
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

The English We Speak

Words for underwear

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This is not a word-for-word transcript

Neil

Hello and welcome to The English We Speak with me Neil...

Li

...and me Li. Hello.

Neil

In this programme, we're talking about clothes.

Li

Clothes! Oh My favourite subject in the whole world! I know all the designers, I try different styles... I love clothes! Let's talk about MY clothes.

Neil

Well... actually I thought we should talk about our smalls.

Li

Smalls?! Do you think my clothes are too small for me? Are you calling me fat?

Neil

No, Li. You look fine. 'Smalls' is a word we use for underwear.

Li

Smalls. So you are talking about women's knickers and men's underpants, socks, women's bras...

Neil

Yes. And we can refer to our underwear as 'smalls' or 'undies'.

Li

Undies. That's easy to remember because it refers to what we wear under our clothes – undies.

Neil

Two easy words to remember when you talk about underwear. And remember they are always plural.

Li

I see. So you don't say one small or one undy.

Neil

No, you don't. Smalls and undies are always used in the plural and they mean underwear. Now let's hear some examples of how these words are used.

Examples

Linda, hurry up or we'll miss the plane! Don't forget to pack your smalls!

Billy, don't walk around the house in your undies. Your granny is coming to visit and she'll be here at any time.

Neil

Now don't forget that these words for underwear are very informal and British slang.

Li

Well, smalls and undies can look good too, even if not many people will see them.

Neil

So you want to talk about fashion now.

Li

Of course. I love fashion! Do you love fashion, Neil?

Neil

Er... not so much...

Li

Come on, Neil. Let's go shopping! I can help you choose the trendiest clothes... you've got to have a style. Let's go! Come on!

Neil

Okay.

Both

Bye!