All the rage: clothes and fashion

VOCABULARY PRACTICE
UPPER-INTERMEDIATE | B2

Name: _____ Date: _____

1 Match each precise term with its definition.

1 sartorial ____	**a** relating to clothes or style of dress
2 aesthetic ____	**b** a general sense of what is visually pleasing
3 silhouette ____	**c** the outline or overall shape of an outfit
4 avant-garde ____	**d** experimental and ahead of current trends
5 minimalist ____	**e** simple, with few decorative details
6 ostentatious ____	**f** deliberately showy, intended to impress
7 understated ____	**g** modest and not showy, though stylish
8 versatile ____	**h** able to be worn in many different ways or contexts
9 garish ____	**i** unpleasantly bright or overdone
10 curated wardrobe ____	**j** a carefully selected, thoughtfully chosen collection of clothes

2 Choose the word with the most suitable connotation.

1 For clothing chosen with careful, personal taste: sartorial / careless.

2 For a deliberately showy, attention-seeking look: ostentatious / understated.

3 For a simple, restrained design: minimalist / cluttered.

4 For a modest, quietly stylish look: understated / flashy.

5 For clothing that suits many occasions: versatile / limited.

6 For overly bright, tasteless colours: garish / tasteful.

7 For an experimental, boundary-pushing style: avant-garde / conventional.

8 For a thoughtfully assembled set of clothes: curated wardrobe / random pile.

3 Complete the fashion collocations with one word.

1 a _____ wardrobe (= carefully selected)

2 _____ appeal (= visual attractiveness)

3 a flattering _____ (= the shape an outfit creates)

4 an _____ statement (= a bold, unconventional look)

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5 _____ elegance (= simple, restrained style)

6 a _____ palette (= a limited range of colours)

7 _____ pieces (= items that work in many outfits)

8 _____ taste (= personal style in clothing)

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4 Complete the case notes with words and phrases from the box.

aesthetic | avant-garde | curated wardrobe | garish | minimalist | ostentatious | sartorial | silhouette | understated | versatile

Case A: The designer's collection was described as 1 _____, pushing well beyond conventional 2 _____ boundaries.
Case B: Critics called the outfit 3 _____, with clashing colours that overwhelmed the overall 4 _____.
Case C: By contrast, her everyday style is 5 _____, favouring a simple 6 _____ that avoids anything 7 _____.
Case D: His 8 _____ consists mainly of 9 _____ pieces that suit both formal and casual occasions.
Case E: Some critics found the jewellery 10 _____, arguing it was more about display than style.

5 Read the text and answer the questions briefly.

Fashion as identity

Clothing choices are rarely purely practical; they often communicate identity, values or aspiration. A minimalist wardrobe may signal a preference for restraint and efficiency, while a more avant-garde style might express a desire to challenge convention. Sociologists note that even an apparently understated outfit can be a deliberate sartorial choice, carefully curated to project effortlessness. Because clothing is read by others as a kind of unspoken communication, personal style decisions, whether garish or restrained, inevitably carry social meaning beyond mere aesthetic preference.

1 What do clothing choices often communicate, beyond practicality? _____
2 What might a minimalist wardrobe signal? _____
3 What might a more avant-garde style express? _____
4 What can an apparently understated outfit actually be? _____
5 How is clothing read by others, according to sociologists? _____
6 Do personal style decisions carry meaning beyond aesthetic preference? _____

6 Rewrite each sentence using the word in capitals. Do not change the meaning.

1 Her outfit was quietly stylish, not showy. UNDERSTATED _____
2 The design was experimental and ahead of its time. AVANT-GARDE _____

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3 He owns clothes that suit many occasions. VERSATILE _____

4 The jewellery was too bright and tasteless. GARISH _____

OVER TO YOU

Write a 120-150 word commentary on how a person's clothing choices might communicate identity or values, distinguishing observation from interpretation.

[ ] Use at least twelve target expressions. [ ] Control connotation carefully. [ ] Avoid unsupported assumptions.

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ANSWER KEY

1 Precise terms

1 a 2 b 3 c 4 d 5 e 6 f 7 g 8 h 9 i 10 j

2 Connotation

1 sartorial 2 ostentatious 3 minimalist 4 understated 5 versatile 6 garish 7 avant-garde 8 curated wardrobe

3 Collocations

1 curated 2 aesthetic 3 silhouette 4 avant-garde 5 understated 6 limited/minimal 7 versatile 8 sartorial

4 Case notes

1 avant-garde 2 aesthetic 3 garish 4 silhouette 5 understated 6 aesthetic/silhouette 7 ostentatious
8 curated wardrobe 9 versatile 10 ostentatious

5 Reading - suggested answers

1 Identity, values or aspiration.
2 A preference for restraint and efficiency.
3 A desire to challenge convention.
4 A deliberate sartorial choice, carefully curated to project effortlessness.
5 As a kind of unspoken communication.
6 Yes.

6 Rewriting - possible answers

1 Her outfit was understated. 2 The design was avant-garde.
3 He owns versatile clothes. 4 The jewellery was garish.

Over to you

Answers will vary. Check lexical precision, appropriate connotation and separation of fact from inference.