

# **Fashion Trends: A Reflection of Our Political Culture**

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## **Overview**

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## **Overview**

Change is a theme that is ever-present in American political culture. Often this change is reflected in the dress of its people. From the plain dress of the Puritans to the hip-hop look of today, political change and change in fashion have, in theory and practice, been linked. In her book, *The Social Psychology of Clothing*, Susan Kaiser suggests that fashion can be defined as a prevalent style by a particular group at a particular time, and, therefore, may be linked to a specific cultural and historical context in which there is general acceptance of a given style or look (481). Politics is part of what determines what is acceptable in a given era.

Others such as Thorstein Veblen and Georg Simmel believed that change in fashion was a direct result of class struggle or that it resulted from the need for the elite to maintain their distinction from and superiority over the masses. This, then, produced a “trickle-down” effect whereby the elite were constantly adopting new styles in order to maintain their distinction once the lower classes began to imitate them. (Kaiser, 483). These and other theories will be explored in this unit.

## **Rationale and Unit Plan**

Regardless of the theory to which you subscribe, there exists an indisputable connection between American political culture and fashion. Through the ages this connection has most clearly been seen during times of extreme political and societal change. Where some groups and individuals have been compelled to conform, others have felt compelled to resist, and this has often been reflected in their dress.

Using fashion as a vehicle to emphasize change in our political culture will allow students to make meaningful connections. This unit will use trends in dress/fashion as a dimension of political change. It will help students explore the connections between

conformity and individuality in dress as they relate to our culture. With opportunities to examine the way we dress at the individual, group, societal, and cultural levels, it will also afford students a barometer by which they might gauge the present state of our social and political culture.

While completing this unit students will be researching various eras in European and American history that exemplify periods of dramatic social and political change. They will then examine the various fashion fads or trends that parallel the changes during these eras in order to make relevant connections. Major events that occurred during these eras will also be examined to determine their impact. The eras to be studied will include (1) the “classical” era, from the European Renaissance to the American Colonial and Revolutionary Periods, (2) the 19<sup>th</sup> century through the Industrial Revolution and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century “industrial” era, and (3) the “postindustrial” era of the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## Historical Background

Dress is more than mere objects and materials people put on their bodies. Dress can be a sign or symbol that refers to or stands for **meanings** not inherent in the material or object. In sum, the physical body when dressed reflects the “social body” or surrounding societal system (Turner, 1991).

This quote truly sums up the importance of fashion and clothing in chronicling time periods in history. Throughout history the tensions and societal relationships that exist between different social groups has been reflected in their dress. Rarely was new clothing accessible to the poor, making it a most valued possession. Prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in Europe and America, it was not uncommon for a poor man to own only the clothes on his back and these generally had been passed down many times before reaching him. Cloth, therefore, became a commodity of such great value that it became its own form of currency and was used as payment for services (Crane 3).

In preindustrial times such as the Colonial Period, clothing was synonymous with a person’s position in the social structure. “It not only revealed your social position and gender, but your occupation [each one had its own costume], religious affiliation, and regional origin, as well. The political culture of the time was reflected in the way people dressed and the way people dressed determined how they were perceived by others and by themselves” (Crane 3). This was acutely seen in the example of the Amish or Pennsylvania Dutch as they came to be known. They had fled religious persecution in Europe in the 1700’s. They perceived themselves as “apart” from the outside world, which they considered “corrupt” and they used clothing as a means of distinguishing themselves from others. Through their “plain dress” they were able to maintain a distinct social identity that embraced uniformity and rejected individuality (Kaiser 397). Their

rejection of the fashion system, therefore, can clearly be seen as a form of social and political resistance at the group and cultural level.

However, it was not until the advent of the Industrial Revolution and machine-made clothing, that the effect of social and political stratification on fashion was truly transformed. The transition from agrarian to city life and the greater affordability of factory-made clothing created a change in how one's social status was determined. The costumes that had once signified a specific occupation for a specific social class in agrarian society were replaced by clothing for a specific "type" of job. Your position and your rank in this new "hierarchy of [industrial and commercial] occupations" was now determined by the uniform you wore and became an indicator of how wealthy you were (Crane 4). A bellhop dressed less grandly than a concierge, but the uniforms of both indicated that they held service occupations.

As Diana Crane points out in her book, *Fashion, and its Social Agendas*, many economists and sociologists such as Thorstein Veblen and Georg Simmel theorized that in this industrialized society, women's status in society was directly linked to the display of their husbands' wealth. They also believed that there was a tendency for social classes to imitate those directly above them in order to move up the social ladder. This desire to appear wealthier than you were was called the "trickle down" effect (14). These theories appear more plausible when you consider what happened during the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. During this time large numbers of immigrants were coming to America. To hasten their assimilation into society, "they almost immediately divested themselves of their traditional costumes and adopted the dress of their new home as a means of discarding their previous identities and establishing new ones. These efforts by the lower classes to emulate the dress of the rich were seen as a way for a person to elevate his or her social status in a country "perceived" to be classless and characterized by upward mobility" (Crane 4).

But as Susan Kaiser points out in *the Social Psychology of Clothing*, the context in which these attempts are viewed must take into consideration not only class struggle, but also the tensions among other cultural categories such as gender, ethnicity, age, and physical attractiveness (487). These factors, along with the various ways in which clothing was used as a form of social control (imposition of uniforms and dress codes in the workplace to indicate rank in the organizational hierarchy), made "upward mobility" [much more difficult] for the working class, and, therefore, served to stratify American society further (Crane 4). One has only to look at the political culture of the time to understand how the inaccessibility to expensive clothing mirrored the inaccessibility of political and socioeconomic status and freedom as well. Therefore, while it is true that the Industrial Revolution may have served to alter some class distinctions in various occupations, it did not always have the same effect when factors such as race and ethnicity were entered into the equation.

Culturally speaking, blacks and Latinos have used clothing as a means of achieving their “American dream” because traditionally, as Christy Fisher explains in her article from *The Meanings of Dress*, they have had difficulty securing that dream when it came to acquiring the [home of their dreams] in the neighborhood of their choice (383). Fashion, therefore, became the status symbol used by these minority groups to prove to others that they had “made it”. For blacks in particular, it also became a vehicle for propelling a shift in cultural imagery to the forefront. Fostered by the advent of the civil rights movement of the 1960’s, this shift signaled a momentous change in our political culture. For the first time in history, black models were featured in high profile fashion magazines. Fashion styles such as the “Afro” and the dashiki, originally thought of as “cultural” clothing, became a fashionable look for white Americans as well. Not only did this fashion style represent a shift in how blacks perceived themselves, but also in how the larger society viewed them. American political culture had reached a milestone and African-American pride in the idea that “black is beautiful” penetrated even the white consciousness (Kaiser, 445).

However, this was far from true of the political culture that existed in the 1940’s. A case in point is the Zoot Suit Riots that occurred during WWII. Baggy pants and a jacket with oversized shoulders and a tightly fitted waist characterized the flamboyant zoot suit. As stated in the article, *American Experience: Zoot Suit Riots*, it had been popularized by the jazz and swing bands of the era and adopted by many young Mexican and African-American teens as a symbol of social resistance. Yards and yards of cloth, a precious commodity at this time, were needed to create the zoot suit and this went against the grain for many Americans. This was especially true for southern white servicemen who, uprooted from their homes and deployed to Los Angeles after the attack on Pearl Harbor, felt they had already sacrificed everything (1). As Mauricio Mazon points out in *The Zoot Suit Riots*, the young Mexican-American teens [were already perceived] by Anglos as culturally and aesthetically un-American, while the young white soldiers were epitomized as the ideal of American patriotism (69).

Conflict between the two groups became inevitable when an altercation between two rival Mexican-American gangs resulted in the death of one of them. The media fanned the fires by portraying the zoot suiters as “murderous and dangerous gangs” (Zoot Suit Riots 1). When those accused were shipped off to jail, following a mockery of a trial, violence erupted in the streets and the young white servicemen were called in to control the Mexican-American zoot suiters. It took little time for them to become an out-of-control vigilante force who, supported by the police, terrorized and attacked the zoot suiters, dragging them off the streets and out of movie theaters and restaurants. They ripped the zoot suits from their backs and beat them mercilessly while mobs of whites cheered them on ( Zoot Suit Riots 1). Once again, we see evidence of how fashion trends mirror a shift in political culture triggered by the events (WWII) and prevailing attitudes of the times, which included manifestations of racism such as the internment of Japanese-Americans.

The Zoot Suit Riots exemplify the underlying discontent that is inherent in our political culture. In subcultures, such as the zoot suiters, this discontent breeds contempt for the status quo, the 'establishment' and for those by whom they feel oppressed. Whether it be the drag queen who uses drag as a "political act of defiance against rigidly stereotyped male and female images and ideals", as proposed by Jane Hegland in *the Meanings of Dress* (198), adolescent teens who are willing to risk their health in order to "be themselves" (*Meanings* 49), or the hip-hop subculture characterized by "baggy clothing and hard-edge rap" (*Meanings* 446), there is a common thread that binds them all together... rebellion. But it is also this rebelliousness and individualistic creativity that has been the catalyst for many of the fashion forward styles adopted by the mainstream (*Meanings* 447).

The ending of the Industrial Revolution brought with it a change in political thought as the postindustrial era began. Social status became less clear-cut because people changed their perception of it and their conception of themselves. Rising standards of living, combined with rising expectations and greater access to information were just a few of the factors that led the working class to become more actively involved in our political culture. They became less concerned with competing with the upper class and more concerned with pursuing individual interests. Fueled by our economic system of capitalism that allowed a competitive fashion industry to offer the consumer infinite choices, post-industrial America entered the new and eclectic realm of postmodern fashion (Crane 5).

Whereas in prior eras dress was used to denote clearly who you were on an individual, group, societal and cultural level, as well as your ranking in each, the same is not true of postmodern dress. In her article "Dress as Nonverbal Communication" found in the *Meanings of Dress*, Mary Lynn Damhorst explains how fashion in traditional cultures tended to be steeped in meanings and changed very slowly, whereas today, in late 20<sup>th</sup> century fashion, those lines have become very [blurred] and [even harder] to verbalize. This eclectic mixing and matching of various styles from various genres means that in postmodern culture the old adage of "everything old is new again" is truly fitting. This blending of the old with the new has created a "new identity" that questions the traditional rules of fashion while looking back and nostalgically borrowing from the past. Clearly, we see again, the mirroring of political culture in fashion during a time when such cultural aspects as sexuality, gender roles, and distribution of power are also being questioned. (Damhorst 86).

Similarly, in her book, *The Social Psychology of Clothing*, Susan Kaiser quotes theorist Fredric Jameson as attributing these changes to the fact that we now live in a "global multinational culture which is decentered and cannot be visualized, a culture in which one cannot position oneself" (Kaiser 516). But even in this multicultural diversity a hierarchical order still exists and "a different but unequal perspective is endorsed [that

gives] power [to] certain cultures over others”. Kaiser points out that this perspective is “inherently flawed because it assumes that history can be hypothetically reconstructed based on cross-cultural observation. It also assumes that Europeans are morally and aesthetically superior” (Kaiser 520-521).

This ethnocentric view of the world has, therefore, led to the judging of other cultures by Western standards as evidenced in the case of Islamic women and the wearing of the “hijab” or veil. Veiling can be traced back to India and Persia. Arabic tribes adopted veiling as a means of enforcing strict codes of modesty for females. For many Islamic women the wearing of a veil is a deeply religious, emotional and symbolic expression. For others, it is seen as a symbol of institutionalized oppression on the part of men and the government against women. Regardless, the “covering” of women has tremendous symbolic meaning in the Middle East and must be placed in context when interpreting its meanings (Kaiser 523).

In postmodern society this has not always been the case, however. Political debate over this issue rages on and there exist many diverse views about the wearing of the hijab. Some see it as “a form of empowerment for the woman choosing to wear it” while others claim it “to be a means of seclusion and containment imposed by others”. Some even view it as “submission to God's commandments” (Wikipedia Hijab).

The controversy has become so heated that, in many European countries, Muslim women have been banned from wearing the hijab as well as other traditional head coverings such as the chador. This has mainly been linked with issues of immigration and the position of Islam in western European society, but the negative “perception” that Europeans have developed towards Muslims and any clothing that represents Islamic religion has caused many countries, such as the Netherlands, to ban the wearing of *any* type of mask or face covering (Wikipedia Hijab). These developments prove, once again, just how closely fashion mirrors even our “multinational” modern political culture.

## **Objectives**

This unit is designed for use with a grade 11 Social Science (Civics) class, although it can easily be adapted for use in both middle and high school classes in American History/Government. Through the lessons and activities of this unit students will:

- Gain a greater understanding of the societal, cultural and political restraints that prompt us either to conform to or resist change.
- Gain an understanding of the concepts of cultural assimilation and acculturation
- Understand that political/social change as it relates to dress can be influenced by social conflict, power structure, and the economic system
- Improve information literacy skills such as activating prior knowledge, accessing, sorting, validating, citing

- Enhance critical thinking skills through self directed learning, i.e., working with ambiguity, applying creativity, problem solving, etc.

### **Strategies**

The unit will incorporate a variety of strategies to help students gather information on fashion trends through the ages and to connect these to the major political event during which they occurred. These will include, but not be limited to:

Brainstorming (keywords, concepts, analogies)

Connecting (to experiences, texts, and authors)

Constructing (graphic organizers)

Reading (**B**efore, **D**uring, **A**fter)

Writing

Outlining

Listening, Viewing, Evaluating (film, video; webcasts on topic)

Working independently

Discussion

Note taking (using graphic organizers, timelines, etc.)

Online research

Debate

Oral Presentation

Use of technology (creating charts & graphs, word processing, researching databases)

Think-Pair-Share

Collaborative groups

### **Classroom Activities:**

- Participate in class discussions based on the study of primary documents and respond to each using appropriate focus questions.
- Work in small groups to produce an illustrated timeline of historical events and corresponding fashion trends and present this orally to the class
- Critique the article *The Zoot Suit War* and corresponding video on the topic
- Debate the pros and cons of the issue of school uniforms vs. dress codes as it relates to the current political culture.
- Discuss/debate tattooing as a form of social resistance and response to our political culture
- Research a major event for a chosen era and create a PowerPoint presentation or podcast that gives an overview of this period and incorporates the corresponding fashion trends that were influenced by it
- Choose a specific time period in history that corresponds to one of the eras studied and create/construct a period magazine that includes items that reflect the

political and socioeconomic attitudes of that period. These will include such things as:

- a timeline of events for the chosen time period
- news articles from the decade
- advertisements for the decade
- editorials and articles written by students about specific events of the time period
- primary document pieces that chronicle events of that decade

## Lesson I: Clothing Memory

Objectives:

Students will

1. Respond to writing prompts
2. Conduct/Survey/Research
3. Conduct Internet research
4. Summarize, interpret and synthesize information from a variety of resources
5. Classify and connect information
6. Create an artistic representation that captures factual information

Procedure:

Tell the class that they are going to participate in a “Think, Pair, Share” activity. In this activity students first write their reaction to the following prompt:

Memories are made up of many elements. You can remember smells, sights, and sounds. When you remember an event, you can often remember what you were wearing. Think about an event from the past that was made memorable by what you were wearing.

Answer the following questions:

1. What were you wearing during this event and why you were wearing it?
2. What style of dress was popular at the time?
3. What was happening in our city, country, or the world at the time that may have influenced this style?
4. Has this fashion trend continued today?

Next, divide students into pairs and have them share with each other. After a brief period, ask for student volunteers to share their thoughts and ideas with the entire class. Try to elicit from the class any connections that they can make as to what was going on in the city, country, or world at the time. Discuss with students whether or not these events



had anything to do with the way they were dressed.

Time Frame: 1 class period

Lesson 2/Day 1:

Objective:

The purpose of this activity is to encourage students to reflect on the interconnections between identity, fashion and culture. They will read an article focusing on these issues, and compare their responses to those of the author.

Procedure:

1. Divide the class into four groups. Ask each group to answer its assigned question.

1. Group One: What is fashion?
2. Group Two: Who dictates fashion?
3. Group Three: Do clothes separate people into groups?
4. Group Four: Is fashion an endless popularity contest?

2. Next, tell the students that they are going to read an article that suggests answers to the questions they answered in their groups. Ask students to read the PBS Newshour article “What is Fashion?” which can be found at

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/infocus/fashion/whatisfashion.html>

3. Have students compare their thoughts with those expressed in the article.

4. Then, ask students to brainstorm a list of responses to the following questions:

- Why do people wear what they wear?
- How do you choose your clothes? What influences you?
- What is fashionable in your school?
- How do you define fashion?
- Do you judge people by what they wear? Does society? Why or why not?

Follow-up/ Activity: Have students design a tee shirt that captures their views on fashion, clothing and identity. Use the template provided, or actual tee shirts. Paint or draw messages, slogans or quotes. Create a class exhibit to display student work.

Time Frame: 2 class periods

Culminating Lesson: How Fashion Reflects Culture

Objectives: Students will:

1. Identify the origin and function of various clothing styles from different cultural groups who settled in America.
2. Review various books, online websites and period magazines to identify examples of clothing styles for the various eras studied.
3. Investigate the role that fashion played in our culture in these different eras
4. Develop a fashion magazine for a specific decade in the various eras studied

Overview of Lesson Plan: In this lesson, students explore how fashion has mirrored the attitudes and lifestyles of culture (both in America and Europe) throughout history and will create fashion magazines reflecting their findings.

Review the Academic Content Standards related to this lesson.

Resources / Materials:

- six to eight printouts of costumes from the Costume Institute's Web site (<http://www.metmuseum.org/collections/department.asp?dep=8>; click on individual photos to access a larger picture without the text explanation)
- pens/pencils
- paper
- classroom board
- copies of "Keeping Up With the Fashions Set by Royalty" (one per student)
- several fashion magazines (for reference during main activity)
- resources about the clothing of various cultures (textbooks, encyclopedias, computers with Internet access)

Procedure:

1. WARM-UP: Prior to class, arrange desks into groups of four, and place a picture of a costume in the center of each grouping. In the first five minutes of class, students respond to the following questions on the back of the picture:

1. From what time period is this fashion? Why do you think this?
2. What position, rank or occupation might the person wearing this costume hold? and under what circumstances? Why do you think this?

After 5 minutes allow groups to report their answers to the class. After each group reports, read the description of the article of clothing provided on the Costume Institute site. How accurate were students' ideas? In what ways do clothing styles reflect the political culture in which they are worn? What items of clothing or styles can students identify that originated in different time periods?

2. As a class, read the article "Keeping Up With the Fashions Set by Royalty," focusing on the following questions:

- a. How did Queen Alexandra dress, and how did her fashions impact her culture?
- b. What time period is covered in the current Costume Institute exhibit?

- c. What is the history of the Costume Institute?
- d. What does the style of the "French caraco" reveal about the changes in French culture at that time? What was the English answer to this change in culture?
- e. What did the original "Empire" dress look like?
- f. What was the complaint of critics regarding the "tartan like plaids" favored by Queen Victoria?
- g. Looking back at the entire article, in what specific ways do the fashions featured in this exhibit reflect the cultures in which they were worn?

3. Assign, or allow each group of four to choose, a different time period. (You may choose to trace the different fashions around the world in a particular time, or, as the exhibit does, explore the dress of several different cultures and different times.)

Explain to students that they will be investigating the dress of their group's time period in preparation for creating a short fashion magazine. The purpose of the magazine is to illustrate this time period's political culture through its fashions.

Using the Metropolitan Museum's Costume Institute Web site, as well as other available resources, groups research the following aspects regarding their time period:

- What were the fashions in this time period? Were there different fashions for different classes of people? Find examples of each type of fashion.
- What political issues were taking place at this time? How were they reflected in the fashion?
- How do the fashions of this era reflect views on women? Men? Children? Marriage? Other social issues?

After twenty minutes, each group brainstorms ideas for a short (eight page) fashion magazine from this era or period in time. The magazine should include:

- ❖ An appropriate cover, including title, illustration, cost, dateline, and short explanations of features inside this issue of the magazine
- ❖ Advertisements for the latest fashions in clothing, shoes, jewelry, etc.
- ❖ An article on a political topic of the day and how style reflects this topic (to give the reader background into the setting of the time period)
- ❖ Several short articles on social issues highlighted by the popular clothing of the day (e.g., in an American magazine dated 1770, an article might focus on the "revealing" nature of the "l'anglaise" style of dress)
- ❖ Any other items that will fill out the magazine and reveal something about the culture researched (crossword puzzles, fashion "advice columns," etc.)

Pictures from the Costume Institute Web site may be used for the magazine, as well as pictures that students create themselves based on the descriptions of the styles of this period. Before the end of class, groups should divide the tasks among group members to be completed at home.

4. WRAP-UP/HOMEWORK: Group members complete their portion(s) of the fashion magazine and then work together to "lay out" the magazine and "publish" it. Magazines should be made available in the classroom for students to read, and might then be displayed.

Further Questions for Discussion:

- Do you think that people your age are too concerned with fashion? Why or why not?
- How does the way someone dresses reflect who they are? Have you ever been "tricked" into thinking someone was a certain way based on the way they dressed?
- How do current fashion trends reflect our society's views on women? Men? Relationships? Other social issues?
- How important is it for you to have the "latest fashions"? Why?
- What is the ugliest trend you have ever seen? Why do you think people wore or wear this item if it is so ugly?
- Who do you think determines what is fashionable? Clothing designers? Consumers? Mass media?
- Do you consider tattooing a form of fashion? Why or why not?

Evaluation/Assessment:

Students will be evaluated on participation in group and class discussions, thoughtful participation in group research and group creation of fashion magazine that reflects the political culture/attitudes of their era.

Vocabulary:

plumage, haute couture, pillbox, progeny, consort, sumptuous, l'anglaise, flounces, bodice, tartan like, chemise-shaped, embellished, breeches

Extension Activities:

1. The Hard Rock Café displays fashions and other pop culture and pop music artifacts in glass cases around its restaurants. Create a floor plan for your own fashion-themed restaurant, focusing on a piece of clothing, culture, time period or other concept. What items would you include, and how would these pieces be displayed? What explanations would go along with these items to explain how they relate to the cultures in which they were worn? What would be on the menu, and how would this tie into your theme? What would your restaurant be called?

2. Recreate some of the costumes from the Costume Institute and present a fashion show for your school. If you are not able to actually create the costumes, draw designs for your own version of several of your favorite costumes and display them in the classroom.

3. How are people defined and judged by the clothes they wear? Create a pictorial "quiz" displaying different fashions and ask the quiz-taker to describe what type of person would wear each fashion. Give the quiz to your classmates and conduct a class discussion

on their perceptions and how stereotypes are perpetuated, confirmed, or broken down by fashion.

4. Many "fashions" of different cultures are a reflection of religious beliefs and practices. Create a poster displaying ritual garments from several different cultures. Next to each, describe the function that it serves.

5. Research trends in attitudes towards women's body sizes over the past century. Give a class presentation addressing the pressures that women have faced in attempting to meet the image of the "perfect woman." Include common medical and dietary practices throughout this time span, statistics on average women's body sizes in each decade, and pictures of "ideal" body sizes in each decade. From where do these attitudes come? What affirms them? How have attitudes changed?

**Interdisciplinary Connections:**

**American History-** First Ladies have traditionally been scrutinized for their dress, especially at important events like the inauguration ceremonies of their husbands. Create a pictorial timeline of "First-Lady Fashion" since Martha Washington, and provide (if available) a short "critique" of each woman's style and her role as First Lady.

**Economics-** Observe the role that fashion plays in your culture. Keep a log of what percentage of time and money is devoted to fashion on television and in print media. Also, find out the figures for yearly clothing sales. Write an essay citing your findings and assessing whether you think your culture spends too much, just the right amount, or not enough time and energy devoted to fashion.

**Journalism-** Write an article for your school paper about the newest "Back to School" (or whatever is appropriate to the season) styles and trends. Include pictures and interviews of teachers and classmates.

**Media Studies-** Research a high-profile brand name, such as GAP, Banana Republic, Tommy Hilfiger, or Donna Karan. Collect data on the types of images that appear in its ads and its advertising slogans, and when advertisements for this brand appear in print media (which magazines, where in the magazine, etc.) and on television (between what shows, at what time of day, etc). Create a poster displaying your data and suggesting what this information reflects about the type of people to which this brand is attempting to advertise.

**Technology-** Use a computer graphics program to create a virtual tour of fashions from the 1960s through the 21st century. Utilize the special features of the program to make your tour interesting and interactive (McClain and Khan 1-6).

## **Bibliography**

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18 June 2009

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<[www.nytimes.com/learning/teachers/lessons/20010907friday.html](http://www.nytimes.com/learning/teachers/lessons/20010907friday.html)>.

“World War Two and the Zoot Suit Riots” - web-based article that examines the confrontation between servicemen and a group of Latinos that came to be known as the Zoot Suit Wars

<<http://w3.usf.edu/~c/MOO/zootsuit/>>

Reading List for Students

“American Experience: The Zoot Suit Riots” Contains online video, timeline, and narrative of the zoot suit riots that took place in Los Angeles during WWII  
<<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/zoot/index.html>>

Damborst, Mary Lynn, Kimberly A. Miller, Susan O. Michelman The Meanings of Dress. New York: Fairchild Publications, Inc., 1999. – A collection of articles from magazines, newspapers, books and journal writings that explore the “meanings of dress” from a variety of different aspects (culturally, politically, socially, technologically)

Sumner, William Graham “Social Darwinism, the Intellectuals, and Populism: What Social Classes Owe to Each Other” pp. 703 - 718

“What is Fashion,” PBS Newshour article that suggests answers to the title question and others.

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/infocus/fashion/whatisfashion.html>

“World War Two and the Zoot Suit Riots” Web-based article that examines the confrontation between servicemen and a group of Latinos that came to be known as the Zoot Suit Wars

<http://w3.usf.edu/~c/MOO/zootsuit/>

## **Standards**

The Pennsylvania standards that will be used to guide this unit include:

### History Standards

8.1.12

- B Primary Documents, Material Artifacts and Historical Places
- C How Continuity and Change Has Influenced History
- D Conflict and Cooperation Among Social Groups and Organizations

### Reading Standards

1.2.11

- A Read and understand essential content of informational texts and documents in all academic areas.
- B Use and understand a variety of media and evaluate the quality of material produced.
- B.1 Select appropriate electronic media for research and evaluate the quality of the information received.
- B.3 Use, design and develop a media project to demonstrate understanding

### Speaking and Listening Standards

1.6.11.

- A.1 Ask clarifying questions.
- A.2 Synthesize information, ideas and opinions to determine relevancy.
- A.3 Take notes.
- B.3 Summarize and reflect on what has been heard.
- B.4 Identify and define new words and concepts.
- C Speak using skills appropriate to formal speech situations.
- C.1 Use a variety of sentence structures to add interest to a presentation.
- C.2 Pace the presentation according to audience and purpose.
- D Contribute to discussions.
- D.1 Ask relevant, clarifying questions.
- D.2 Respond with relevant information or opinions to questions asked.
- D.3 Listen to and acknowledge the contributions of others.
- D.4 Adjust tone and involvement to encourage equitable participation.
- D.6 Introduce relevant, facilitating information, ideas and opinions to enrich the discussion.
- D.5 Facilitate total group participation.
- D.7 Paraphrase and summarize as needed.
- E Participate in small and large group discussions and presentations.
- E.5 Organize and participate in informal debate around a specific topic.
- E.6 Use evaluation guides (e.g., National Issues Forum, Toastmasters) to evaluate group discussion (e.g., of peers, on television)
- F Use media for learning purposes.
- F.1 Use various forms of media to elicit information, to make a student presentation and to complete class assignments and projects.
- F.3 Create a multi-media (e.g., film, music, computer-graphic) presentation for display or transmission that demonstrates an understanding of a specific topic or issue or teaches others about it.