**The Necktie Script**

Good morning everybody. How are you today? I hope you’re well. It's a beautiful sunny day here today. It's a little bit warm. Hopefully the snow's finally going to start melting. I'm looking forward to the spring. Right. Today, I want to talk to you for five minutes about the tie. So, OK, here we go.

A tie. Why do I wear a tie? Well, basically I wear a tie because everyone else wears one. I’ve had to wear a tie every day of the week since I was seven years old, which means I have worn a tie now for a total of thirty-three years, five or six days a week. OK, so why do we wear a tie? Well, the wearing of a piece of cloth around your neck basically started in Roman days. The Roman Legionnaires, the Roman soldiers, they used to wear a colored piece of cloth around the neck to differentiate the unit they were in. Of course, an army is broken up into smaller and smaller and smaller groups, and to tell which group you were in, the soldiers used to wear a colored piece of cloth. That was so, in a battle, you could tell who your friends were and if you got divided you could find your own group pretty easily. That continued.

Basically, the modern tie though, comes from the Thirty Years' War, which was from 1618 until 1648. I don't have much time to talk about that, but it was basically a European war which was Protestant countries versus Catholic countries. It was a deadly, hugely destructive war. 8 million people died altogether from the war, and also from famine and from disease. It was a huge … hugely destructive war. But, anyway, during that war, Croatian mercenaries in French service used to wear a small knotted neckerchief around their neck. Very, very small, thin, colored piece of cloth. Now, this is nothing special. Soldiers have been doing this for millennia. Of course, though, in France, people like fashion, and Parisians liked this idea and it started to take off. A fashion can grow, and it can become popular but to really make a fashion stick you need a famous figurehead to take this fashion on, and that figurehead was King Louis the XIVth, who even though he was only seven years old, a boy king, he started wearing a neckerchief, basically. And that's where it came from.

The name, cravat, ties are sometimes called cravats, that came from … in Croatian, Croat people are called … I don’t know how to pronounce this … Hrvati, and in French they’re called Croates, and those two words mixed, and you got cravat.

After that, of course, the French like design, they like fashion, and these ties started to get crazier and crazier, and frillier and frillier, and more and more and more intricate, until sometimes it would take hours to tie the actual tie itself, and you had to go to a professional tie tier to put the tie on. So, very, very complex ties.

Now, that fashion would have continued if it hadn't been for the industrial revolution. In the industrial revolution, people were now working for a full day, from the morning until the evening. They didn't have time to tie a complex tie, and they needed a tie that would last all day, would be easy, would be comfortable, and wouldn't come undone. So, that was when the modern tie was basically designed, the 1770s and thereon.

Up until about 1926 it was all handmade. In 1926 somebody perfected the way of tying … a way of making a tie. It’s basically made from three or two pieces of cloth that are sewn together, and there is a lining inside, and the lining was actually stitched in. 1926, that was all designed.

After World War Two, ties were very, very short, much shorter than today's ties. About this long. They were also very, very big and very, very colorful. That was kind of a rebellion towards the war. During the war soldiers were forced to wear the same uniform, so, after the war, they wanted colorful ties. Ties were pretty short because back then trousers were worn much higher. Around about here. And most people wore waistcoats as well. So, you didn't see the bottom of the tie. After waistcoats kind of died out, and trousers sunk down to here, ties became longer. Today, the average tie length is about 140cm, which is about the length of mine. These days, ties are relatively thin and pretty much the same, although you do get some quite colorful ones.

There are some problems associated with ties, of course. One of the biggest ones, of course, is if you work with machinery, if you work in an industrial job, it's very easy to get your tie caught in a machine. And, some people every year are actually killed by their ties. They are killed by strangulation, asphyxiation. Another problem of course, is doctors. Quite recently it was realized that doctors’ ties were spreading disease. Which part of your clothes do you wash the least? I wash all my clothes, of course, but I very rarely wash my ties. And, this was the same with doctors. They realized that doctors’ ties were actually spreading disease from one patient to another. So, quite recently, ties have actually been made illegal in hospitals. You very rarely see a doctor wearing a tie these days. And, of course, another problem is that it's enforced. You basically have to wear a tie. If you went to a job interview without a tie, people would think you were not being respectful, people would think you are not formal enough. So, it's kind of an enforced rule. It's a socially enforced rule.

OK. I’ve run out of time. I actually like wearing ties. I have quite a few ties. I wear them every day because I have to. I ran out of time.

That was a lot of fun. I hope you understood me. Thank you for listening. If you want to read the script for that, if you click on the link below in the description down here, there’s the script for this. There are some questions. There are some sample answers. You can practice your reading, your listening, of course. You can practice your writing, and if you say the answers out loud, you can practice you speaking as well. Keep practicing. Keep learning. The more you learn, the better your English will get, of course. If you liked this, click LIKE. If you want to subscribe, please subscribe. That’s somewhere over here. Looks like my head. Thank you. I'll see you again next time. Goodbye.

**The Necktie Questions**

1. Why did Roman soldiers wear a piece of colored cloth?

A: To look fashionable.

B: Because it showed their rank.

C: To identify the unit they belong to.

D: Because they could use it to bind wounds if they were injured.

2. What kind of war was the thirty years war?

A: A territorial war

B: A religious war

C: An ideological war

D: A war of attrition

3. Which King started wearing cravats? King Louis the \_\_\_\_\_

A: IIII

B: IV

C: XVI

D: XIV

4. Why were colorful neckties popular after World War II?

A: People who had fought rebelled against a uniform.

B: People wanted bright colors to cheer them up.

C: People couldn’t find any dark material to make ties.

D: People didn’t want to be respectful.

5. Which of these is NOT a problem with neckties?

A: They could get caught in machinery.

B: They make it difficult to drive.

C: They might spread disease.

D: They are an enforced uniform.

6. Talk about a fashion that came and went during your life.

7. Fashion is an expression of individuality. Discuss.

8. Why do we laugh at outdated fashions?

9. Why do you think religious wars start?

10. Do you think men and women should have to wear suits or uniforms?

**The Necktie Answers**

1. C 2. B 3. D 4. A 5. B

6. Talk about a fashion that came and went during your life.

When I was in junior high school a fashion for incredibly tight trousers developed. To this day I have no idea why. I was a slightly plump child, and, as such, I found these tight trousers incredibly uncomfortable and unflattering. I remember scouring the racks for a slightly baggier pair, only to come up short. The fashion passed within a few years and I was able to go back to my loose-fitting trousers. Since then, many fashions have come and gone, but that was the only one that I found physically uncomfortable.

7. Fashion is an expression of individuality. Discuss.

Fashion can, ironically, be both an expression of individuality and a symbol of group identity at the same time. Quite often, most of the extreme fashions we see are taken up by adolescents trying to rebel against their parents and authority. And yet, while they believe they are rebelling, they fail to see that they fall into groups: punks, goths, emos, hippies, etc. However, despite falling into clearly defined categories, these fashions demonstrate the person’s individuality from their parents and the previous generation, not their peers, which, in the end, is probably the point.

8. Why do we laugh at outdated fashions?

Because we suffer from a condition known as the “end of history illusion”. This is the main reason why people get tattoos. The end of history illusion implies that at whatever point in our life we have reached, and despite knowing full well that we have changed a lot over the preceding years of our life, we believe that we will not change any more. We believe that the tattoo of a giant Hello Kitty we are having put on our back will be something we will always cherish. This is why 80% of people with tattoos regret them twenty years after having them. Fashion is the same, although less permanent. We look back at the past and laugh about how foolish we were. We are unable to see that we are still changing and in twenty years we will be laughing at our current fashion. The end of history illusion.

9. Why do you think religious wars start?

Well, on the surface, religious wars start because of religion. One group of people worship god A, and another group of people worship god B. The Aists want to force the Bists to believe in A. They do this by war. However, that is simply the way it appears. Most religious wars that have occurred through Earth’s history have only used religion as a pretext. Religion is a method of controlling your own people, and a reason for declaring war on another people. The crusades were fought to extend Western power and to halt Moslem expansion. The thirty years war, mentioned in the talk, was a religious war, in pretext, but it was actually a fight between the major European countries for power and influence. Wars purely for the sake of religion do happen, but quite often they are usurped for reasons of territory, politics, or power.

10. Do you think professional men and women should have to wear suits?

This is actually two questions rolled into one. Should professional men and women wear suits? Should professional men **and** women wear suits. I’ll try to take them one at a time.

The wearing of suits in a professional capacity has become the social norm. We differentiate work clothes from casual clothes by their seeming lack of comfort. People working should not be comfortable, perhaps. However, the real reason why we wear suits to work is simply because we wear suits to work. It is as socially accepted as money. Why do we use money? Simple pieces of paper that have no value. Because we all agree with it. Why do we wear suits? Because we all agree that suits are worn in the office. Some people can afford to flout this rule. However, these people are usually the powerful, the rich, the people that don’t need to be concerned about the security of their job.

The second embedded question was whether both men and women should wear suits at work. In the workplace, men have a fairly standardized dress code, while women have more freedom. As long as they area dressed appropriately, women have a wider choice of clothes. Is this ok? Yes, it’s ok. Women suffer in the business place from unequal pay, glass ceilings, lack of maternity leave, unequal expectations, and many more problems that I haven’t even realized. I don’t think dress code is even worth considering. Men don’t have the right to whine about being forced to wear a tie.