

The History of Modern Fashion

Student worksheet

Reading Comprehension

Read the text about fashion and answer the questions below.

Fashion – the World Over	
1	Today, dedicated followers of fashion look to cities such as New York City, London, Paris and Milan for their inspiration and to buy the latest <u>trends</u> . The fashion scene changes with every season and in many countries, this means that there are four collections – one each for spring, summer, autumn and winter. The concept of fashion trends developed in the 14 th century in Europe, but what about fashion in the rest of the world?
2	Early Western travellers going to the East noted that fashion styles did not change rapidly in countries such as Persia, India, China and Japan. However, this was not always the case as there was also evidence uncovered during the dynasty of <u>Ming China</u> of rapidly changing fashions in <u>Chinese clothing</u> . History shows us that changes in costume often took place at times of economic or social change, which occurred in <u>ancient Rome</u> and the medieval Arabian Peninsula. Then a long period without major changes would follow.
3	At this time, most weaving, embroidery, cutting and stitching was hand-crafted by skilled craftsmen and seamstresses. Many textiles originated in countries such as China, where exquisite silks were produced and Turkey with its rich history of embroidery and clothing styles influenced by Central Asia and the Far East. Until the mid-nineteenth century, in Europe and America most clothing was therefore custom-made by skilled dressmakers and tailors. This meant that following fashion trends was clearly an expensive past-time.
4	In the twentieth century, mechanised production of textiles and the introduction of the sewing machine dramatically changed the way fashionable garments were produced. It led the development of <u>haute couture</u> and, much later, <u>affordable branded clothing</u> which was the offshoot of <u>haute couture</u> . Mass production meant that clothing became much cheaper and more widely available, yet at the same time was easily adapted to meet the designers' demands. As economies grew and people became more affluent, more people could afford to buy designer clothing across the world.
5	To sum up, fashion is closely interlinked with the history of the world. Periods of rapid change and movement of people influenced the textiles and styles that people chose to wear. Nowadays, people are still extremely conscious about the way they dress for various occasions. Adolescents and young adults feel very strongly about the brands they wear, whether it is for college, partying or sportswear. Their parents feel the same about their own designer labels. There are designer or boutique brands all over the world. In many Asian countries, local designers can charge a small fortune for exclusive bridal wear, wedding attire and other formal wear.