

Fashion dictates.

"Mum, please don't buy me any clothes. I just want to go shopping for clothes with Dad." This request was made by my almost thirteen year old, and echoed(1) by my fourteen year old. It was totally unexpected. In fact, I have never heard anything like that before(2). I've shopped for my children's clothes all of their lives, and now, suddenly, I've been told not to. Did their request hurt my feelings? Not really. I understand that my two oldest are adolescents; they have what we call a 'mental fog'(3) of hormones and changing feelings. I was the same. Perhaps they no longer like my style. Perhaps the brand names I buy are just not cool. Or perhaps they know something that I don't know about fashion. I have never really followed fashion; I just buy what I like. But fashion, for my boys, has suddenly become quite important. The reason they want to shop with their dad, is that he doesn't care about bargains, sales, or saving money. I, on the other hand, am always looking for a bargain. I shop around(4). My husband will find the nicest shop, and buy whatever(5) the boys want. That's why they now prefer dad over mum, the traitors. So, I decided to show my kids that I'm not out of touch(6), I can be fashionable, and perhaps even cool. The latest thing now, apparently, in middle school are Elites. They are a super duper(7), special, wonderful, cool-to-the-extreme(8) type of sock. Everybody wears them, well, everybody who is anybody(9) wears them. If you want to be seen as normal you have to have Elites, otherwise your life is meaningless. So, I followed the dictates of fashion, and spent far too much money on socks. And, you know, I think there is something special about them, some kind of magical power. As soon as my boys put them on, they seemed happier, more confident, and definitely cooler. They walked into school like two zebras joining the herd(10); they belonged.

1. 'Echo' can be used figuratively when someone's words agree or reflect someone else's.
 - a. My sister's words were echoed by her husband: I should go to the doctor immediately.
 - b. My grandmother's voice echoed in my daughter's laughter.
2. 'I have never heard anything like that before' is a useful sentence to practice with different verbs:
 - a. I have never seen anything like that before.
 - b. I have never eaten anything like that before.
 - c. We have never been anywhere like that before.
 - d. They have never done anything like that before.
 - e. She has never said anything like that before. etc etc
3. 'Mental fog' is used when talking about health issues, when a person feels forgetful or not fully awake.
 - a. If I don't sleep enough, I have a real mental fog.
 - b. Depression gives you a mental fog, but exercise and a good diet can make you mentally sharper.
4. 'To shop around' means to spend time going from one shop to another to find the best price. It is also slang for dating lots of people to gain experience.
 - a. I liked the car, but it was too expensive. I think I'll shop around.
 - b. You don't have to marry the first man you meet; shop around a little.
5. 'Whatever' is too important to not mention. It's a great word to use in many situations.
 - a. Buy whatever you want. Eat whatever you want. Listen to whatever he says. (The negative of this is 'don't listen to anything he says'). Do whatever you want.

6. 'To be out of touch' is to not see or respond to reality the way most others do; or to not be realistic. It is also used for being non-communicative with friends and relatives.

a. My family thinks that I am out of touch because I don't have a computer.

b. I'm so out of touch; I really need to get on Facebook and catch up with my family and friends.

7. 'Super duper' is a traditional slang; it's an extension of super and is lighthearted.

a. After dinner, we had Maria's super duper yummy apple pie.

b. I think the Honda Leaf is a super duper car.

8. '.....to-the-extreme' can be used with many different adjectives.

a. They are sporty-to-the-extreme; it's all they talk about, and all they do.

b. They are unhealthy-to-the-extreme; they smoke, drink too much, never exercise, and only eat at McDonald's.

9. 'Anybody' or 'somebody' are both used to refer to someone who has social importance. The opposite is a 'nobody'.

a. He really thinks he's somebody. He left the party because he said it was full of nobodies. I'm glad he left.

b. You must see the Oscars; anybody who is anybody will be there. (Here you can say 'everybody who is anybody will be there') also.

10. A herd is a group of animals, usually 4 legged.

a. The herd of cows ran when the thunder started.

b. The huge herd of zebras covered the plains to the horizon.