

## Brown shoes could mean failed job interview

6th September, 2016



University graduates hoping to get a job as an investment banker in London could be disappointed if they wear brown shoes to their job interview. A new report highlights how the investment banking industry in the UK follows centuries-old, unwritten rules about

how bankers should conduct themselves. The study was undertaken by the British government's Social Mobility Commission. Researchers looked at how the industry selected people in job interviews. They found that the industry was governed by "relatively opaque" codes of conduct. They wrote: "For men, the wearing of brown shoes with a business suit is generally considered unacceptable...within investment banking."

The survey suggested that people from working class backgrounds had to change their behaviour to fit in with bankers who were from middle and upper classes. One newly-appointed banker said: "I felt like my accent was a bit out of place, so I changed it." The study also said the industry discriminated against those who did not go to elite universities. The Commission's chairman said: "Bright, working-class kids are being systematically locked out of top jobs in investment banking because they did not attend a small handful of elite universities." He added: "It is shocking...that some investment bank managers still judge candidates on whether they wear brown shoes with a suit, rather than on their skills and potential."

Sources: *cnn* / *telegraph.co.uk* / *bbc.com*

## Writing

All workers should wear the same uniform. Discuss.

## Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

graduates / investment / banking / job interview / industry / code of conduct / suit / survey / behaviour / middle classes / discriminated / working class / shocking / skills

## True / False

- The article said high school graduates could be disappointed. T / F
- A study said the investment banking industry follows unwritten rules. T / F
- The study said the industry's code of conduct is very unclear. T / F
- Brown shoes were generally unacceptable for investment bankers. T / F
- The study said people from upper-class backgrounds had to change. T / F
- A new banker had to change his/her accent to fit in. T / F
- Most investment bankers did not go to an elite university. T / F
- Investment bank managers always judge a candidate on potential. T / F

## Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                        |                 |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. <b>hoping</b>       | a. on the whole |
| 2. <b>disappointed</b> | b. chosen       |
| 3. <b>undertaken</b>   | c. appalling    |
| 4. <b>selected</b>     | d. let down     |
| 5. <b>generally</b>    | e. manner       |
| 6. <b>behaviour</b>    | f. top          |
| 7. <b>changed</b>      | g. wishing for  |
| 8. <b>elite</b>        | h. promise      |
| 9. <b>shocking</b>     | i. done         |
| 10. <b>potential</b>   | j. amended      |

## Discussion – Student A

- What is wrong with all investment bankers being upper class?
- Do people discriminate against accents in your country?
- What difficult questions have you had at a job interview?
- Should people from elite universities get the best jobs?
- Should unsuccessful candidates be able to sue companies?
- What skills do you have that would impress in a job interview?
- Should all workers wear the same clothes?
- What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

# BreakingNewsEnglish - The Mini Lesson

## Phrase Match

1. graduates hoping to get a job
  2. could be
  3. unwritten
  4. codes of
  5. a business suit is generally
  6. people from working
  7. change their behaviour to
  8. I felt like my accent was a bit out
  9. systematically locked
  10. judge
- a. of place
  - b. considered unacceptable
  - c. candidates
  - d. disappointed
  - e. class backgrounds
  - f. as an investment banker
  - g. rules
  - h. out of top jobs
  - i. conduct
  - j. fit in

## Discussion – Student B

- a) What experience do you have with job interviews?
- b) What's the best way to pass interviews?
- c) What do investment bankers do?
- d) What kind of clothes are best to wear at an interview?
- e) What kind of code of conduct should investment bankers follow?
- f) What do you think about what you read?
- g) Are black shoes better than brown shoes?
- h) What advice do you have for people going for a job interview?

## Spelling

1. University daausegrt hoping to get a job
2. could be dpaitdonsep
3. the investment banking ditsryun
4. tesrecuni-old
5. relatively puqeo codes of conduct
6. generally considered cenebclautpa
7. change their irhabuoev (UK) / ieahborv (USA)
8. my tencan was a bit out of place
9. eidrisidtman against those who did not go
10. teile universities
11. judge satnedidac
12. their skills and totnaplei

### Answers – Synonym Match

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

## Role Play

### Role A – Nice shoes

You think nice shoes are most important in an interview. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): confidence, qualifications or a firm handshake.

### Role B – Confidence

You think confidence is most important in an interview. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): nice shoes, qualifications or a firm handshake.

### Role C – Qualifications

You think qualifications are most important in an interview. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): confidence, nice shoes or a firm handshake.

### Role D – A firm handshake

You think a firm handshake is most important in an interview. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): confidence, qualifications or nice shoes.

## Speaking – Candidate

Rank these with your partner. Put the most important things a candidate needs at a job interview at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- nice shoes
- a nice smile
- confidence
- qualifications
- work experience
- good clothes
- politeness
- a firm handshake

### Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	T	d	T	e	F	f	T	g	F	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.