Asia, most African countries and many other countries ... so why not here in the US?

We've all felt the pressure to have trendy clothes if we want to fit in at school. Parents often complain that we want overpriced things, but the better-value options are not cool. Uniforms solve that problem. Nobody in a uniform will be bullied for having unfashionable clothes. It should save money, though I've also read that in some places children can't go to school because they can't afford the uniform. School uniforms should be free!

Believe Sora and me: it's great when you don't have to think about what to put on in the morning. I didn't like our woollen trousers in England, though. A light cotton outfit would be more practical for our warm climate here in California. Well, Sora says she wants a gorgeous green silk blouse, but maybe that's not quite realistic!

We know that most people at our school will say 'no' when asked if they want a uniform. But think about it: it has some real advantages.

**Text taken from *Shining Lights* level 3 (B1.2), p.11*

- | | |
|---|-----|
| a. Eddie and Sora liked the uniform at the beginning. | T/F |
| b. Lots of people around the world wear school uniforms. | T/F |
| c. Parents complain that their children want expensive clothes. | T/F |
| d. Eddie thinks wearing a uniform will reduce bullying. | T/F |
| e. He thinks a uniform makes getting dressed in the morning easier. | T/F |
| f. He thinks students at his school in California will also want a uniform. | T/F |

E. Talk together.

- What would you prefer at your school and why?
- What do you think your parents would prefer you to wear and why?
- Do you agree with Eddie that uniforms are fairer for everyone?

Oracy tip: When you give your opinion, explain **why** you think that by giving reasons or examples. This makes your thoughts clearer and helps people to understand your ideas.

Extra idea: Can you add any more ideas to your list of advantages and disadvantages now?

Focus on adjectives

F. Read the text again and circle all the adjectives for describing clothes. The first one has been done for you.

G. Write vowels to complete the words and make pairs of opposites.

l_ght → h__vy	comfortable → _nc_mf_rt_bl_
f_rm_l → casual	g_rg_ _ _ s → ugly
b_ggy → t_ght	tr_ndy → _nf_sh_ _n_bl_

H. Write each adjective onto a piece of paper. Organise them into groups. Make sure you can explain why you have put them in these groups.



I. Describe the clothes for your partner to guess. You can't say the colour!

He's wearing a baggy cotton shirt.

I think it's picture ...

Correct!/Try again ...

Your turn./It's my turn.



A



B



C



D



E



F



G



H

J. Design your ideal school uniform. Draw a picture and write a description. Say why it would be a good idea. Don't forget to use a range of adjectives to describe the clothes.

Useful language

My ideal uniform would be ...

It should be _____ because ...

The **trousers/skirts/shoes** would be _____ so that ...

I think ...

Reflection

K. Discuss with your partner then write.

Three things I've learned today _____

Two things I've enjoyed today _____

One question I still have _____

Activity and suggested timing	Notes	Answer key
Lead-in, 5–10'	Give learners the worksheet folded so they can't see the reading text.	
A.	Put learners in pairs to discuss the questions. Monitor to see if learners mention advantages or disadvantages of uniforms for stage B.	
B.	Elicit one advantage and one disadvantage of wearing a school uniform. Learners write a list in pairs.	
Objective, 5'	Share the learning objective with the class explaining what you are going to do. Give learners a couple of minutes to check understanding with their partner then clarify any questions in open class.	
Listening and reading, 10'	C. Explain to learners that Eddie and Sora went to school in the UK for a year. They are going to listen to Eddie talk about school uniforms and answer the question: <i>Does he think uniforms are a good idea or not?</i> Listen from 00.03 (so learners don't hear the title which gives away the answer). Extra support: Let learners unfold the worksheet and listen and read at the same time. Allow learners to compare in pairs before asking for an answer. D. Ask learners to read the statements below the text in D and check understanding. Clarify any difficulties with vocabulary, etc. Individually learners read the text and decide if the statements are true or false. Learners compare in pairs then check answers as a class.	Yes a. F b. T c. T d. T e. T f. F
Speaking, 5–10'	E. Ask a learner to ask you the first question and give a good and bad model, e.g. <i>I'd prefer to wear my own clothes. I'd prefer not to have a uniform because it's uncomfortable. I like to express my personality through my clothes.</i> Ask learners which version they prefer and why. Ask for a couple of ideas then point out the oracy tip and explain how this can improve a discussion.	



Activity and suggested timing	Notes	Answer key
	Learners discuss the questions in pairs. Monitor and collect successful examples to share with learners. Extra idea: ask learners to go back to their lists from stage B and add new ideas.	
Adjectives, 10–15' F. G. H.	Learners read the text again and circle the adjectives to describe clothes. Clarify the meaning as necessary. Use learners' clothing or put a picture on the board, e.g. <i>Point to a baggy green jumper. What colour is the striped T-shirt?</i> Learners complete the table to make opposites. Ask learners to go back to the text to check their spelling. Give each pair some slips of scrap paper. They write each adjective onto the paper – one word per piece of paper. Demonstrate for the class organising some words into a group, e.g. – <i>woollen, cotton, silk</i>. Elicit the reason for the grouping – to describe the material. Learners can choose any groups they like to do with meaning, form or pronunciation. Extra support: suggest categories if necessary, e.g. opinion, shape/size, positive/negative. Extension: ask groups to add at least five more adjectives that could be used to describe clothing to their set. (e.g. <i>plain, spotty, checked, flowery, casual, short-sleeved, long-sleeved, stylish, colourful, bright</i>)	Annotated text with answers at end Completed table at end
Speaking, 5' I.	Demonstrate the activity first noting you can't use colours (it would make it too easy). <i>He's wearing a baggy cotton shirt.</i> Elicit a few answers before confirming it's picture H. Learners do the activity in pairs. Encourage them to use full sentences and the useful language in the speech bubbles.	
Writing, 10–20' J.	Give learners some thinking time: ask them to close their eyes and imagine their ideal school uniform. Ask prompt questions, pausing to allow them to imagine. For example, <i>Picture your ideal school uniform. What would it look like? What colour would it be? Would it be a dress, trousers and a T-shirt; a tracksuit? What material would it be made from?</i>	

Activity and suggested timing	Notes	Answer key
	<i>Why? Would it be very formal or casual? Why?</i> Keep asking questions until you feel learners have a clear idea of what they would like to draw. Learners draw and write about their ideal uniform. Point out the useful phrases. As they're writing, monitor and collect examples of where learners have used the target language successfully and also where it could be improved. Try to find more examples of good language than bad. Note some good ideas as well to highlight in feedback. Put learners into groups to read each other's ideas. They can choose the one they like best and say why.	
Feedback, 10'	Elicit some ideas learners liked and add some of your own. Write the examples of language you noted on the board and ask learners in pairs to improve or correct it where necessary. Give learners a few minutes to review their texts again and make improvements.	
Reflection, 5' K.	Allow learners to discuss in pairs then complete the sentences. Ask volunteers to share one of their reflection sentences. Answer any quick questions or save to answer in full in another lesson.	

Answers to stage F

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Above text taken from Shining Lights level 3 (B1.2), p.11

Answers to stage G

light	heavy	comfortable	uncomfortable
formal	casual	gorgeous	ugly
baggy	tight	trendy	unfashionable