

## Good Morning Britain (ITV, UK), "Dress Code Sexism"

### Introduction

Look at the following vocabulary connected with dress codes. Would you normally associate the things with males, females or both?

Men	Women	Both

**blouse • braces (UK)/ssuspenders (USA) • brogues • clean-shaven • dyed hair**

**flats • high heels • lipstick • make up • shirt • six-inch Louboutins**

**suit • tie • tights • trousers**

Look at the following phonemes. Match the vowel sound in the words above (underlined), to the sounds below.

aʊ	<u>cow</u> <u>lou</u> nge <u>ou</u> t	
əʊ	<u>g</u> o <u>vo</u> te <u>th</u> row	
aɪ	five sky <u>h</u> igh	
eɪ	<u>th</u> ey <u>s</u> ay <u>s</u> ave	
ɜː	<u>g</u> irl nurse <u>e</u> arth	
uː	<u>sh</u> oe food <u>fr</u> uit	
ɪ	hit fish spin	

## Video

1. You are going to watch a video about dress codes in the workplace. Before you watch, explain what you think "smart" dress for a man and a woman consists of for an office job.
2. Do you think the differences in what you have described above make life harder for men or for women?
3. Is there anything "sexist" about any differences described?

Watch the video for the first time and mark the statements below true or false.



Nicola Thorp



Piers Morgan



Theresa May,  
Prime  
Minister of UK

- a) Nicola Thorp was sent home from work for not wearing heels.
- b) The petition she started was signed by around 50,000 people.
- c) The petition led to an important report into the subject.
- d) Nicola was eventually fired from her job.
- e) She didn't want to wear heels because she does a lot of walking in her job.
- f) She worked in a client-facing role at a technology firm.
- g) Piers Morgan thinks that looking professional and looking glamorous go hand in hand.
- h) Nicola doesn't have a problem with wearing lipstick.
- i) Piers compares women wearing lipstick with men having to shave.
- j) Piers thinks all women should wear heels at work.
- k) Piers thinks that because the UK has a female prime minister, women are not as disadvantaged as Nicola thinks.
- l) Piers wishes Theresa May would wear more glamorous shoes.
- m) Nicola objects to the way newspapers focus on the prime minister's appearance and not her policies.

## Your Opinion

1. Is it sexist to require women to wear heels to work?
2. Where is the line between looking professional and looking glamorous or sexy?
3. Would you object to being told to wear make up at work?
4. Is it wrong that the stereotype of a professional woman is sexy?
5. Does having a female head of state show that sexism is not an issue in today's society?
6. If you do a photo shoot for *Vogue USA*, can you complain about people focussing on your appearance and not your policies?

## Grammar: Conditionals in Debates

The video is full of conditionals which are used to make a point. Watch the video again and fill in the gaps in the following conditionals. Before you watch, look at the conditionals, can fill in any gaps before you listen?

Example	Zero or second conditional?
"If you're the gatekeeper to those _____ and you're taking very important clients to meet besuited guys, or women, or whatever, in the business end of the company, is it actually _____ for the company to say to you...?"	
"If your part includes wearing lipstick and wearing heels which _____ your physicality...what sort of part are we asking women to play?"	
"If I went in sort of unshaven, and I was working for a top legal firm or accountancy firm...somebody would tell me to _____."	
"If you're the face of that company, taking in clients, I don't think it's massively unreasonable for them to say we don't really want you in _____..."	
"If I didn't wear a tie, I think one of my bosses might go, <i>you know something...if you're going to meet the _____, we would like you to wear a tie</i> ".	
"If I was told, <i>we want you to look sexy and attractive, and fit the _____ of a female as we see it; as we've seen it since the 1950s,...</i> "	
"If you're a _____ on a busy hospital ward, I absolutely get that _____, of course, are not appropriate."	
"If you're in a presentational kind of job, male or female, it could be a male _____, he has to wear a smart _____ or whatever, if that is what the company would like to exude as its image.. "	
"I would happily wear the female version of that."	
"If I started coming in high heels like six-inch Louboutins, for example, somebody would say to me, <i>Piers, I have a bit of a problem with this...</i> that would be _____ sexism."	

### Why are zero and second conditionals so good for this debate?

The **zero conditional** is used for things that are always true. In this video they are good for describing general rules and conventions that already exist; they describe the current trend.

The present tense is used in both clauses.

The **second conditional** is used for things that are hypothetical. In this video it is good for presenting imaginary situations; they describe an idealised or horrific alternative situation (present or future).

The past tense is used with *if*, and the conditional is used in the other clause.

## Debate

Choose the most interesting topic below to debate in class/groups:

**There should always be at least one woman interviewed for every CEO position.**

**The national curriculum should be changed to help boys get better grades.**

**The employees of a company should be consulted on a work uniform.**

**All wages should be disclosed to ensure men and women earn the same for the same job.**

**All male employees should attend "mansplaining" workshops to ensure they don't patronise their female colleagues.**

**All employees should wear exactly the same to help promote equality.**

Before you start to debate, think about what sort of arguments might arise. Try to formulate your ideas in zero or second conditional sentences.

Compare your conditional sentences with the class/another group, do you have the same arguments?

## Language Extra: Debating

Are you confident about formulating arguments in English? If you need some extra help, look at the table below of the language used in the video. If you need to, watch the video again to check understand how to use the constructions.

Making a Point	Turning the debate on your opponent	Agreeing/Disagreeing
First and foremost...	My question to you would be...	Absolutely!
First of all...	Don't the two go hand in hand?	Of Course!
I would imagine that...	Well that's it, isn't it?!	I absolutely get that...
I don't think it's massively unreasonable to...	I get the point you're making but...	Actually...
I <i>do</i> think...	Where is the line between ... and ...?	
I just wonder whether...	That's the worry, isn't it; that...?	
I would happily....	Are you then saying that...	
I have no problem with...	If you're saying to me that...	

## Speaking: Debate

Once you have prepared your debate, you are ready to speak! Divide into *for* and *against* and take it in turns to present your arguments and respond to others.