

A 100 YEARS OF FASHION HISTORY

Featuring
Encyclopedia Britannica Museum Exhibit Slides

EASTER, 1865

Sloping shoulders and very wide skirts accented extremely narrow waists. Boned corsets controlled waists to as small as 18 inches. Boyfriends were "waist watchers". They would check to see if they could put their hands around their girlfriends' waists and touch fingertips. If they could, the girlfriends had perfect waistlines. Layers of petticoats and hooped crinolines held out billowing skirts. The discovery of chemical dyes made magenta and fuchsia the rage.

CHRISTMAS EVE, 1875

Corsets extended well over the hip to slim and elongate the feminine figure. Hair styles were long and feminine. Low placed bustles were common during the 1870's. Long curls and kilt skirts were worn by the little boys. At age 6, boys were allowed to wear short hair and pants.

4TH OF JULY, 1887

Corsets and bodies were shortened and bustles rode higher in back. Colors were becoming bolder, but still were very conservative. Darker hues were popular as society moved to a more business-like image. Immigrants coming from foreign countries were very common and gave up "old world" fashion to seem more Americanized.

1893

An X-shaped silhouette was created by wide sleeves and shoulders, a narrow waist and bell-shaped skirts. Leg-of-mutton sleeves were popular. The man's suit for summer was in a "care-free" fabric. The World's Fair exhibited the first ferris wheel which was a big hit. Electricity was also a dazzling new invention.

THANKSGIVING DAY, 1903

Queen Victoria inspired the "pouted pigeon", the shape England loved. The look was created by ruffles at the bustline and a pad which replaced the bustle. Women's soft, feminine role in society was reflected in the fabrics and see-through laces of their clothing. Children's wear mimicked adult clothing.

VALENTINE'S DAY, 1910

An H-shaped female silhouette was featured. Waists were high with inset panels. Layering of fabrics was common. The neo-empire style was inspired by the Napoleon era. There was also an influence seen from the ancient Greek and Roman Empires.

ARMISTICE DAY, 1918

Clothes took on a shape of their own. The peg top effect, with an increased hipline and narrower hemlines, was common. High collars were fashionable. Because of World War I, a patriotic zeal dictated economy of cut and subtle decorations. Fashion tried to save materials so they could be used in the war effort. Doughboys with a pack and helmet were a familiar sight.

NEW YEAR'S EVE, 1926

Hemlines went up and waistlines went down. Corsets vanished and a new physical freedom (soft, low support underwear called bandeaux which actually flattened the bosom) found expression in loose fitting clothes and, for the first time, "bobbed" hair was fashionable. Egyptian motifs and colors were reflected in fashion and art deco due to the discovery of King Tut's tomb in 1922.

1935

In this year, two opposing trends occurred. Clinging bias cut dresses contrasted with stiff, puffy-sleeved dresses with tight waists. "Southern Belle" style crinolines of the 1860's and bridal headpieces were stylish and drew upon medieval times for inspiration.

1945

Pants were now acceptable for women at work or play. Man-tailored styles, padded shoulders, and coordinated pantsuits created a look suitable for women's new opportunities and increased opportunities and importance in the labor force. During the war years, clothing decoration was minimal. Women's hair was worn long and was feminine in contrast with masculine style clothing.

1955

Clothes fit the upper torso and revealed the body shape. Inspired by the styles of the 1850's, Christian Dior revived naturally sloping shoulders, well-defined waistlines, and bell-shaped skirts. The man's white dinner jacket, also by Dior, was very stylish.

1965

A natural fit defined waists and hemline lengths were moderate. The suit was styled after the Chanel suit. Knits and synthetic fibers brought changes in fit and care. Another style of the 60's, that of the "flower children", had not yet influenced the mainstream American dress. However, in teenage styles, bell bottoms, beads, fringed jackets, and vests were all stylish.

1980-90

Jumping ahead to mid 1980's we find a real fashion change from that of the 60's and 70's. The trends in the 60's brought us hippies, bell bottoms, Beatlemania, complete with paisley prints, and anything from London. The physical fitness craze of the 70's spilled over into fashion. Jogging suits, sweat shirts, and pants in all colors appeared and became part of the apparel of the day. Athletic shoes were revolutionized. From the one style "tennis shoe" that was used for all athletic events, new "hi-tech" one-for-each event shoes were developed.

SUMMER, 1989

T-shirts, previously worn only under men's dress shirts, were now in bright colors with printed logos. Due to their comfort, reasonable prices, and easy care, they have become an important part of teenage fashion. "Levi" style denim pants also have become a classic part of the teen wardrobe.

Neon colors were a big look for the summers of '89 and '90; not just in T-shirts, but in all types of sportswear.

Pastels showed the softer side of summer colors. Denim, fast becoming a classic instead of a fad, has been acid washed and used for everything from shorts, skirts, pants,....to jumpers and jackets.

Walking shorts were still very big for summer and fall fashion.

Accessories for summer were big and bright....and bold!

Fall and winter 1990 offered deep, rich colors; gold and deep greens with gold tones surfaced again after a 20 year rest.

Paisley prints were seen bigger and bolder than last year and hinted of the late 60's and early 70's prints.

Fashion is defined as the current style of clothing. Each decade of fashion is different and each one is "the best" for those wearing the fashion of the day.

Whether it's a bustle or bell bottoms, fashion is always fun.