

1.5 The New Dress -Virginia Woolf

ICE BREAKERS

Q. 1. Write in Column 'B' the description of the clothes you would choose to wear for the occasions given in Column 'A':

(The answer is given directly in Column 'B' and underlined.)

Column A	Column B
A birthday party	<u>Casual jeans and T-shirt</u>
A prize distribution ceremony at school	<u>Formal shirt and trousers</u>
A picnic	<u>Colorful casuals or Shorts and T-shirt</u>
An entertainment show	<u>Good jeans and good T-shirt</u>

Q. 2. Discuss the criterion of the choice of your clothes with the help of given points:

Ans.

(a) **Occasion:** *whether it is a birthday, wedding, picnic, college festival, etc.*

(b) **Society (people you may meet at the venue):** *friends, relatives, classmates, visitors, students from other colleges, etc.*

(c) **Availability:** *bought at a store, tailored, borrowed, etc.*

(d) **Fashion:** *designer clothes, casual, Indian formal, Western formal, etc.*

(e) **Your wish/whim:** *color of my choice, style, etc.*

(f) **A suggestion or advice by someone (mother, sister, friend, etc.).** : *Only advice by friends*

(g) **Any other than the above mentioned reasons:** *I would choose a dress that would suit me and set off my looks in the best possible way, even if it may be out of fashion. I would not go by whether it is expensive or branded.*

Q. 3. Divide the class into groups. Discuss the role of costumes in enhancing your personality:

(Points: clothes very important first impressions important - colors, cut that suit a person - if the clothes are suitable, confidence level increases - however, it is not the cost of clothes but suitability to the wearer and occasion that are important - your clothes also depend on the culture and place.)

Ans. Costumes or clothes play a very important role in our lives. The clothes that we wear say a lot about the kind of person that we are. People, who don't know us, can get to know a lot about our personality by the clothes that we wear. Wearing clothes that make us look good, boosts our self-esteem. When we wear clothes that are comfortable, they help us to be at ease with respect to the environment as well as company. We may never notice this, but clothes also affect our mood. When we wear clothes that we don't really like or find uncomfortable, it reflects in the way we conduct ourselves. We become more conscious and critical of ourselves. It is thus very important to choose the right costume for the right occasion because when we dress right, we feel comfortable and confident in our skin. This comfort and confidence then enhance our personality. Your clothes also depend on the culture and place.

Q. 4. State whether you agree or disagree with the following statements and discuss the reasons:

(a) A simple dress makes one's personality look dull.

Ans. (Disagree - if the cut is good, the cloth is good - it suits the wearer - a simple dress can be excellent.)

(b) We should not judge ourselves from the comments we receive from others.

Ans. (Agree - we should have self-esteem - trust our judgement - do not have to seek approval from others - people may be envious, etc.)

(c) A fashionable and costly dress makes you look rich, intelligent and beautiful.

Ans. (Disagree - the dress must suit the wearer - should be worn with confidence - wearer should have good posture - accessories should be well-matched, etc.)

(d) We should choose a dress according to the fashion rather than our choice.

Ans. (Disagree - if we choose according to fashion, may not be comfortable - the fashion may not suit us - we may feel self-conscious - hence choose a dress according to our choice.)

BRAINSTORMING

(A1) (i) Narrate in your words the picture imagined by Mabel as she thinks herself in the party as a fly at the edge of the saucer.

Ans. Mabel felt that we are all like flies trying to crawl over the edge of the saucer, some crawling slowly with their wings stuck together. In order to make the other people at the party look insignificant and unimportant, she tried hard to visualize them as poor, struggling flies, trying to pull themselves out of something or into something. However, her inferiority complex was so strong that she ultimately saw only herself as a fly trying to drag itself out of the saucer.

She saw the others as dragonflies, butterflies, beautiful insects, dancing, fluttering and skimming lightly.

(ii) There are a few other characters mentioned in this extract. Discuss the way their reactions help us to understand the inferiority complex of Mabel.

(Note: Most of the textual 'Wh' questions are converted to Activity Format.)

Ans. Mrs. Barnet touched the brushes and drew Mabel's attention, rather markedly, to the appliances kept on the dressing table for improving one's looks. She indirectly indicated to Mabel that something about Mabel's looks was not quite right. Mabel immediately lost whatever confidence she had. This shows us that Mabel's inferiority complex was so deep and strong that even a housekeeper's hint rattled her and made her lose confidence.

Rose Shaw looked at Mabel up and down, twisting her lips in a sarcastic manner. Mabel had expected her to do this. Mabel also felt that Rose and all the others present were dressed, as always, in the height of fashion. This shows us how sensitive Mabel was to the behaviour of others and how she thought that they were always right in fashion, while she was not. This indicates Mabel's lack of self-esteem and self-worth.

Mabel told Robert Haydon that she felt like some dowdy, decrepit, horribly dingy old fly. She said it to reassure herself and appear detached and witty, and to show that she did not feel in the least out of anything. Robert Haydon probably replied something to praise her, which Mabel felt was just politeness, and that he was being insincere. Though she was constantly looking for approval from others, she always felt suspicious when someone actually praised her, or said something in her favour. This shows that she has no self-esteem and a very big inferiority complex.

Mabel told Charles Burt that it 'was old-fashioned, hoping that he would think it was the picture she was talking about, and not her dress. She longed for Charles' approval, and hoped he would say that she looked charming. But Charles Burt laughed at her, and this upset her tremendously. She wished she had the confidence to be sure that Miss Milan was right about her dress and Charles was wrong, but unfortunately that was not so, and Charles' laughter and his malice made her feel even more humiliated and inferior than before. This shows us that Mabel depended heavily on the approval of others and had no self-esteem.

When Mrs. Holman asked her questions about Elmthorpe and other things, Mabel was furious to be treated like a house agent or a messenger boy, to be made use of. It shows that she is insecure about herself, and feels that people are always humiliating her. Even a person like Mrs. Holman, who is having a difficult time with her family, can make Mabel feel insecure and inferior.

Mabel thought that Charles Burt and Rose Shaw were chatting together by the fireplace and laughing at her. She could not hear them, but this was her imagination and inferiority complex which made her think so. Mabel even felt that poor Mrs. Holman on was laughing at her dress, and that she would tell everyone about it. Mrs. Holman had so many of her own problems that she probably never even thought of it, but Mabel's lack of confidence made her feel so.

(A2) (i) Pick out the sentences from the extract which describe the ambience of the party at Mrs. Dalloway's place.

Ans. (1) Mrs. Barnet, while handing her the mirror and touching the brushes and thus drawing her attention, perhaps rather markedly, to all the appliances for tidying and improving hair, complexion, clothes, which existed on the dressing table.

(2) Rose herself being dressed in the height of the fashion, precisely like everybody else, always.

(3) She was a fly, but the others were dragonflies, butterflies, beautiful insects, dancing, fluttering, skimming.

(4) ... and not be whipped all around in a second by coming into a room full of people.

(5) If she had been dressed like Rose Shaw, in lovely, clinging green with a ruffle of swans down.

(6) For she would not join Charles Burt and Rose Shaw, chattering like magpies and perhaps laughing at her by the fireplace.

(7) "But it's too early to go," said Mrs. Dalloway, who was always so charming.

(8) "I have enjoyed myself," she said to Mr. Dalloway, whom she met on the stairs.

(9) She thanked Mrs. Barnet for helping her.

(ii) Mabel is thinking too much about her dress.

Propose five sentences supporting the above statement.

Ans. (1) She could not face the whole horror - the pale yellow, idiotically old-fashioned silk dress with its long skirt and its high sleeves and its waist and all the things that looked so charming in the fashion book, but not on her, not among all these ordinary people.

(2) She looked at herself with the dress on, finished, an extraordinary bliss shot through her heart. Suffused with light, she sprang into existence.

(3) She issued out into the room, as if spears were thrown at her yellow dress from all sides.

(4) It seemed to her that the yellow dress was a penance which she had deserved.

(5) Then Mrs Holman was off, thinking her the most dried-up, unsympathetic twig she had ever met, absurdly dressed, too, and would tell every one about Mabel's fantastic appearance.

(iii) Critically analyze Mabel's weak economic conditions in the past as one of the reasons that led her to choose the old-fashioned dress.

Ans. Mabel did not belong to a rich family. She was one of a family of ten. They always had to be careful about their expenses, always counting the pennies. Her mother had to carry big cans; the linoleum on the stairs was worn off, and there was always some minor domestic tragedy taking place. Even when they went to seaside resorts, they stayed at lodges which never faced the sea directly, but at an odd angle, so that they had to squint to see the sea. Maybe indirectly she was still fighting with her weak economic conditions of the past, and this had made her choose the old-fashioned dress; or it could have been some memories of the past that made her do it.

(iv) The cause of Miss Mabel's disappointment is not only her poor background in the past but her too much bookishness also. Substantiate.

Ans. To a certain extent this is true. She keeps thinking about the depressing lines she has read written by Shakespeare; she also keeps thinking of the story of the fly and the saucer, and how she is a fly and the others are dragonflies, butterflies and beautiful insects. Probably her over-active imagination, which led to her continuous disappointment with various things, was also due to extensive reading.

(v) Do you appreciate Mabel's tendency of deciding her own value from the comments given by others? Explain your views.

Ans. No, I don't. We all have our own likes and dislikes; we should wear what we like and behave in the manner we think is appropriate. We should not depend on the approval and comments of others to decide our value and worth. This is done only by those who have no confidence in themselves and no self-esteem.

(A3) (i) Write the synonyms for the word 'dress' by filling appropriate letters in the blanks. One is done for you.

(The answers are given directly.)

Ans. (a) attire

(b) garb

(c) costume

(d) garment

(e) outfit

(f) apparel

(iii) Conchology means the scientific study or collection of mollusc shells. Refer to the dictionary and Find out the meanings of:

(1) Etymology

(2) Archaeology

Ans.

(1) Etymology - the study of the origin and history of words.

(2) Archaeology - the scientific study of material remains (such as tools, pottery, jewelry, stone walls, and monuments) of past human life and activities.

(A4) (i) Use the correct tense form of the verbs given in the brackets and rewrite the sentences.

(a) She (take/takes/took/had taken) that old fashion book of her mother a few months back.

Ans. She had taken that old fashion book of her mother a few months back.

(b) She (pecking/pecks/pecked) at her left shoulder for quite some time.

Ans. She pecked at her left shoulder for quite some time.

(c) One human should (done/doing/be doing) this for another always.

Ans. One human should be doing this for another always.

(d) All this (will be/is/have been) destroyed in a few years.

Ans. All this will be destroyed in a few years.

(e) She (feels/felt/will be feeling) like a dressmaker's dummy standing there.

Ans. She felt like a dressmaker's dummy standing there.

(ii) Do as directed:

(a) Lata will sing tonight. (Make it less certain.)

Ans. Lata may sing tonight.

(b) You should wear your uniform. (Show ability.)

Ans. You can wear your uniform.

(c) Sandeep may study to clear the examination. (Make it obligatory/compulsory.)

Ans. Sandeep must study to clear the examination.

(d) I can do it. (Make a sentence seeking permission.)

Ans. May I do it?

(iii) (a) Frame three rules for the students of your college. (Non-textual grammar)

Ans. (1) Students must wear identity cards in the college premises.

(2) Students must not loiter near the college gate.

(3) Every student must have at least 75% attendance in every subject.

(b) Frame three sentences giving advice to your younger brother.

Ans. (1) You should make a timetable for revision at least a month before the exams.

(2) You should not eat junk food.

(3) You should visit your dentist at least once every six months.

(iv) Fill in the blanks with appropriate modal auxiliaries according to the situation given in the following sentences.

(The answers are given directly and underlined.)

(1) Take an umbrella. It might rain later.

(2) People must not walk on the grass.

(3) May I ask you a question?

(4) The signal has turned red. You must wait.

(5) I am going to the library. I could find my friend there.

(A5) (i) Read the sentence we are all like flies.. The paragraph describes the dejected thoughts that Miss Mabel carries in her mind. All the earlier paragraphs are in a continuity of a story line. The next paragraph begins with, 'I feel like....' again resumes to a story. The author has moved in the mind of the character and out of it very smoothly without any intimation or change in the language or tense. Similarly, she has moved in the past years of Miss Mabel's life. This is called stream of consciousness' technique.

Ans. Do it yourself.

(ii) Read the sentence from the text - What a hideous new dress!

This is an exclamation. It can be written as a simple sentence "The new dress is very hideous".

Find out few more exclamatory sentences from the story and transform them into assertive sentences.

Ans.

1. "What a fright she looks!"

Ans. She looks like such a fright.

2. "How dull!"

Ans. It is so dull.

3. "Lies! Lies! Lies!"

Ans. It was all lies.

(iii) Virginia Woolf has created many characters other than Miss Mabel with great skill. Write a character sketch of any one of them.

Ans. One of the guests at Mrs. Dalloway's party was Charles Burt. Mabel was impressed by him and longing for some praise from him. However, he was a malicious person, with no heart, no fundamental kindness and only a superficial appearance of friendliness. He liked to poke fun at people and see their reactions. He probably also liked to gossip about people and discuss them behind their backs, but his opinion made a great difference to Mabel.

(iv) 'Clothes mean nothing until someone lives in them.' Expand the idea in your own words.

Ans. Clothes mean nothing until someone lives in them.

These are the words of Marc Jacobs, a fashion designer. It means that clothes gain importance and character only when someone is wearing them. The first impression that people have of a person is not only through the clothes that one is wearing but the way one is wearing those clothes. The style a person adopts

tells people a lot about his/her personality and character. The best and most expensive clothes can be unimpressive if the wearer does not carry himself/herself well. On the contrary, the simplest of clothes can look good and impressive if the wearer has good posture, self-confidence and self-esteem.

Hence, when we are buying clothes, we must not only be sure that they will suit us but that we will be comfortable in them and able to carry them well. So, we must choose clothes that make us feel good about ourselves, confident and happy.

(A6) Go to a library and read the following books:

(a) 'A Haunted House' by Virginia Woolf

(b) 'Mrs. Dalloway' by Virginia Woolf

Ans. Do it yourself.

(A7) Find out information about career opportunities in the following fields:

(1) Fashion designing

Ans. The fashion industry is one of the most lucrative industries. With a variety of undergraduate and diploma courses available in fashion designing, one can choose to become a fashion designer, a retail buyer, a retail manager, a stylist, a personal shopper or a fashion blogger. The institutes offering fashion design courses in Mumbai are ISDI School of Design and innovation, National Institute of Fashion Technology, International Institute of Fashion Design, among others.

(2) Dress designing

Ans. Dress designing or costume designing is a part of fashion designing and involves researching fashion trends and creating patterns and introducing fabrics into the market. Pattern making, draping, tailoring, etc. are some of the areas that a dress designer needs to master. There are a lot of courses available for this specific branch under fashion designing, which teach the principles and processes of the fashion industry, computer programs used for dress design, the knowledge of materials, workforce leadership and the understanding of industrial equipment. Institutes offering fashion designing courses also provide dress or textile design courses.

(3) Textile industry

Ans. Textile industry is divided into Spinning, Weaving or Knitting. One needs to take a degree or diploma in textile engineering to enter this industry. The more artistic ones can join as Textile Designers, however nowadays one needs to be more apt with computer-aided designing to enter this line. Graduates with textile chemistry find careers in dyeing and finishing, technical services, research and development, quality control, product development, polymer science and environmental control. Most graduates of the textile management program

initially enter management trainee programs which can ultimately lead to plant or corporate management. Other career options include technical sales, industrial engineering, product development, marketing customer relations, human resources, and cost and inventory control. So one who has a degree in Textile Engineering can work as: Process engineer, Quality control supervisor, Technical Services/Sales Manager, Operations Trainee, Process Improvement Engineer, Medical Textiles Engineer.

(4) Garment industry

Ans. The apparel industry is one of the most important sectors of the economy with regard to investment, revenue, and trade and employment generation all over the world. The apparel industry in India has substantially diversified on the basis of fashion, climate, region, culture, and fiscal factors. Indian textile is witnessing great growth and development in the industrial sector in India as well as abroad. The important segments covered in the apparel industry include home decor and furnishings along with clothing and fashion accessories for kids, women, and men. The sector needs skilled people as Pattern Masters, Cutters, Supervisors, Quality Controllers, the high-end job is for Merchandisers who have to deal with the buyers and keep track of the deliveries.

(5) Image consultancy

Ans. Do it yourself.

(6) Psychology and Psychiatry.

Ans. Do it yourself.