

Keep your English up to date

Pants

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Of course, you all know the normal meanings of 'pants' – though perhaps you've sometimes found yourselves in that situation of trying to remember which meaning of pants is the norm in the UK and the US (remember, in the US trousers are called 'pants') – but how many of you know it as an adjective, an interjection, or even a verb? Ah yes, 'pants' is so much more than an item of clothing.

Consider a conversation I heard recently in London between two young people in their early-twenties: one took out his mobile phone to make a call, and his friend said 'Your mob is pants, why don't you get a new one?'. When pants is used as an adjective to mean 'rubbish' or 'poor quality', it can be modified, so we have 'more pants' and 'the most pants'!

Or how about this: 'Pants! I've got a test at school tomorrow and I haven't done any work'. Here we're expressing disappointment, worry – a feeling of dejection.

And did you know you can be 'pantsed'? Imagine yourself at the swimming pool, you've had a nice swim and a shower and are getting dressed when one of your friends rushes over and pulls your underwear down, running away laughing. You've been pantsed!

Just when you thought you only had to remember the difference between pants as underwear and pants as trousers, you find a whole new world of meaning. Oh pants!



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