

EXAMINE THIS ISSUE

A book by its cover. Some people use clothing as a tool for relating to others. To them, clothing is a kind of shortcut that reveals facts about a person. As a result, they base the way they treat someone on what that person is wearing. Others think that clothes can be misleading. They believe that looking only at what someone is wearing can lead to wrong conclusions about the person. They consciously avoid letting clothes influence the way they treat others.

What do you think?

What do you think clothing reveals about a person? Should clothing guide the way people treat others?

WHO DECIDES WHAT CLOTHING YOU wear? Do you? “Well, sure,” most teens might say, “I always decide.” That’s a reasonable answer, but there might be more to it than you think. As you’ll soon see, something as routine as the weather or as complex as the media can have impact on the clothing decisions you make. See *Fig. 1-1*.

CHOOSING WHAT TO WEAR

What happens when you sleep longer than you should on a school morning? If you went to bed knowing what tomorrow’s outfit would be, the clothing decision has already been made. If not, you probably rush to the closet and grab something.

Whether you quickly choose boots instead of athletic shoes when getting dressed or carefully pick an outfit that makes you look your best, something is behind your decisions. What might that be? People choose the clothes they wear for a number of reasons.

Your Basic Needs

You might not realize it, but the clothing you choose meets certain basic needs that all people share. While serving the functions shown in *Fig. 1-2* on pages 26-27, clothing meets many needs. Some are physical—for comfort, protection, and safety. Clothing covers the body and protects it from the weather, harm, and injury.

Other needs are intellectual, emotional, and social. Clothes can communicate lots of information about people and their lives. Clothes can make you feel attractive and self-confident. Clothes can also help you identify with other people and feel like part of a group.

Your Activities

Clothing choices are linked to how and where you spend your time. A hiker or shopper chooses comfortable shoes for walking. Many sports enthusiasts need protective gear. Bike riders, skateboarders, and football and hockey players wear helmets. Soccer players wear shin guards.

Even the people you’ll be with influence what you wear. Weekend activities with family and friends may call for either casual or dress-up outfits. Wearing something similar to your friends can make you feel more comfortable.

1-1 How do you decide what to wear? Sometimes an outfit that works for you one day just doesn’t seem right on another. Why is that?

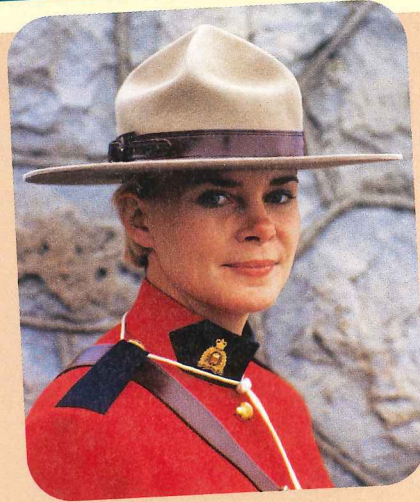
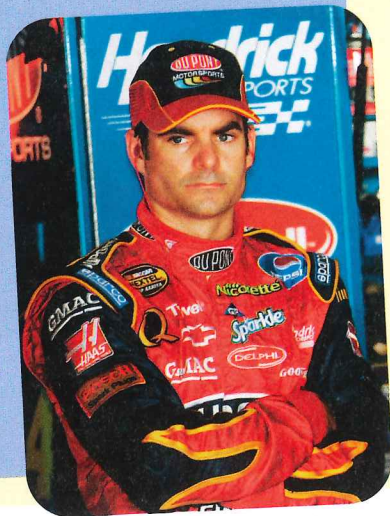


Fig. 1-2 • Basic Functions of Clothing

Throughout history, clothing has fulfilled the following basic functions.

Protection. Clothing insulates from the cold and keeps the sun from burning and dehydrating the body in the heat. Special clothing protects people from harm in sports and certain occupations. Construction workers, firefighters, and police officers

need special clothing for safety. Workers in hospitals and restaurants wear sanitary clothing and hair coverings to prevent the spread of germs.



Identification. Clothing and accessories can identify people as members of a group. Uniforms provide instant recognition of police officers, firefighters, and members of the military. Uniforms create a special image for hotel staffs and airline personnel. Uniforms also identify athletic teams, with striped shirts and shorts in rugby and tight, one-piece singlets in wrestling.

A check of the weather guides many clothing choices. The right garments can insulate your body against extremely hot or cold temperatures. Many warm-weather clothes feature light colors that reflect sunlight and loose styles that allow warm air from the body to escape. Cold-weather clothing has multiple layers and heavy or bulky fabrics that trap warm air from the body, creating an insulating layer of warmth for outdoor activities.

Your activities often allow you to make choices about what to wear, but sometimes the decision isn't up to you. A school, for example, may set up rules about what can be worn. On a part-time job you might have to wear a uniform or clothes of a certain style and color. Fast-food workers must

wear hats or hairnets to prevent hair from falling into the food they prepare or serve.

Activities are as varied as people. What activities influence the clothing choices that you make each day?

Your Personal Preferences

Everyone has likes and dislikes. That's why clothes come in many colors, fabrics, and styles. Clothing likes and dislikes are determined by your **values**, beliefs about what's important, desirable, or worthwhile. By examining your values, you can discover your overall attitude toward clothing. This is your clothing philosophy, and it affects what you decide to wear.

Fig. 1-2 • Basic Functions of Clothing (continued)

Modesty. Clothing provides modesty, a belief about the proper way to cover the body with clothes. Modesty may vary for the occasion. Bathing suits



and bare feet are fine for the beach but not in schools and offices. Modest also varies in history. In Victorian times, women wore bathing outfits that covered them from elbows to knees.

Status. Clothing and accessories can show a person's status, a position or rank within a group. Kings and queens, even now, wear crowns to set them apart from subjects. Leaders of marching bands stand out with tall fur hats. Members of the military wear insignias to indicate rank. Deans of universities wear colorful scarves or hoods to show status in the school.



Adornment. People wear clothing and jewelry to enhance their appearance and attract attention. As **adornment**, these decorations express uniqueness and creativity. Throughout history, people have adorned their bodies with cosmetics, body paint, and tattoos in addition to clothing and jewelry.



What do you look for in clothes: comfort, durability, low cost, easy care, status, the latest style? As you answer, your values about clothes become clearer.

People who want comfort choose clothes that feel good. For durability, they want clothing that wears well over a long period of time. Those who value low cost look for special sales and bargains. To preserve their free time, some people want clothing that takes little care. Individuals who value status select clothes and accessories that look, or are, expensive or have the name of a designer or celebrity. If having the latest styles, colors, and accessories is important, a person might sacrifice comfort and practicality in order to wear up-to-date fashions.

Your likes and dislikes also include how you feel about your appearance. Do you like to stand out in a group or blend in? Do you like to be a trendsetter? Perhaps you prefer a middle-of-the-road approach. Some people dress in a certain way so others will notice them. Other people use their clothing choices as a way to blend in with the crowd. The more you understand your personal preferences, the easier it is to make the best clothing choices for every occasion.

OTHER INFLUENCES

Some influences on clothing decisions are less obvious than the ones you've just read about. Family, friends, and the media also have impact on fashion choices.

Influence of Family

Since the family is such a constant presence in most people's lives, its impact may go unnoticed. When clothing decisions are made, however, the family does make a difference. Where the family lives and favorite activities influence what is worn. Families who live in northern climates, for example, need heavy coats, mittens, and boots for snowy winter days. Families who enjoy outdoor activities might need clothing for camping, hiking, or water sports. See *Fig. 1-3*.

Influence of Friends

A **peer group** consists of people with a similar background, social status, and age. Your peer group is your friends and classmates. An adult's peers are friends and job associates. A peer group can have a big influence on how people dress and act.

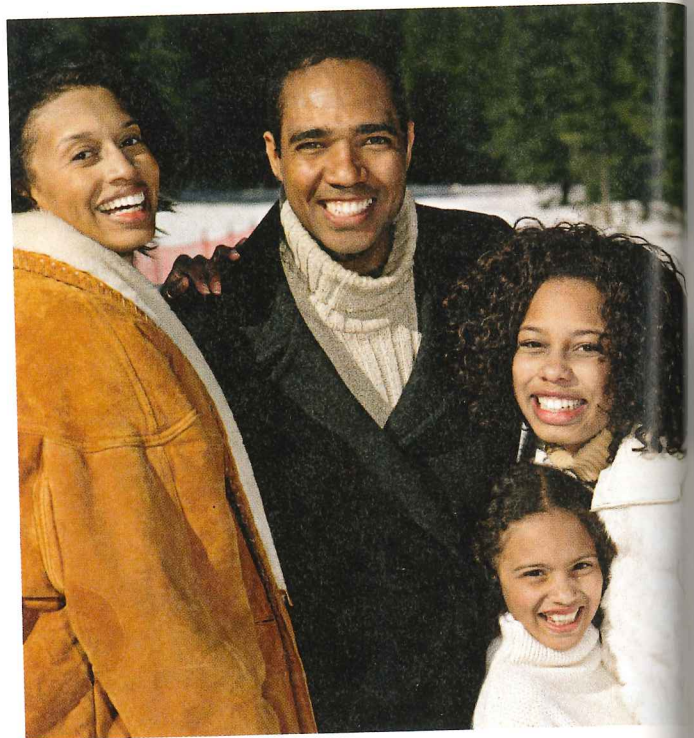
During the teen years, young people usually have a strong need to be accepted by peers. The group may decide what clothing is "in," whether high-top athletic shoes with untied laces, a baseball cap turned backwards, or a brand of clothing. Acceptance hinges on wearing the "approved" style.

Following the course set by peers is not necessarily good or bad. It depends on the circumstances. Problems arise when the group's idea of "right" conflicts with the individual's beliefs as well as the family's. In another chapter, you'll see that deciding when to go along with the crowd can be a measure of your own identity and values.

Impact of the Media

Through the **media**, messages are communicated to a large audience. You'll find the media all around you. Almost everyone watches television, listens to the radio, goes to the movies, or rents videos. People also read magazines and newspapers, browse through catalogs, and surf the Internet. All of these impact clothing choices.

Many product messages are communicated through the media. When you read a magazine article on the season's latest fashion trends, you get ideas about what to buy and wear. Advertisements, however, are the main method used to promote products. When you buy a cer-



1-3 Clothing choices are influenced by the family. Family activities often influence these choices.

tain jacket brand that you saw advertised, your decision has been influenced by the media.

Advertising

If it weren't for advertisements, how would you know which stores carry the clothes you want and how much they cost? Advertising is very useful to consumers, but you have to remember that the main purpose is to sell a product, image, or idea. Advertising is very powerful because of its ability to persuade people to buy. An ad for a premium ice cream talks about the good taste but doesn't mention the high fat content. A television commercial for a luxury car doesn't mention its poor gas mileage. An ad for clothing or accessories shows the item on a gorgeous model, with no information about the product.

When you see such ads, look for the facts. Many ads appeal strictly to emotions. They create vague but positive feelings for the product. Often, the goal is to make you think that this item will

make your life—and you—more interesting, more exciting, more attractive, more popular, and ultimately happier.

If you read, look, and listen to each ad carefully, you can separate the facts from the emotional appeal. Advertising should be only one of the many influences on your clothing choices.

Celebrities

Have you heard anyone say, “Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery?” When you admire someone, it’s easy to allow that person to influence the choices you make, often about clothing. Subconsciously, people think that if they look or act like a particular person, some of the admired characteristics will rub off.

Entertainers, especially on stage, screen and television, influence clothing, hairstyles, and makeup. They may influence fashion through the styles they wear themselves or the costumes of the characters they portray. In the 1960s, people copied the haircuts and the collarless suits worn by the Beatles. Later, Madonna started a trend by wearing lingerie as outerwear. In the late 1990s, people copied the hairstyles and casual, urban clothing of the leads in the television show, *Friends*. Today, prom gowns are influenced by the designer gowns celebrities wear at awards shows, such as the Academy Awards and the MTV ceremonies. Many television shows and magazines place special emphasis on reporting what the celebrities are wearing to these special events.

Celebrities from the sports world also inspire fashion trends. Some famous athletes endorse brand products. Michael Jordan has done ads for Air Jordan® athletic shoes and Tiger Woods for Nike® sportswear. Other athletes inspire particular styles, such as the colorful tennis outfits worn by Serena and Venus Williams. When Lance Armstrong wore a yellow rubber wristband to support *Livestrong*™, an organization that supports people in managing and surviving cancer, it became a fashion trend as well as a fund-raiser.

Models, politicians, religious leaders, television and film personalities, and heroes can all

motivate people to copy their styles of clothing. In the late 1990s, Regis Philbin, the former television host of *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*, started a fashion craze or matching shirts and ties. Aviator sunglasses became popular after the actor Tom Cruise wore them in the 1986 movie, *Top Gun*. Twenty years later, when he wore them in the movie *Mission Impossible 3*, they again became popular.

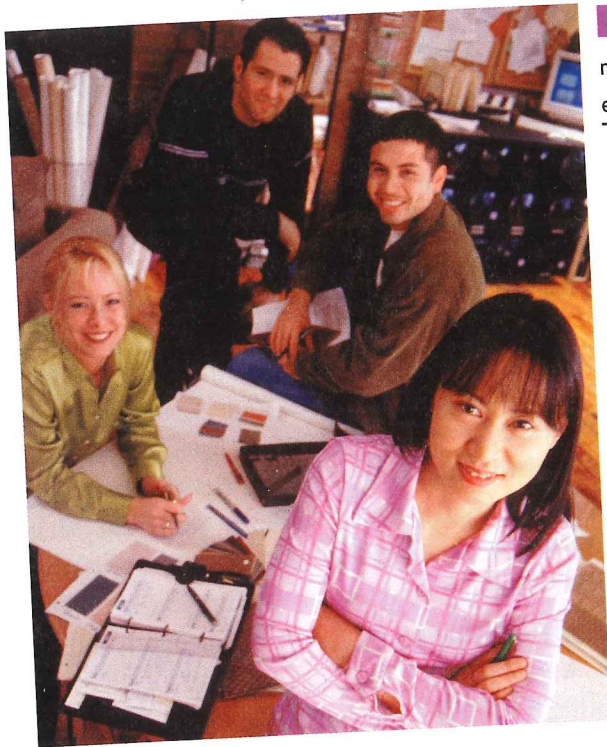
After the rescue operations that followed the destruction of the World Trade Center in New York City, people wore caps, jackets, and T-shirts inscribed with FDNY and NYPD, the insignias of New York’s fire and police departments. What other heroes and celebrities influence fashion trends?

Status Symbols

Many fashion designers, sports figures, and other celebrities have their names, initials, or symbols on clothes and accessories. Through exposure in the media, such items can become **status symbols**, which give the wearer a special feeling of importance or wealth. See *Fig. 1-4* on page 30.

What status symbols have you noticed on clothing? A small alligator adorns LaCoste’s shirts. An embroidered moose appears on Abercrombie and Fitch merchandise. The YSL initials appear on Yves St. Laurent’s accessories. The Nike® “swoosh” symbol appears on sportswear, as well as caps and shoes. Some expensive brands of jeans are identified by their distinctive stitching patterns on the back pocket. Many designers and stores, such as Tommy Hilfiger and Old Navy, have their names boldly printed on T-shirts and sweatshirts.

For some people, status symbols are important. By wearing these clothes and accessories, people try to look special. They may want to show that they can afford something expensive, or they just like wearing something that is “in.” As long as you understand the reason for status symbols, and the ones you choose fit your budget, these items may have a place in your wardrobe. If status symbols mean nothing to you, you can still look just fine without them.



1-4 Many businesses today allow employees to dress more casually than in the past. What advantages do employees have with this practice?

A CHANGING SOCIETY

Society influences what people wear. A **society** is a group of individuals who live together in a particular area, sometimes as a nation or community. Together, the people share certain traditions, institutions, and interests. The United States is a society of people who live together under one form of government. Although many variations exist in the way Americans dress, in the society as a whole there are similarities.

In the U.S., change is inevitable and ongoing. What happens in one part of the country can quickly influence other parts. Where clothing is concerned, five major trends influence the choices people make. These trends are introduced here, but you'll read more about them later.

More Casual Living

At one time, American society was more formal. Many clothing rules existed. Hats and gloves were a regular part of a woman's wardrobe. Most men wore business suits. People dressed up when

they traveled on an airplane, went shopping, or ate in restaurants. Many restaurants prohibited women from wearing slacks or pantsuits; men had to wear jackets and ties. There were other rules too. For example, women never wore white shoes before Memorial Day or after Labor Day. Black was the only acceptable color to wear for funerals. Black was never worn for weddings.

Today, most restaurants welcome customers in casual clothes. While traveling, people dress for comfort. Wedding guests and even bridesmaids frequently wear black. Most workplaces permit employees to wear casual attire. See Fig. 1-4. With more emphasis on leisure time, sports, and exercise, wardrobes reflect these interests. Women, in particular, no longer accept uncomfortable and constricting clothes or shoes just to follow the dictates of fashion designers.

Rapid Communication

Technological changes have brought societies around the world in close contact. Societies today share goods, services, and information quickly and easily. Like other news, fashion news transmits rapidly via computer, television, fax, and videos. The same television shows and movies are seen in many different countries. Concerts and sporting events are telecast live via satellite TV. The Internet and its commercial on-line services, such as Netscape, America Online (AOL), and Yahoo, offer new ways to communicate, advertise, and sell to consumers.

As a result, similar fashions are available for sale at the same time in many parts of the world. Teens in Japan and the United States can wear the same style of jeans even though they're manufactured in a third country. People around the world can access the Internet to purchase goods from almost anywhere.



1-5 Today's consumers have many options for shopping ranging from individual boutiques to large mega-malls. What's your favorite shopping option?

Multiple Shopping Options

If you like to shop for clothes, you're living at the right time, since opportunities are everywhere. Stores are still a favorite shopping option. Although stores are not all the same, their differences are less obvious than they once were. Today, the price at a discount store might be higher than buying on sale somewhere else.

Many stores are conveniently grouped together in malls. Some are found in small "strip centers," where the stores are lined up in a row. Large indoor malls feature at least two large stores, a collection of smaller stores, and a food court. Mega-malls have over 400 stores, many restaurants, and even entertainment areas.

People who don't have the time or desire to go to a store can order almost anything at home via computer, fax, or phone. They can view pictures of merchandise and place orders through the Internet. They can order from catalogs by phone or on-line. No matter where you live, you can now shop 24 hours a day. See *Fig. 1-5*.

Consumer Power

While designers drove the fashion world of yesterday, consumer influence is felt today. The time when a designer's revolutionary new style spread rapidly across the country no longer exists. Now designers are more likely to focus on new colors and fabrics than on radical new styles. They draw inspiration from what people are already wearing—at parties, clubs, sporting events, and on the street.

As consumers, people have become more educated. Their knowledge and skills have grown with rapid communication. As a result, consumers know what they want, and they want it all: rock-bottom prices, the best quality, good service, and the least hassle. They shop where these demands will be met. If a new store or shopping concept comes along, consumers are willing to give it a try. Loyalty to a store or brand name is less likely. All of these changes have made consumers more powerful, which makes sellers listen.

Global Marketplace

You might not have traveled around the world, but it's possible that something in your closet did. A well-traveled shirt could have begun its journey in another country, where someone created a design. At the same time, a fabric design was in the works somewhere else. After the fabric was produced in a third country, it was sent to a fourth country, where the shirt was manufactured. The thread, buttons, and trim were shipped in from other parts of the world. Once the shirt was assembled, the finished garment was shipped to a store, where it became yours.

Today, a garment that's entirely made in one country is the exception rather than the rule. Developing nations have become key players in the fashion industry, mostly as sources of materials and production. Clothing made around the world can be sold almost anywhere in the world.

Fashion capitals have also expanded across the globe. In the 1940s and 1950s, the major high-fashion designers were based in Paris. All the ready-to-wear designers were based in New York City. In the 1960s and 1970s, London, Rome, and

How To...

MAKE DECISIONS

To make the best clothing choices, you need good decision-making skills. The six steps shown here can guide you through decisions. Each time you use them, you'll become better prepared for future decisions.

Step 1: State the situation.

Clearly identify the problem or situation.

- You need a nice outfit to wear to a job interview.

Step 2: List various options.

What choices do you have?

- Should you buy something new?
- Could you sew a new garment?
- Should you make do with something you already own?
- Could you borrow a garment from a relative or friend?
- What other options do you have?

Step 3: Evaluate the options.

What are the pros and cons of each option? Evaluate all your choices before deciding.

- How much money can you spend on something new?
- Can you wait for a sale?
- Do you have the skills to sew a garment?
- Will you look presentable without something new?
- Would a borrowed garment fit well and look good?



Step 4: Consider your values.

What is most important to you? Consider money, time, practicality, appearance, and creativity.

Step 5: Select the best option.

Based on your evaluation of each option, which choice is best? When you've made your decision, follow through on it. The sooner you act, the sooner the problem will be solved.

- If this were your decision, what choice would you make?

Step 6: Evaluate the results.

Take time to evaluate your decision. Answer these questions: Why did you make the decision that you did? What important fact helped in making your decision? In the long run, did you make the right choice?

Exploring Decisions

What clothing decision do you have to make in the near future? Apply the six steps to make a choice.