

ROLES OF CLOTHING/CLOTHING CHOICES

Clothing is a basic need in our society for two main reasons:

1. physical
2. psychological/social

The **PHYSICAL** reasons we need clothing are:

1. protection
2. modesty
3. safety/sanitation

The **PSYCHOLOGICAL/SOCIAL** reasons we need clothing are:

1. identification
2. status
3. decoration

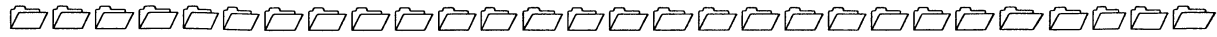
PROTECTION: Humans don't have a natural protective covering from the climate and weather, like feathers and fur, as many animals have. Therefore, we must wear coverings that protect us from the elements.

For example:

- Eskimos survive extreme cold by wearing furs that trap the warm air from their bodies, creating a layer of warmth and also blocking out the cold outer air.
- Desert dwellers cover their bodies with long robes and head coverings that keep the hot desert sun from burning and dehydrating their bodies.
- In warm weather, we wear loose styles and light colors to keep cool. (Dark colors absorb more of the sun's rays and make us warmer.)
- In cold weather, we wear additional layers of clothing and bulkier, tighter fitting clothing in darker colors to keep us warm.

MODESTY: Modesty refers to what a person feels is appropriate covering for his/her body. It is generally dictated or influenced by a local culture, religion, mores, and personal choices. The definition of modesty may differ for some of the following reasons:

1. Laws and customs of the land. For example:
 - Moslem women cover every part of their bodies and leave only the eyes showing.
 - Pacific Island women wear only a cotton wrap that barely covers their bodies.
 - In the United States nudity in public places is against the law.
 - In Europe it is not against the law to go topless on many beaches and is very acceptable.



ROLES OF CLOTHING/CLOTHING CHOICES - PAGE 2

2. Religious beliefs. For example:
 - The Quakers wear only dark clothing.
 - Some religions don't believe in wearing makeup.
 - The Mennonite women always wear long skirts.

3. Personal activities. For example:
 - For beach volleyball, swimsuits or shorts would be worn; the males would probably not wear shirts, and shoes would not be worn.
 - For school, swimsuits are not considered appropriate attire, and shirts and shoes are required to be worn.

4. Styles of the time. For example:
 - In the early 1900s, women wore long skirts and thick socks and would follow a man when walking upstairs because it was unacceptable for a man to see a woman's ankles.
 - During this century, skirt lengths have gone up and down in cycles. In the 1960s and 1970s, mini-skirts brought in a concept known as "new morality."

Basically, what might be considered modest for one person may not be considered modest for someone else. It has become a matter of personal judgment.

SAFETY/SANITATION: Safety from clothing is a consideration in several areas of our lives: 1) sports, 2) on-the-job, 3) recreation, and 4) sanitation. Specialty clothing is available for all of these activities. For example:

Sports: Athletes must wear helmets, padding, teeth protectors, etc.

On-the-job: Construction workers wear safety shoes and boots, hard hats, etc.

Firemen must wear fire-proof clothing.

Policemen wear bullet-proof vests.

Road workers and hunters wear fluorescent orange vests.

Recreational: Swimmers wear shirts and use umbrellas to prevent sunburn and dehydration at the beach.

Hikers wear sturdy shoes or boots to prevent slipping and falling.

Scuba divers wear wet suits in cold, deep water to prevent muscle cramping.



ROLES OF CLOTHING/CLOTHING CHOICES - PAGE 3

Sanitation: Medical personnel wear disposable uniforms, gloves, face masks, and sterile robes to prevent the spread of infection and/or disease.

Food service personnel wear uniforms, hats or hair coverings, and aprons to keep the food sanitary and safe.

IDENTIFICATION: One can often be identified with a particular group by the uniform or clothing he/she wears. This can be due to a particular occupation, a group to which one belongs, or an activity in which one is involved.

Groups that commonly wear uniforms are:

Occupational: Law enforcement, food service, and medical personnel

School related: Class and student body officers, sports teams, musical groups, club members

Customs: In our culture, judges wear black, brides wear white, ministers and priests often wear black robes, college professors wear black robes, etc.

STATUS: Some types of clothing are worn to show status, such as:

- Kings and queens wear crowns and fine fabrics in royal colors.
- Graduation robes and drapes signify different colleges and degrees within a university.
- Furs, expensive jewelry, and designer clothing indicate wealth.
- Insignias are also frequently used to denote ranks, schools, organizations, etc.

DECORATION: Today, most people select clothing they feel will decorate and adorn their bodies to make them "look good." Decoration can express uniqueness and creativity. This has been done for centuries and every culture has its form(s) of body decoration. For example:

- In many African tribes, the people paint their bodies and faces, or may even cut deep scars in the skin, for markings.



ROLES OF CLOTHING/CLOTHING CHOICES - PAGE 4

FASHION CONFORMITY, PERSONAL ORIGINALITY, CLASSIC STYLES OF DRESS

Technology and media influences affect our clothing choices. From these influences we make fashion decisions according to our own personalities and fashion preferences.

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| FASHION CONFORMITY: | Occurs when fashions that are currently accepted by society are selected. Choices are influenced by popular opinion and may include current fads. One dresses for social acceptance and to be like others. |
| PERSONAL ORIGINALITY: | Occurs when clothing and accessories are used to express one's individuality and uniqueness. Choices are not influenced by popular opinion. One dresses to be different and/or to please himself/herself. |
| CLASSIC: | Clothing choices are very stylish but in styles that have a long life. Choices are often more conservative and professional in appearance. |

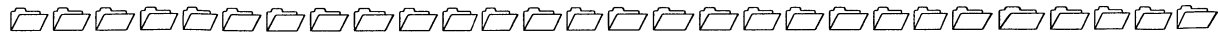
To introduce these three styles of dress, prepare three (3) collages—one for each of the following:

1. Clothing that is "in style" or reflects current trends
2. Clothing that is "unique" or different
3. Clothing that is "classic" or professional

Do NOT label the collages. Have each student select the collage that best represents him/her. Explain each basic style and reveal the classifications:

- If the student selected collage #1, he/she most likely fits into the FASHION CONFORMITY/TRENDS group.
- If the student selected collage #2, he/she most likely fits into the PERSONAL ORIGINALITY group.
- If the student selected collage #3, he/she most likely fits into the CLASSIC group.
- A person can be some of all three (3) types, depending on his/her mood and the activities in which he/she is involved. He/she should select the group that reflects his/her likes most of the time.

Use the overhead transparency to illustrate how these three (3) styles of dress fit within fashion trends.



ROLES OF CLOTHING/CLOTHING CHOICES - PAGE 5

THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY AND MEDIA ON CLOTHING CHOICES

Fashion is anything that is popular at the time. In the past, fashions changed very slowly; today, fashions change quickly. This is principally due to modern technology and communication methods.

Modern technology has changed the way fibers are processed, fabrics are manufactured, and garments produced. Mass production has taken on a whole new aspect due to:

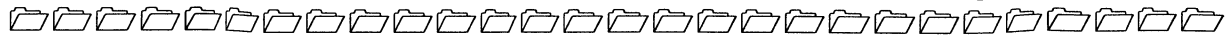
- new technology in producing the fabrics
- the use of CAD/CAM computer systems for:
(Computer-Aided Design/Computer-Aided Manufacturing)
 - a. computer-aided pattern design
 - b. computer-aided grading/sizing
(change pattern pieces to the different sizes)
 - c. computerized pattern layout
(computer automatically checks grainlines, nap direction, and matches plaids)
 - d. computerized cutting
(computer controls knife; speed is adjusted to match the thickness and number of layers)
 - e. garment assembly
(computerized sewing machines or "robots" stitch the garment together; tracks move material from machine to machine)

COMMUNICATION/MEDIA

Because of technology in the field of communication, such as computers, Fax machines, satellites, etc., information from around the world can be obtained in minutes. On any given day, we can view fashions from any country, any designer, and any television program or movie. The clothes we see television program stars wear on a regular basis often become the fashions of tomorrow.

Some examples of fashions from television are:

Miami Vice	pastel casual jacket
Fresh Prince of Bel-Air or Blossom	funky, off the wall
Beverly Hills 90210	preppie/short designer
Models, Inc.	designer, unique styles
News programs	business dress
Political leaders	Eisenhower jacket, Jackie Kennedy pillbox hat
Movie and television stars	Michael Jackson's single glove
Athletes	particular brands of athletic shoes



ROLES OF CLOTHING/CLOTHING CHOICES - PAGE 6

Local merchants advertise on the **radio** to lure listeners to their stores to buy merchandise. They frequently advertise particular brand names they carry.

The styles worn by popular **musical recording artists** are frequently copied and may become fads. Some examples of fashions that have become popular through musicians are:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Cher | leather clothing |
| Madonna | wearing underwear as outerwear |
| Garth Brooks | opposite stripe-yoked shirts |
| Snoop Doggy Dog | baggie "gang" |
| Nirvana and Pearl Jam | the grungy look |
| Michael Jackson | a glove on one hand, white socks, and short pants |
| Johnny Cash | all-black clothing |

T-shirts with the names and logos of musical groups are very popular, too.

Movie stars that play main character parts in popular movies often begin or revive certain fashions, such as:

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Top Gun | leather bomber jackets |
| Flashdance | off the shoulder sweatshirts |
| Pretty Woman | red formals, polka dot dresses, hats |
| Disney movies | theme T-shirts, sweatshirts, hats, etc. |

Magazines generally reflect the current fashions through articles, advertisements, covers, photographs, etc. Frequently they show the very latest styles along with the fashions that are on the forefront of acceptance. They may carry a lot of influence about what look is "in," what isn't, and the fabric choices offered.

