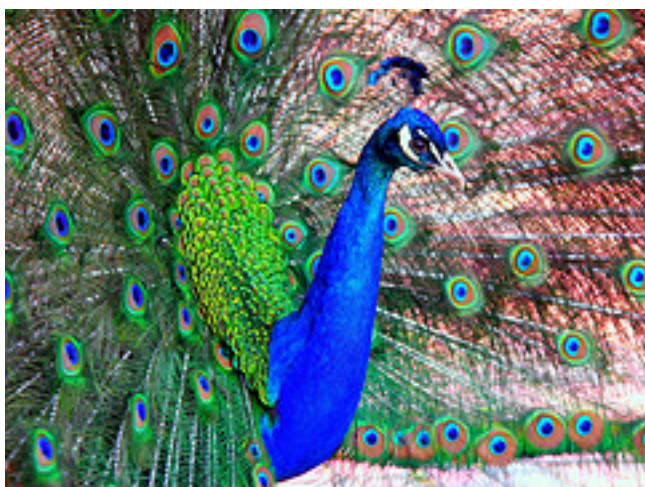


Dress to Impress

Posted by Peter on 28 June 2010



This peacock knows how to dress to impress. Photo by [El Sol/flickr](#)

I think I told you in an earlier podcast that my daughter, who is 16 years old, attends a secondary school for girls. She has now completed Year 11, and has finished her [GCSE](#) exams. In September she will start at a sixth form college. Most of the other girls in her year at school are in the same position. Naturally, they all want to celebrate the end of their time at secondary school.

So, one day last week was "Dress to Impress Day". All the girls dressed up in party dresses, high heels and too much make-up. First they went to school for a leaving ceremony and to say goodbye to their teachers. Then they left in cars, taxis or (in some cases) [pink stretch limos](#), to go to parties or restaurants. I am sure that they all had a good time, and that many of them found it difficult to get out of bed the next morning.

"Dress to Impress Day" has given me the idea for this podcast - the word "impress" - what does it mean and how do we use it? If you want to impress somebody, it means that you want that person to think good things about you. When you sit an exam, you want to impress the examiners. You want them to think that you are a good student with an excellent understanding. If you go for a job interview, you want to impress the people who are interviewing you. You want them to think that you are exactly the right person for the job. And if you go on a date, you want to impress the boy or girl you are with.

Kevin has a friend called James. For years, Kevin and his friends have been trying to find James a girlfriend. The trouble is that James is not very good at impressing girls. He has recently been on a date with Sarah. This is what happened. He arrived late. He had been watching football on the television, and the match went to extra time. He forgot to have a shower or to change his clothes. He talked to Sarah all evening about his hobby - computer games. And, when they went to a restaurant, he ordered spaghetti. That was a big mistake. No-one looks good when they are [eating spaghetti](#).

James tells Kevin about his date with Sarah. Kevin sighs. "So, she wasn't impressed, then," he says. "Well, she must have been a bit impressed," says James. "She is coming with me to the computer games exhibition on Saturday. She is a great fan of Manic Street Racer 2. And she likes spaghetti." Kevin is amazed. Women can be very strange sometimes.

So James, surprisingly, has impressed Sarah. She has never before met a man who shares her passion for Manic Street Racer 2 and spaghetti. She thinks good things about James, even though he was late and forgot to have a shower. James has made a good impression on her. If the date had been a disaster, we could say that James had made a bad impression on Sarah.

You will sometimes hear the expression "to [have the impression that](#) ..." For instance, you might say "I have the impression that James is keen on football". Why do I have this impression? Why do I think this? Because James stayed to watch the football on TV instead of meeting Sarah.

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Or I could say, "I have the impression that Sarah likes men who play computer games and eat spaghetti". This means, simply, that "I think that Sarah likes men of this sort. I am not completely sure. There are a lot of things about Sarah that I do not know. But, from what I have seen so far, I think that she likes men like James."

There is an adjective [impressive](#) as well. If something is impressive, it is big, or beautiful, or clever - it impresses you. For example, the [Eiffel Tower](#) in Paris is very impressive - it is over 300 meters high. The [Tate Gallery](#) in London has a very impressive collection of 20th century art. And Sarah's top score in Manic Street Racer 2 is 436,117, and that really is impressive!

This is the text of the podcast at <http://www.listen-to-english.com/index.php?id=533>,