
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

Authentic Real English 地道英语

White / blue-collar worker

白领，蓝领



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Callum

Hello and welcome to Authentic Real English. I'm Callum.

Feifei

大家好，我是冯菲菲。

Callum

Feifei, what kind of workers are we - are we blue-collar workers or white-collar workers?

Feifei

什么蓝领、白领的？你穿着没领子的T恤衫，你就是“无领”；我么，是黄色斑点衬衫领 a yellow-with-polka-dot-collar worker. How about that?

Callum

Come one, Feifei, you know that this has nothing to do with fashion! It has to do with colours but more by tradition than by fact.

Feifei

Indeed – I was just joking. A blue-collar worker 也就是我们汉语里说的从事体力劳动的、上班需要穿制服的“蓝领”。

Callum

Yes. In the early 20th century, they usually wore clothing which was sturdy, cheap and didn't show dirt easily. Their uniform was made of fabric like denim.

Feifei

不过在办公室办公，做秘书或管理等工作的人常被称为 white-collar workers，也就是我们说的“白领”。这肯定跟他们穿的白色衬衫有关系吧。

Callum

This is also a tradition from last century which has been incorporated into the language. I work in an office and we are not told to wear a particular uniform so I wear any colour I like.

Feifei

我们也可以说 a blue-collar job 或者 a white-collar job。

Callum

Let's hear some examples of how these expressions are used.

Examples

When the company went bankrupt many white-collar workers found themselves looking for blue-collar jobs.

Some popular folk songs reflect the aspirations and struggles of blue-collar workers.

Feifei

在这里，要告诉大家的是，在日常生活对话中，除了 blue-collar worker、white-collar worker 以外，你可能还会听到别人说 pink-collar worker 粉领劳动者。这个表达主要是指低收入的劳动者，多用于女性，比如从事秘书或护士工作的女性。

Callum

But pink-collar worker and other classifications with colours are less common. The ones most used are indeed blue-collar worker and white-collar worker.

Feifei

Pink-collar worker 这个说法没有 blue-collar worker 和 white-collar worker 用得那么多，所以在使用的时候要稍加注意。What a pity! I quite like striped-dark-blue-and-pale-yellow-designer-collar worker.

Callum

You might like that, but nobody would understand what you meant. But you don't have to worry, you look good in white, or blue: it brings out your tan, works well in contrast with the colour of your eyes... and with your hair...

Feifei

Oh, stop it!

Both

Bye!