

Centennial: But Mom, I Have Nothing To Wear

Summary

by Sheri Sohm. Clothing styles reflect time, place, and culture.

Materials

Deseret News article: Antique Clothing Captures Grace of Yesteryear. - Ann Whiting Orton, Sunday August 29, 1993.

'Clothing Styles Over the Decades' - Utah Heritage Society, drawings: Sheri Sohm.

Deseret Dress. (Teacher or student provided) Antique clothing if available for display.

Background for Teachers

Clothing is much more than a covering for the body. People use clothing to communicate wealth, status in the community, personal taste, and sometimes rebellion from accepted norms.

Encourage students to talk to grandparents and older neighbors, read articles, view pictures, see examples of historic clothing, and use their own personal sense of style to compare and contrast clothing over the last 100 years.

Intended Learning Outcomes

In their study of Utah's Centennial, students will examine clothing styles from the past and compare them to the clothes of today. Students will discuss the ways in which clothing can communicate and help identify time periods, thoughts, and values.

Instructional Procedures

See preface material for the Utah Centennial Lesson Plans book.

Ask students to draw their favorite outfit including shoes and accessories. Students will write a short description of the clothing. Mention that styles have changed drastically over the past 100 years. For example: girls were required to wear dresses to school until the 1970's, now most children wear pants.

Read the first column of the article (first 5 paragraphs), Antique Clothing Captures Grace of Yesteryear.

Have students record all the words from the article that refer to articles of clothing such as: corsets, bustles, fanny pads, petticoats etc. Define the words. Unusual mens' clothing including: ascots, garters, braces (suspenders) longjohns, night shirts and hats.

Ask, Which articles of clothing have counterparts in our culture? What do we call them today? What articles are now obsolete?

Explain that clothing does more than cover the body, it communicates a lot of information about a person's values, lifestyle and self concept. Discuss how clothing reflects personal values. Show the picture of Park City's Silver Queen. Analyze the picture. See the lesson on the Silver Queen. Write a complete description of her attire. What does her dress say about:

her era

her view of self

her status in the community

Write a short paragraph answering the above questions and explain what she is communicating to the world through her clothing and accessories.

Ask students to bring COPIES of pictures from their family history. Create a bulletin board. Inspect the pictures. Create a story about the people by observing their clothing.

Look up 'clothing' or 'costume' in the encyclopedia, resource books, and in the packet. Ask students

to compare through drawing or description, articles of clothing worn during: the late 1800's, the 1920's, the 1940's the 1960's and today.

Using the drawings in Packet B, ask students to rank order their favorite clothing from different era's, list their preferences and explain why they like that era's dress.

Students might wish to interview a parent, grandparent, or great grandparent about the clothes in style when they were young. They may be willing to speak to the class or lend a piece of clothing for display. Ask students to compare and contrast the clothing of the past. How are they the same, how are they different, what do you like about antique styles, what do you like better now? How would life be different if students dressed now like they did 100 years ago?

Connecting the Past to the Present: Explain that Brigham Young was concerned that the young women of Utah were too concerned with style. The dresses fashionable on the East Coast had long dragging skirts that became extremely dirty on the unpaved roads of Utah. He designed a practical outfit to be worn by the girls. The costume was modest and practical but unattractive. Needless to say the style was not a success. Why did the young girls refuse to wear the uniform?

Compare this story to dress codes today. Does the school have dress standards? Prepare arguments for and against dress codes. Conduct a debate on the issue.

Consider Brigham Young's point of view. He reasoned that the extreme styles were not only uncomfortable, and impractical but difficult to clean and expensive. He realized that hoops and corsets made normal every day life difficult. Pretend you are a parent of a girl in the 1800's and wish her to adopt a less extreme style. Write a paragraph explaining this to her.

Extensions

Design a dress pattern that would address Brigham Young's concerns but be more attractive.

Use decision-making to consider whether you would prefer the styles of the 1800's or the 1990's. Use a criteria to help make this decision. Some criteria questions are below. Have students add to the list.

Ask students to consider whether past or present styles would be the:

- Most comfortable

- Most attractive

- Longest lasting

- Most fun to wear

- Easiest to clean

- Least expensive

Rate each style by giving it a point from one to ten using the criteria above to help judge the answers. (Ten being the best) See which style wins the most points.

Invite students to design a school uniform that would be comfortable and meet the above criteria.

Design a boy's and a girl's uniform. Add variety with different tops, alternate colors. etc.

Debate the pro's and con's of school uniforms.

Have a '100 years ago' day in the classroom. Ask students to wear clothing of natural fabrics and in old fashion styles if available. Take a class picture on this day and post it by a picture taken on a regular day. Write a paragraph explaining why some students choose to wear extreme styles. Explain your position on clothing standards.

Discuss why young people often choose extreme styles. What do they wish to communicate through their choice of clothing?

Students might enjoy experiencing old fashioned methods of clothing production. Guests might share methods of weaving, crocheting, tatting, knitting etc.

Contact a camp of the Utah Daughters of the Pioneers. Ask them about antique clothing styles. They may be available to share memories, artifacts, or a tour of a local museum.

Research the production of natural fabrics in Utah.

Create a bulletin board of antique styles and old photos.

Authors

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