

# English articles

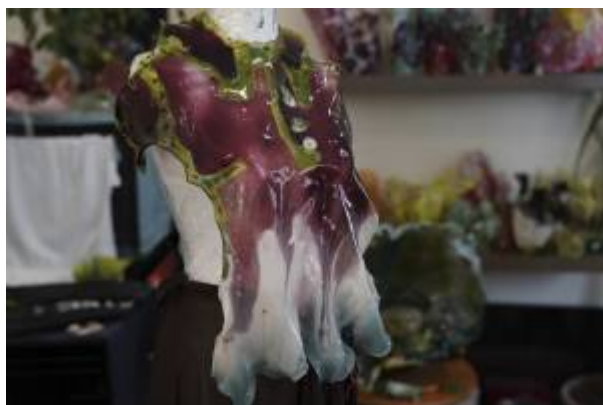
It's useful to read articles in English, even if you don't understand every word - it will help you increase your vocabulary and keep up to date with things happening in English-speaking countries!

*This page will be updated on **Mondays**. The first article is aimed at a B1 and upwards level and the second article is aimed at a B2 and upwards level*

## Articles of the week



**A designer dressed Chappell Roan with seaweed. But don't expect to find the approach in stores — yet**



By KIKI SIDERIS and MELINA WALLING Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — At her kitchen stove, fashion designer Caroline Zimbalist looks like an alchemist at work as she stirs a pot full of corn starch and a thickener made from seaweed. The peppermint-

scented mixture glitters as she carefully pours it into silicone molds of hearts and leaves.

When the material hardens, Zimbalist will stitch it into unique, made-to-order dresses that she sells on her website. She hopes her designs, which have been worn by celebrities including Chappell Roan, will put a spotlight on materials that aren't sourced from planet-polluting fossil fuels, such as oil.

"It's almost like a vessel to show the world," she said.

Other small-scale designers are testing out tapioca, gelatin and other kitchen-shelf ingredients. Meanwhile, big names such as Adidas and Hermes have experimented with mushroom leather, while the Lycra brand is incorporating a new largely corn-based material into stretch fabric. Some experts are skeptical that these textiles — commonly referred to as biomaterials — will go mainstream, but designers such as Zimbalist hope their experiments will set an example for larger brands to follow.

Over 60% of clothing comes from petroleum-based synthetics like polyester, according to Textile Exchange, a nonprofit that promotes sustainable fashion. Manufacturing those materials creates emissions. Synthetic garments can also shed microplastics during washing. And as fast-fashion brands pump out new clothes for customers who expect new designs every few weeks, many garments end up in landfills.

Zimbalist's designs gained attention in 2024 when Roan wore one on "The Tonight Show." The New York-based designer has since dressed stars such as comedian Atsuko Okatsuka and actors Anna Lore and Reneé Rapp. She takes commissions for custom clothing pieces, which cost between \$150 and \$1,200, via her website, which notes her "unique recipe of biodegradable and natural materials."

As to whether her approach could be reproduced at a larger scale, Zimbalist says her materials could most practically be used to replace plastic hardware such as buttons and zippers. She acknowledges they can be sticky if not dried correctly, stinky if not treated and melty if exposed to extreme heat.

"Even incorporating it in small ways to start would be really strong," she said.

### **Why biomaterials are hard to find**

Fossil-fuel derived fabrics are ubiquitous because they're cheap and made from plentiful raw materials, said Dale Rogers, an Arizona State University professor who studies supply chains.

Many clothes are also made of materials that come from plants or animals such as cotton, silk, wool and cashmere. But some have environmental impacts. Cotton uses a lot of water. Sheep and goats burp out methane.

Some biomaterials have gotten closer to widespread use. Mycelium leather, made from mushrooms, has been used to create luxury shoes, accessories and handbags by brands such as Stella McCartney, Lululemon, Adidas and Hermes.

Still, Rogers said he's not convinced there's enough demand for alternative materials to overcome companies' aversion to the higher costs of producing them at a large scale.

"Honestly, in the end, cost drives almost all decisions," he said.

### **Wrinkles in aiming for sustainability**

Getting larger companies to use alternative materials depends on whether they will pay more for a fabric that matches their values, said Jon Veldhouse, the CEO of Qore LLC.

His company makes a product called Qira that replaces about 70% of the fossil-derived components of elastic synthetic fabrics with a corn-based material. The Lycra Company, which sells its stretchy material to major brands, initially expects to incorporate Qira in around 25 percent of its Spandex business, said Lycra chief brand and innovation officer Steve Stewart. But that option will be more expensive, and they haven't yet announced any takers.

It can also be hard to measure the sustainability of farming practices that go into producing raw materials for new fabrics. Cargill is Qore's partner and corn supplier, and it gets its grain from farmers in the vicinity of their processing plant. Veldhouse said many already plant cover crops or reduce tilling to lower environmental impact, but he couldn't provide data on how many use those approaches.

Sarah Needham, a senior director at Textile Exchange, said it's great to see a large organization such as Lycra making its production systems more sustainable. But she also stressed the industry needs to reduce its overreliance on virgin materials, perhaps considering agricultural waste as a source of fabric.

### **The role of experimental designers**

Needham said experimental designers are often the ones coming up with those alternatives to virgin materials and building appetite for new approaches.

But small designers might not have the resources to test the biodegradability of their materials, which often do involve processing, even if it's by hand, said Ramani Narayan, an engineering professor at Michigan State University.

"If I take something — like seaweed or whatever it is — and I apply a process to it, then I can no longer call it natural," he said.

Zimbalist, the New York designer, acknowledges that her materials aren't ready to replace conventional fabrics and that her work is more of "a piece that leads to larger conversations."

Rogers, of Arizona State, thinks the fashion industry is a long way from meaningful change, but that "it's incredibly valuable" for artists and specialty manufacturers to try new materials.

"What they're doing is likely to have long-term benefit, maybe even after their lifetimes," he added.

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## **Macron says France and Britain will 'save Europe' as he starts a state visit to the UK**

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By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — French President Emmanuel Macron on Tuesday urged Britain to stick close to its neighbors despite its exit from the European Union, saying France and the U.K. will “save Europe” by standing for democracy, law and international order in a dangerous world.

On a state visit that mixed royal pageantry with tough political talks on Ukraine and migration, Macron said Europe must strengthen its economy and defenses and reduce its dependence “on both the U.S. and China.”

Macron's three-day trip, at the invitation of King Charles III, is the first state visit to the U.K. by a European Union head of state since Brexit, and a symbol of the U.K. government's desire to reset relations with the bloc after Britain acrimoniously left the EU in 2020.

Macron addressed members of both houses of Britain's Parliament packed into the building's ornate Royal Gallery. He said the two countries represent “a world order based on law, justice and respect for territorial integrity, an order that is today being attacked on a daily basis.”

“The United Kingdom and France must once again show the world that our alliance can make all the difference,” Macron said, adding that “we will save Europe by our example and our solidarity.”

He said that even though Britain has left the EU, “the United Kingdom cannot stay on the sidelines. Because defense and security, competitiveness, democracy — the very core of our identity — are connected across Europe as a continent.”

### **Pomp and politics**

The French president and his wife, Brigitte Macron, were treated to the full force of British ceremonial charm, a far cry from the chilly relations of 2022, when then-Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said that the “jury is out” on whether Macron was a friend or a foe.

The Macrons were greeted at London's RAF Northolt air base by Prince William and his wife Catherine — wearing a dress by French design house Christian Dior — before being met by King Charles and Queen Camilla in Windsor, west of London. They were driven to the almost 1,000-year-old royal residence of Windsor Castle in horse-drawn carriages, through streets bedecked in Union Jacks and French tricolor flags.

The king and queen hosted a banquet for the Macrons at Windsor Castle on Tuesday evening, with 160 guests including politicians, diplomats and celebrities such as Mick Jagger and Elton John. They were served summer vegetables, chicken with asparagus and iced blackcurrant parfait, along with Champagne and a gin-infused cocktail called L'entente, after the “entente cordiale” struck between

Britain and France in 1904.

As monarch, Charles is expected to be above politics, but he spoke about the support Britain and France give Ukraine “in defense of our shared values,” noted the challenge of “irregular migration across the English Channel” and said the two countries face “complex threats, emanating from multiple directions.

“As friends and as allies, we face them together,” Charles said.

### **New tactics to stop boats**

Politics will take center stage on Wednesday, when Macron sits down for talks with U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer on migration, defense and investment — including a 12.5% stake by French energy firm EDF in a new nuclear power plant planned for eastern England.

Macron also came bearing a tantalizing cultural gift: an agreement to send the Bayeux Tapestry to Britain for the first time in more than 900 years. The 70-meter (230-foot) tapestry showing the Norman conquest of England in 1066 will go on display at the British Museum from September 2026 to July 2027.

At talks Wednesday and a U.K.-France summit on Thursday, Macron and Starmer will discuss ways to stop migrants from crossing the English Channel in small boats and try to advance plans for a post-ceasefire security force for Ukraine, despite apparent U.S. indifference to the idea and Russia's refusal to halt the onslaught on its neighbor.

Britain receives fewer asylum-seekers than Mediterranean European countries, but thousands of migrants each year use northern France as a launching point to reach the U.K., either by stowing away in trucks or — after a clampdown on that route — in small boats across one of the world's busiest shipping lanes.

The U.K. has struck a series of deals with France over the years to increase patrols of beaches and share intelligence in an attempt to disrupt the smuggling gangs.

It has all had only a limited impact. About 37,000 people were detected crossing the English Channel in small boats in 2024, and more than 20,000 people made the crossing in the first six months of 2025, up by about 50% from the same period last year. Dozens of people have died trying to cross.

British officials have been pushing for French police to intervene more forcefully to stop the boats, and welcomed the sight of officers slashing rubber dinghies with knives in recent days.

France is also considering a U.K. proposal for a “one-in, one-out” deal that would see France take back some migrants who reached Britain, in return for the U.K. accepting some of those in France.

Macron said the leaders would try “to fix today what is a burden for our two countries.”

“France and the U.K. have a shared responsibility to address irregular migration with humanity, solidarity and fairness,” he said.

### **Keeping Ukraine in focus**

Starmer and Macron have worked closely together to rally support for Ukraine, though they have taken contrasting approaches to U.S. President Donald Trump, with Macron more willing to challenge the American president than the emollient Starmer. Britain and France have led efforts to form an

international peacekeeping force for Ukraine to reinforce a future ceasefire with European troops and equipment and U.S. security guarantees.

Trump has shown little enthusiasm for the idea, however, and a ceasefire remains elusive. British officials say the “coalition of the willing” idea is alive and well, with Macron and Starmer due to join an international videoconference on Thursday to discuss planning for the force.

Macron said the coalition was a sign that “Europeans will never abandon Ukraine – never.”

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