



## How to Have the Perfect Prom Dress and Save Money

By: Abby Slater

Prom dress shopping is both a delight and a horror. It may be fun to browse through the stores and look online at the bejeweled and ruffled chiffon, but once it come down to the final purchase, the decision can be stressful. With big shopping malls and online stores at our fingertips, the amount of choices available seem overwhelming.

Sometimes though, you may have the specific dress of your dreams already in our head. If you are lucky enough to find it in the stores it may be too expensive, or not carried in your size. Other times, the dress simply does not exist. For some people, this may be a sign that it simply is not meant to be. However, I am here to encourage you and tell you that there is a solution!

When I was a senior in high school, I knew exactly what I wanted my prom dress to look like; it would be a light pink, strapless, sweetheart, chiffon gown with white rhinestones down the middle of the bodice and a belt of dangling rhinestones across the front. I wanted to have a dress that was unique, that no other girl would be wearing that night.

I searched far and wide for the perfect dress that matched this image in my head, but came out empty handed. A similar dress either did not exist, or was too expensive for my budget. That is when I had to get creative.

I bought a simple pink dress off of Amazon for about \$80 that already had jewels down the front. When it finally came, it was not quite my size, as I am rather tiny. Luckily for me, however, my mother was able to hem it and make adjustments.

The only piece missing was the belt with dangling jewels. This problem was easily overcome as I headed to my local craft store and found a strand of dangling jewels that my mother was then able to sew on to the dress.

So, if you are looking for the perfect dress, but are also shopping on I budget, I urge you to get creative. The best way to create the dress that you want is to buy a simple solid colored dress that is the style you want and then add and accessorize.

Some ideas could be adding a sheer or lace shirt underneath if you do not want to go strapless or add some floral applique on the skirt and bodice for some more character. Add a belt, ribbon, or pearls; the options are endless when you have the creative power.

Things to remember if you opt to dress shop online is that cheapest is not always best and that what is shown in the picture may not be the actual item you will receive. Therefore, it is important to do research on which sites and sellers are legit, and which ones are known scams. It is also important to look at customer reviews. Amazon has credible customer reviews as some are marked as certified purchases, which means that it is a real person giving real feedback.

Also, make sure to order your dress months in advance. It often takes longer for prom dresses to be shipped, especially if they are being delivered from another country. Buying a dress in advance also gives you time just in case it never shows or if the dress is not what you expected. Most importantly, however, you want to make sure that the dress fits, and if not, that you have time for alterations.

With these tips, you are well on your way to finding the perfect dress for the perfect night!