




Fashion trends

A journey through time...

by Judy Jennings

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What is Fashion?

Clothes express who you are and what you value.

Definition of Fashion:

- Style of clothing, hair and personal appearance.
- Dress, behavior, way of living or other personal expressions that are popular at present.
- A particular type or variety.

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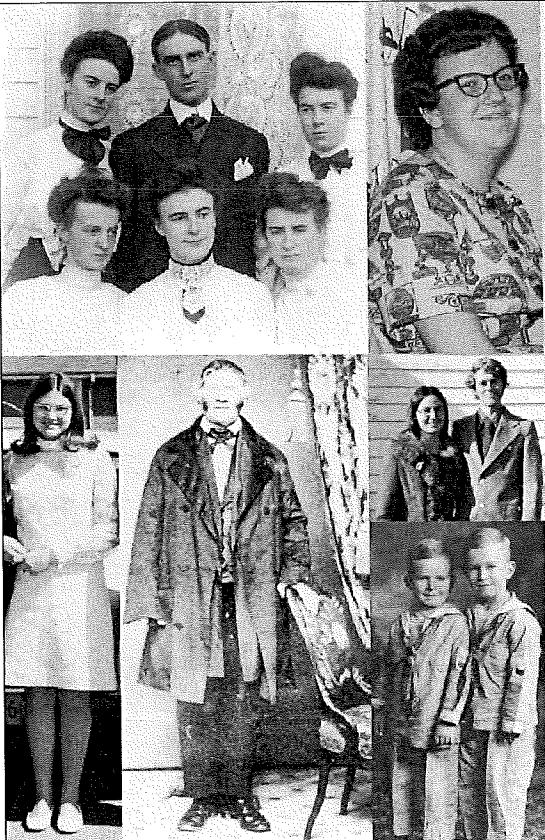
Introduction:

When a person puts on a T-shirt with a slogan it lets everyone know who he or she is.

That's what fashion is all about; letting your clothes express who you are and what you value.

Interest in fashion is not a new phenomenon. Before people wore many clothes, they adorned their bodies with paint and primitive jewelry. For thousands of years, clothing has been a way individuals and societies have communicated aspects of who they are without saying a word. At first glance, what people wear can indicate where they live as well as their social class, wealth, profession, religion and even marital status.

The term fashion isn't limited to clothing. What kind of jewelry and accessories people select, how they wear their hair and make-up — even body tattoos — are expressions of personal history, preferences and values.



Fashion Influences

Culture
War • Trade • Entertainment

Lifestyle
Climate • Work • Leisure

Communication
Marital Status • Social Status
Religious Affiliation

Technology
Inventions • Production • Science

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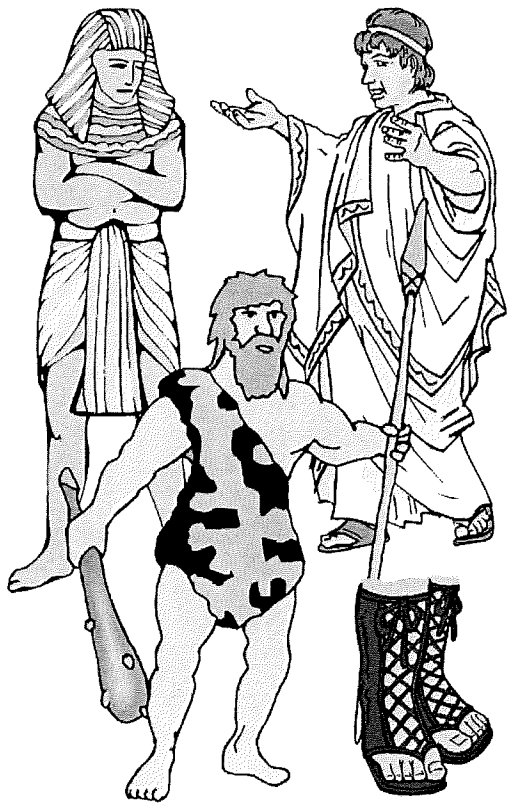
Whether plain or fancy or even weird, clothing styles don't develop out of thin air. What people wear is influenced by what's going on in the world around them. Factors such as culture, lifestyle, communication and technology affect fashion trends.

Culture. Is the country at war? Are new trade routes opening? What's the popular entertainment? Society's changes are reflected in clothing choices.

Lifestyle. Is the climate hot or cold? Do the people of the time work in the fields, toil in a factory or prance around at a royal court? What are the current leisure activities? The requirements of daily life drive apparel designs.

Communication. Are you married or single, rich or poor, a member of a social or religious group? Fashions are often created to answer these questions.

Technology. A technological advance could be as simple as tanning buckskin or as futuristic as weaving electronic threads to computerize fabric. Textiles and fashion generally mirror the acceptance of new technology.



Early Civilizations

Cultural Influences

- Early man is a hunter and gatherer.
- Other primitives turn to farming and herding.
- Empires rise and fall.

Fashion Influences

- Needle invention makes sewing possible.
- Spinning and weaving produce textiles.
- Silk industry begins in China.

Fashion Trends

- The loincloth is the first fashion statement.
- Linen drapes into tunics and togas.
- Barbarians favor trousers and fur.


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Early man hangs an animal pelt across his shoulders and fashion is born.

The loincloth likely comes next. Even when ancient societies are very civilized, people still wear minimal clothing. From Egypt to Greece to Rome, empires rise and fall but the loincloth and loose draping style remain basically the same for thousands of years.

The tunic is a rectangular piece of cloth with a neck opening. The toga is a gracefully draped garment. Often a toga is worn over a tunic. Light colored linen is the most popular fabric but people also wear wool and silk. More colorful clothing is seen in Byzantium. The climate is colder where the barbarians live so they wear trousers and fur.

Primitive clothing technology includes sewing with a bone needle and using natural vegetation and organic materials to dye fabric.



The Middle Ages

Cultural Influences

- Small kingdoms replace empires.
- Crusaders go to the Middle East.

Fashion Influences

- Crusades open trade routes.
- Scissors improve cutting.
- New buttons are decorative only.

Fashion Trends


- Surcoats cover long narrow dresses called cotehardies.
- Women hide their hair under wimples and headdresses.
- Men pad their clothing under armor.

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The Roman Empire falls apart and now small kingdoms rule under a feudal system. Crusaders head to the Middle East to recapture land and come back with all kinds of new ideas and treasures. They introduce luxurious fabrics as well as small scissors for cutting cloth. Buttons are another popular import but are used strictly for decoration. It will be many more fashion cycles before buttons fasten garments.

A woman wears a cotehardie, a long straight under dress, often with trailing sleeves. Over it goes an armless surcoat which may feature fur trim. Men pad their tunics and tights to wear under armor. A long flowing robe called the houppelande is adopted by both men and women. Clothing becomes more colorful in this era.

People in the Middle Ages have a real passion for headwear. Women hide their hair under white wimples which wrap around the chin. Later they switch to large headdresses often topped with veils. Men also cover their heads with hoods, caps and hats.



The Renaissance

1450-1600

Cultural Influences

- Exploration and trade grow.
- New ideas in science and art flourish.

Fashion Influences

- Traders promote beautiful textiles.
- Knitting is introduced.
- Jewelry becomes popular.


Fashion Trends

- Embroidery and jewels embellish garments.
- Men and women wear ruff collar.
- The farthingale widens women's skirts.

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Life changes dramatically as the Renaissance brings a new interest in art, science and exploration. Adventurous explorers bring back beautiful fabrics of wool, linen, silk, velvet and brocade as well as precious gems. The new textiles and embellishments spark a move to elegant fashion. Women's gowns are adorned with elaborate gold and silver embroidery, lace and jewel trims. The basic male style of padded tunic-like doublet, breeches and stockings now also features grand embellishments.

A large pleated collar, called a ruff, is worn by both men and women. Near the end of the period, women are wearing the farthingale. The elaborate contraption, which resembles a birdcage, is worn underneath the skirt to create a silhouette of tremendous proportions.



1600s

Cultural Influences

- Settlers colonize the new world.
- New thinkers tackle math, chemistry, philosophy and anatomy.
- War is almost a permanent state.

Fashion Influences

- Politics divide fashion into plain and fancy.
- Louis XIV likes over-the-top court fashions.

Fashion Trends

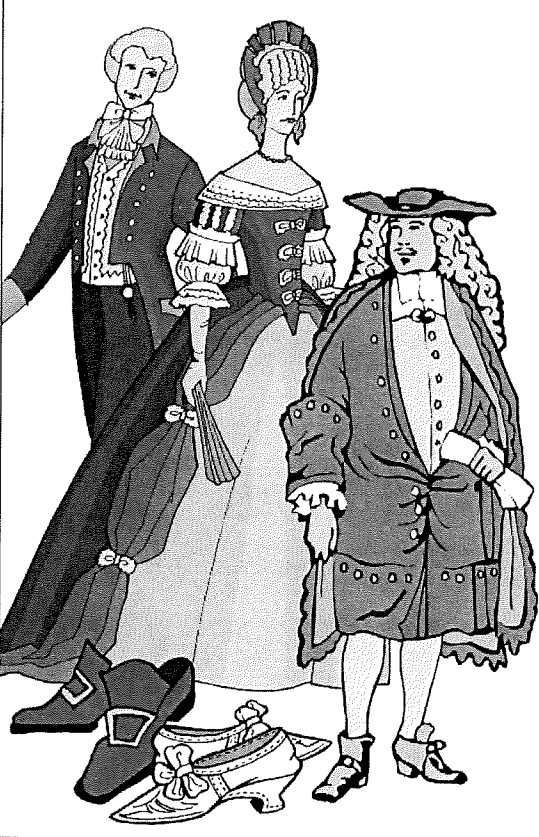
- Necklines plunge and sleeves go short.
- Lace, ruffles, ribbons and bows trim garments.
- Doublets lengthen into coats.

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In the 1600s, the political strife in countries plays out in fashion. For example, in England the conservative Puritans wear somber clothing to contrast the elaborate court fashions.

There's a new twist on the ruff collar as it softens and drapes over the shoulder. It's usually made of lace as are most trimmings. France feels the lace and ribbon trend is out of control and bans their use. Most everyone ignores the law.

Although women's necklines plunge and short sleeves reveal bare arms for the first time, it's men who make the century's fashion statement. Their doublets lengthen into knee-length coats with vests and breeches in the first move toward a men's suit. They top off their look with long, dark curly wigs.



1700s

Cultural Influences

- Americans gain independence.
- French overthrow king.
- The middle class emerges.

Fashion Influences

- Democracy urges simplicity.
- Inventions aid textile production.

Fashion Trends

- Hooped skirts make a comeback.
- Trendsetters powder their hair and wigs.
- New sack dress hangs loosely.
- High-waisted gowns reflect ancient look.


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Revolution is the word for this century as upheaval tears through France and America gains independence from England. Another revolution, the industrial revolution is just beginning.

The wildest revolution on the fashion front is big hair. Men wear elaborate powdered ponytail wigs. Women skip the wigs but pile on just as much powder on their towering hairstyles.

Hooped skirts make a comeback but they flare only on the sides with panniers, the French word for basket. Another new style is the sack dress which flows loosely to the ground. After the French Revolution there is an interest in high-waisted classical apparel. The English adopt simpler country styles in wool and cotton fabrics.

Until the 1700s, children are dressed as miniature adults. Now they get their own clothing styles.



1800s

Cultural Influences

- Civil War temporarily divides the nation.
- Industrial Revolution brings sweeping changes.

Fashion Influences

- The cotton gin and sewing machine modernize apparel production.
- New retail department stores open.
- Mail-order catalogs bring fashion to rural customers.
- Mechanization spawns ready-to-wear market.

Fashion Trends

- Hoop skirts and bustles enlarge fashions.
- Gibson Girl reflects shirtwaist separates style.
- Levi Strauss introduces denim work pants.
- Men adopt business suits.

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In the 1800s, the Industrial Revolution touches almost every part of life, especially fashion. The invention of the power loom and cotton gin change the way textiles are produced and the new sewing machines cut down on the time it takes to sew garments. Quicker turnarounds make it possible to mass produce clothing. The ready-to-wear industry takes off.

It's another corseted century despite doctors warning of health hazards. Giant hoop skirts and bustles create fashion statements as well as personal space barriers.

The once elaborate male fashion profile tones down as men adopt conservative practical suits. A fellow named Levis Strauss makes and sells denim work pants. A lasting American fashion trend is born.

Near the end of the century, women wear tailored skirts and shirtwaist blouses. The Gibson Girl look spreads because it is easy to mass produce for the ready-to-wear market.



1900-1920

Cultural Influences

- Automobiles hit the road.
- Suffragettes fight for voting rights.
- Women go to war and work.

Fashion Influences

- Modern fashion shows begin.
- Art, ballet and film impact designers.

Fashion Trends


- Hemlines reveal ankles.
- Narrow Hobble skirts restrict walking.
- Special motoring clothes catch on.
- Wartime requires more practical clothing.

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The Gibson Girl style of skirts and shirtwaists is still popular at the beginning of the century. But soon tightly corseted styles give way to more relaxed gown looks as hemlines move up to the ankle and higher.

To enjoy the popular but dusty past time of driving in an automobile, an entire category of motoring clothes come to stores. Another new fashion is the long tapered skirt. It's called a hobble because it is so tight women can take only tiny steps.

World War I erupts and women join the effort on the front and in the workplace. They need more practical clothing. The tight hobble skirts are left behind as hemlines go up, skirts flare and trousers appear.



1920s

Cultural Influences

- Post-war optimism spreads.
- Women gain the vote.
- Radio connects the country.

Fashion Influences

- New factories mass produce affordable clothes.
- New sizing system helps shoppers.
- Exercise craze opens sportswear market.

Fashion Trends


- Loose "boy" silhouette dominates female styles.
- Hemlines go very short.
- Waistlines drop.

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As the 1920 decade begins most Americans are happy. World War I is over and they want to be free to have fun. The corset goes. Hemlines show legs, sometimes to the knees. The straight boy silhouette, complete with short hair, is the look. Flappers add beads and fringe to their new bare styles and head to the dance floor. Jazz is the music of the day.

The youthful population is swimming, cycling, exercising and playing tennis. This energetic lifestyle creates a demand for sportswear.

For the first time in decades, men get into the fashion game with expanding options including double-breasted jackets and cuffed pants.



1930s

Cultural Influences

- Great Depression brings financial collapse and unemployment.
- Improved sound quality makes "talking movies" a popular escape.

Fashion Influences

- Movies glamorize evening clothes.
- Rayon and nylon widen fabric options.
- Garment manufacturers open specialty markets.
- Zippers become clothing fastener.

Fashion Trends

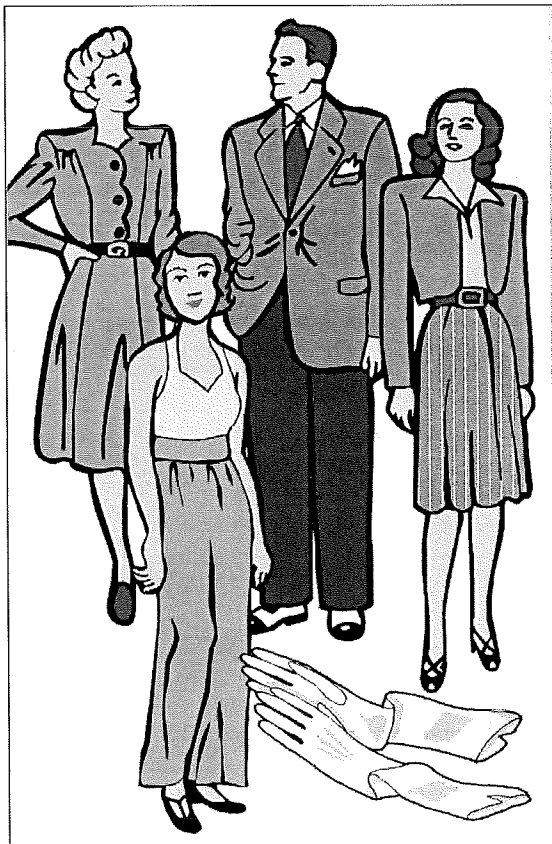
- Hemlines drop.
- Silhouette narrows.
- Elegant styles mirror Hollywood glamour.
- Soft dressing revives feminine look.

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When the 1930s decade begins the United States is in the Great Depression. Businesses are bankrupt and people everywhere are unemployed. In contrast, Hollywood becomes the capital of glamour as the popularity of talking movies spreads across the country.

Fashion keys in on movie mania by creating the long, elegant styles seen on the screen. The introduction of nylon and rayon and other synthetic materials change fabric options and make it possible to produce softly draped clothing and lingerie.

Also in this decade, apparel manufacturers begin to target specialty markets such as younger women and larger women. At the same time, the cosmetic industry takes root.



1940s

Cultural Influences

- America enters World War II.
- Women go to work.

Fashion Influences

- Fabric shortages restrict styles.
- American designers expand the sportswear industry.

Fashion Trends


- Hemlines go shorter.
- Skirt silhouette narrows.
- Working women adopt pants.
- Consumers mix and match separates.

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America enters World War II which affects every area of the nation's life including fashion. The military needs fabric for troop supplies, and the material shortages change the clothes people wear. Skirts become short and narrow.

American designers can't travel to Europe to see and copy the high fashion styles of the big design houses. So, they come up with their own innovation, sportswear separates. Mixing pieces maximizes a limited wartime wardrobe.

Women go to work to fill the jobs vacated by the men who go to war. They discover trousers are a better option, especially for factory work. Pant sales soar. Nylon is needed for the war effort so many women, especially teenagers, take to wearing short, white socks called "Bobby socks."



1950s

Cultural Influences

- America settles into post-war stability.
- Families move to suburbs.
- Youth culture emerges.

Fashion Influences

- Wartime fabric restrictions lifted.
- Television becomes mainstream entertainment.
- Rock 'n roll music and movies inspire clothing choices.
- Polyester is the hot new fabric.

Fashion Trends

- Hemlines drop.
- Skirts become fuller.
- Pencil skirts are also "in".
- Men buy more suits and sportswear.

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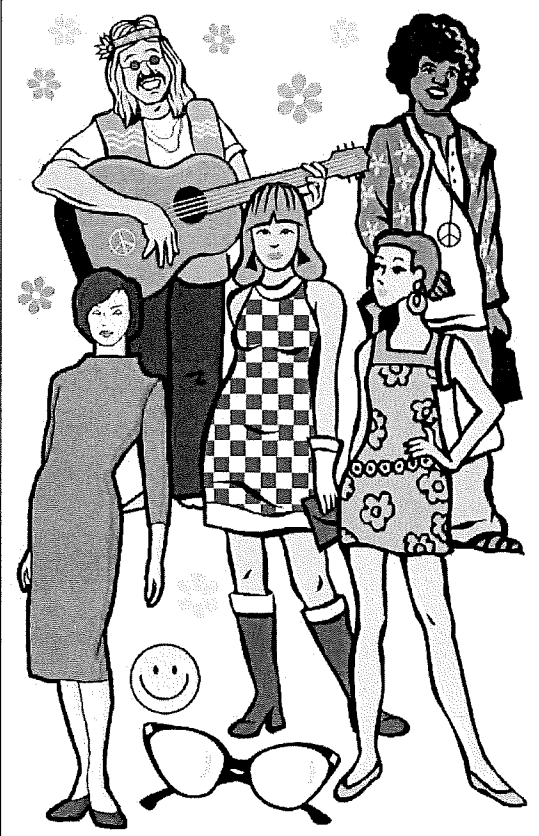
The nation settles into a conservative and comfortable post-war decade.

Many families move to the suburbs to pioneer a new lifestyle. Women leave the workplace and center their lives around their homes. Television becomes a popular form of entertainment. Clothing styles reflect these changes.

The war restrictions on fabric are lifted and full skirts, made fuller by crinoline petticoats, become a fashion statement. Fitted waists and tight bodices emphasize a return to a feminine silhouette. Pencil thin skirts and twin sets are also popular styles as are tight calf length pants. Stiletto heels are the hot fashion accessory.

Men become clothes conscious. They buy corporate suits for work and sportswear for leisure activities. Polyester is the fabric word of the day.

Rock 'n roll music energizes teenagers as their culture and clothing move into the spotlight. 1950s teens wear poodle skirts, sweaters, saddle shoes, denim dungarees and leather jackets.



1960s

Cultural Influences

- Youth culture grows.
- The Beatles invade the United States.
- Vietnam war polarizes the country.
- Space race begins.

Fashion Influences

- Twiggy popularizes thinness.
- New pantyhose frees hemlines.
- Shopping malls and boutiques expand shopping options.

Fashion Trends


- Mini skirts revolutionize fashion.
- Hippies wear unisex jeans and T-shirts.
- Ethnic styles include Nehru jackets.
- Designers introduce futuristic styles.

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The 1960s is the decade of youth. The Beatles invade America and with it comes the influence of the young London fashion scene. The model Twiggy makes thinness the look of the day. Soon people are wearing shockingly short mini-skirts with white go-go boots. The unsung hero of the period may be pantyhose. Its introduction gave flexibility to hemlines.

Nehru jackets and kaftans become part of a new ethnic style. Hippies popularize flower power and unisex clothing. Young men and women dress alike in bell bottom jeans, slogan T-shirts, headbands and peace jewelry. Futuristic clothing, likely inspired by the space race, is another 1960s look.

Buyers now have options with the introduction of shopping malls and boutique shops.



1970s

Cultural Influences

- The women's movement gains strength.
- Protest groups find their voice.
- People take up jogging and aerobics.

Fashion Influences

- Disco fever sweeps the country.
- Television shows Charlie's Angels and Wonder Woman capture viewers.
- Discount stores offer lower prices.
- Technology advances the textile industry.

Fashion Trends

- Hemlines go mini, midi and maxi.
- Fitness clothing debuts.
- Disco inspires flashy fashions.
- Women wear pantsuits.
- Men wear leisure suits.

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The image of 1970 style is John Travolta posing in his white suit. Disco dancers bring flashy dance wear and hot pants into the fashion mainstream. But fashion is all over the map.

While radical punk styles make an appearance, nostalgic cotton print dresses are also selling. When people discover exercise, jogging suits and fitness clothes become the new casual wear. Leisure suits as well as boldly printed polyester shirts are fashions for men.

Every decade hemlines go up or down but in the seventies woman can choose mini, midi or maxi lengths. They also buy the new pantsuits.

Shoes come to the forefront with platforms, running shoes, gaucho boots and hiking boots taking a share of the footwear market.

Anything goes in the fashion-filled 1970s.



1980s

Cultural Influences

- Women flood the workplace.
- London has a royal wedding.
- AIDS becomes an epidemic.

Fashion Influences

- Madonna makes a splash.
- Designer labels snag shoppers.
- Book urges power dressing.
- MTV goes on the air.
- Lycra and latex change fitness.

Fashion Trends

- Women wear tailored suits.
- Romantic clothing returns.
- Jeans are acid washed.
- Fitness clothing goes tight.

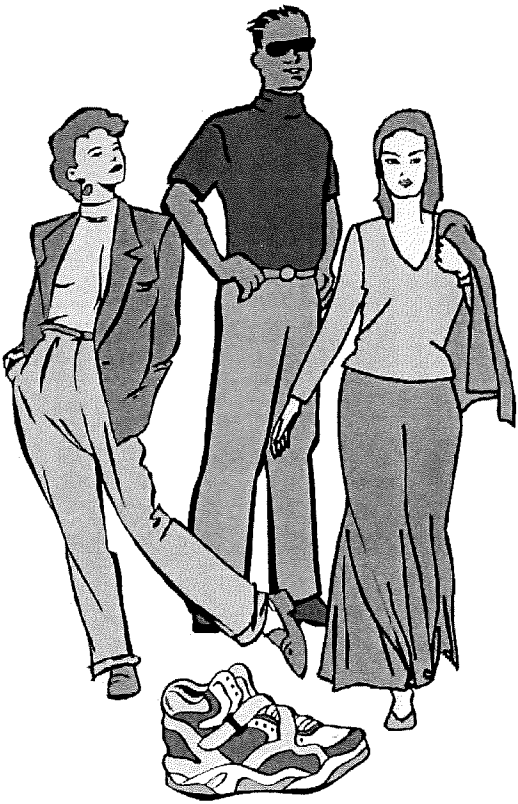
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For the most part, fashion settles down in the 1980s. John Molloy comes out with the book "Dress for Success" and yuppies go for tailored power suits.

In a different conservative look, romantic styles complete with lace and frills follow the fairy-tale wedding of Prince Charles and Princess Diana.

Denim is still popular but now it's acid washed. On the fitness front, Lycra clothing provides a second skin and the movie "Flashdance" inspires a brief appearance of legwarmers. Individual designers gain popularity as shoppers want their brands.

MTV goes on the air and Madonna goes to a young audience with outrageous acts and outfits. The style sticks.



1990s

Cultural Influences

- Global boundaries change.
- The internet is the information highway.
- Americans "cocoon" at home.

Fashion Influences

- American brands sell overseas.
- Super models are celebrities.
- TV and internet shopping catches on.
- Fleece, water repellent and stain resistant fabrics are new.

Fashion Trends

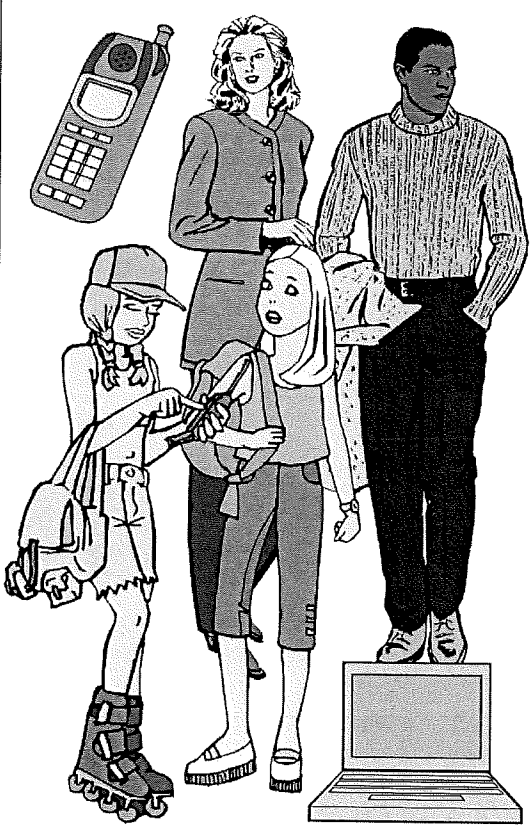
- Mismatched styles work.
- Pantsuits return.
- Street clothing sets style.
- Skimpy clothes reveal skin.

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Fashion in the 1990s is about choice. Shoppers can choose from a buffet of styles to create their own individual look. Power dressing is over and women try softer dressing at work. The pantsuit is back again. Color blocking finds favor with many designers. It's fashionable to mix very mismatched pieces such as leather and satin.

Street clothing including hip hop's baggie pants and ethnic prints as well as the Seattle grunge look, sweep into fashion. Also trending are skimpy clothes which reveal a lot of skin. Teflon goes from frying pan to water and stain repellent garments. Professional and weekend athletes take to the Polartech fleece for outdoor warmth and comfort.

The way clothing is sold changes substantially. Designers promote their brands overseas. Buyers can select styles from catalogs, the internet and television shopping channels. Nineteen ninety is a fast-moving fashion decade.



Millennium Decade

Cultural Influences

- The world welcomes the new century.
- Terrorism keeps America on edge.
- Patriotic spirit spreads.

Fashion Influences

- Apparel manufacturing goes overseas.
- Many leather and silk fabrics are now washable.
- Stretch fabrics are in demand.

Fashion Trends


- Work wardrobe turns to business casual.
- Denim pieces are mismatched.
- Shoppers quickly accept cropped pants.
- Clothing has pockets for computer devices.

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Excitement sweeps the country as Americans welcome the new century. But soon terrorism is a global concern.

The fashion industry experiences big changes. Clothing companies increasingly outsource garment production around the globe. Textile production also shifts overseas. Many fabrics, such as silk, leather and suede, are now washable.

The work wardrobe changes. Employees head to work in casual clothing and soon stores limit suits and stock khaki pants and sports shirts. Cropped pants, a revival of the 1950s Capri pants, are an immediate hit. Denim is still popular but now its trendy to mismatch pants, shirts and jackets. At the beginning of a new clothing innovation, some jackets and vests have pockets for electronic devices.



The Future

Cultural Influences

- Technology makes rapid advances.
- The over-50 and ethnic populations increase.

Fashion Influences

- Technology marries fabrics and computers.
- Designers target older fashion-conscious shoppers.

Fashion Trends

- People wear computerized clothing.
- Shoppers like retro styles.

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There is no crystal ball to pinpoint fashions trends ten, twenty or thirty years from now. But there are some clues. As it was in the Industrial Revolution, the textile industry is one of the first to be affected by new technology. Soon computerized fabrics and clothing will transmit medical information, change color, regulate temperature and enable wearers to use their electronic devices. Researchers have several names for this trend: smart clothes, e-textiles, intelligent clothing and wearable computers.

Changes in demographics will affect fashion. As the population shifts to an over fifty majority, designers will create clothing to capture this market. The same will be true with the rising ethnic population.

Designers will likely bring back past styles so retro clothing will be a fashion trend. The question is: which era will be "in" and when? One thing is certain. Culture, lifestyle, communication and technology will continue to influence what people wear.

Web Resources

Costumes.org (go to History sorted by Period)

- www.costumes.org

Vogue Online

- www.style.com/voque

The International Vocabulary of Fashion

- www.fashionindex.com

The Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising

- www.fidm.com

Teacher Oz - Fashion History

- www.teacheroz.com/fashionhistory.htm

Fabrics: The Complete Source for Everything Textiles

- www.fabrics.com



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