

Teacher's Guide

Fashion Fads and Freedom

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Fashion, Fads and Freedom contains a provocative 20 minute close program and this guide. Owners of the program may reproduce the guide for classroom use only. The VHS is close captioned. Catalog Number LS-1245-00.

Overview

Clothing choices play a role in almost every social problem from school violence and drugs to poverty and gangs. To many, the word “fashion” means Paris, models, and high prices. In reality fashion is basic self-expression for the only animals on the planet who wear clothes.

Fashion Fads & Freedom explains that for youth, fashion is an attempt to reconcile two seemingly contradictory messages: “I’m unique” and “I belong.” Watch articulate and youthful commentators explain their own clothing choices. Then listen to your own students talk about fashion, style and freedom.

Objectives

After viewing and discussing program viewers will:

- Know that clothing announces the self to others.
- Learn about the origins of clothing just for youth.
- Identify the clothing cliques at school. Common fashion groups may include: prep/jocks, gothics, and skater/punks.
- Discuss whether the way people dress affects the way they behave.
- See how designer labels influence fashion
- Learn how youth fashions are adopted, the impact of music videos, TV, magazines, and peer groups.
- Discuss whether youth judges others on clothing.
- Know the difference between fad, trend, fashion.
- Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of school dress codes.

Discussion Starters

1. What fashion groups are present at your school?
2. Discuss these statements from the video:
Fashion has “I’m unique” message as well as an “I belong” message
Fashion is about being accepted in a group. It’s about conformity as well as rejection.
3. How does clothing reveal attitudes?
4. The students in this video all said they valued comfort in clothing. Do you always wear comfortable clothing? Do you value comfort? What do you value in clothing?
5. Give examples of popular fashion trends that emerged from each of the following:
 - Music
 - Entertainment
 - Sports
 - Subcultures
 - Ethnic Groups
6. What music groups currently influence how teens dress?
Are there certain lines of clothing that are popular in music videos?
(Tommy Hilfiger worked to place its clothing in music video, knowing that its presence in videos would increase sales.)

7. Discuss Emily's comment, "Seventy-five percent of the time you can tell the type of music people listen to by the way they dress." Give examples of clothing styles influenced by current music.
8. What ethnic groups or subcultures influence fashion today? (*Fubu began in the inner city. Example: Tommy Hilfiger gave away clothing in the inner city, knowing that popularity among inner city youth would lead to general popularity among all youth.*)
9. What sports celebrities currently license their names for lines of clothing? What entertainers have their own lines?
10. What are classics? Give more examples of classic styles. Discuss the hand-out on classics on page 12.
11. How do you think the wearing baseball hats backwards trend started? Is it still popular or did it die?
12. What trends are popular in "street fashion" today? (*It is impossible for an educational video to show up-to-the-minute street fashions. Some last only three weeks.*)
13. Do you think teenagers are fashion setters or slaves to fashion?
14. What is a fashion trend? Give examples of current trends.
How do you think trends start?
15. Give examples of current fads.

16. Discuss the history of piercing presented in the video. Is piercing an example of something that moved from being a trend to being an established part of fashion? Has body piercing continued to remain popular or has it died?
What do you think of males piercing their ears?

17. Discuss: does clothing influence behavior? How?

18. Discuss your view of your school's dress code.
What do you think should or should not be banned?
Schools often ban:

- Clothing considered unsafe, dangerous, or a health hazard
- Clothing with offensive or obscene symbols, slogans or words
- Clothing degrading any gender, cultural, religious, or ethnic values
- Clothing containing language of symbols oriented toward violence, vandalism, sex, drugs, alcohol or tobacco
- Headgear
- Excessively baggy clothes
- Exposed midriffs
- Chains, jewelry with gang symbols
- Nose, lip, tongue or eye rings
- Clothes with gang symbols and colors
- Clothing which exposes underwear
- Sandals, thongs, or footwear with steel capped toes

19. What are advantages of school uniforms? What are disadvantages?

20. Compare and contrast uniforms and costumes. *(Both define the wearer as a member of a group. A costume allows creativity.)*

Do some students wear costumes to school?

21. Are you judged by what you wear? How? Do you think junior high students differ from senior high students in how they judge people by appearances?

22. Are students at the junior high more ignorant that students are judged by what they wear? The video shows pictures of Tristan as a junior high student. Is this common?

23. Discuss that fashion is about fitting in and being different.

24. Discuss the elements of style of today's youth clothing, using the handout on page 9..

25. At what age did you start choosing your own clothing? *(In 1998 a Roper Youth Report revealed 38% of six-to-17-year-olds say they consulted with their parents before purchasing clothes versus 45% the previous year. Similarly, 37% of children said they consulted with parents on athletics shoe purchases, compared to 46% in 1997.)*

Research Projects

1. Prepare a report on shoes popular with youth. A useful resource is **Shoes** By Colin McDowell ((Thames and Hudson, 1989). It includes Doc Martens, sneakers, shoes for sports, the military boot.

2. Report on the SmartGirl Web site. What does it reveal about fashion, fads and freedom?
Check out alloy.com. It is a website on teen fashion.
What web sites influence youth fashion?

3. Research product placement of a specific item of clothing, such as sneakers, in movies.
*Eddie Murphy wore Adidas in **Beverly Hills Cop**; dancers in **A Chorus Line** were in Puma.*
*J Crew's clothing line appeared in the WB network show **Dawson's Creek**.*
Check www.erma.org/brndwk/brandweek.html

*The March 1999 issue of **American Demographics** gave many examples.*

4. Prepare a report on the counter culture's influence on fashion and body decoration. The report could focus on the punks who emerged in the 1970s in Britain. "In piercing their skin, the punks are giving visible expression to the emotional pain that is associated with the meaning of the word punk: trash, rubbish." Or, it could deal with current fashion groups such as Gothics.

5. Use the internet to research dress codes of schools across the country. (*Our net search "school dress codes" revealed 47,000 hits*)

6. What ethnic groups or subcultures influence fashion today? *Fubu began in the inner city. Students could research how Tommy Hilfiger gave away clothing in the inner city, knowing that popularity among inner city youth would lead to general acceptance.*

The November 1996 issue of American Demographics contained an article called "Marketing Street Culture: Bringing Hip-Hop Style to the Mainstream."

To research on the internet, enter the name of a popular brand in a search engine.

7. How does music influence fashion today?
(Hip Hop is an example of music influencing fashion. Its musicians wore status symbols, designer labels, and athletic names when they performed and in their videos.)

Look at current magazines aimed at teenagers or magazines dealing with music. What recording artists currently appear in print clothing advertisements?

8. Research body piercing. What are its health risks? Why do mainstream youth today pierce other parts besides the ear?

(Body piercing started in the underground fringe cultures. Body holes can be anywhere.

The first sightings of body piercing usually produce a range of responses like "Yuk," to "They did what?," to "Why?"

Some who have piercings also have tattoos, but many other adolescents say they would never get a tattoo because "they are too permanent." They see the biggest advantage to body piercing is that if they don't like it, they simply remove the jewelry and the hole closes.

9. Research how the internet influences fashion.

(The net speeds up the fashion cycle by letting youth find out about obscure trends as they emerge.

Television drives homogeneity; the internet drives diversity. On the web, fans of small music groups can meet one another and exchange information. They can show up at a concert dressed like the lead singer they see it on line.

10. Research the history of a popular clothing item.

Here are some examples.

Khakis: *Come from the Urdu word Khak, which means dust or earth. Originally they were the warm weather military trousers worn by the English. They picked up their nickname chinos, because, until American sportswear manufacturers began making them, they were largely made in China.*

Sweatshirts: *At one time college athletes wore wool sweaters during competition.*

In the twenties, the Knickerbocker company became the first company to sell sweatshirts with academic logos. Knickerbocker changed its name to Champion because so much of their business was with the university sports teams.

From 1919 to 1938 logoed, fleeced cotton sweatshirts were used for warm up practices. Responding to complaints from athletes that the all cotton sweatshirt shrank in the wash, champion employee Sam Friedland patented the reverse weave process in 1938. In the late 80s the hooded sweatshirt became a universal fashion statement, whether worn by suburban sports fans or hip hop kids.

The button-down shirt *was originally designed to keep collars from flapping into the faces of polo players as they rode at high speed across the field.*

Elements of Style

Fit

Fit marries clothes to the body. Fit defines proportion and silhouette. Fit may be classically tailored or deconstructed, oversize or snug.

Comfort

Clothes that are not comfortable often stay in the closet. Standards of comfort improve each decade because of changes in fabrics, human nature and changing dress codes.

Color

Color coordination is the basis for wardrobe planning

Fabric

Fabric determines quality and durability as well as comfort.

Appropriateness

When clothing is appropriate, form follows function.

Practicality

Practicality depends on comfort, care, and durability. Practicality relates to where and when one would wear a garment, and how it fits in with the clothes you own.

Value

Clothing that has value lasts and serves the wearer well.

Adapted from *Clothes* by Kim Gross and Jeff Stone. Alfred Knopf, Inc

Jeans and Fashion

1950's In the 1950's, the newer and bluer jeans looked best. Rolled cuffs revealing the reverse weave of the fabric were the rage.

According to a newspaper report, ninety percent of American youth wore their blue denims everywhere except in bed and to church.

1960's Old denim became popular in the sixties. The frayed look was in. Jeans became the unisex uniform of the sixties Woodstock generation. Three piece suits of chemically faded blue denim were added to the Levis line, along with patchwork denim pants and vest combos.

1970's In the seventies, jeans got flared legs. It was a sign of coolness to have the bottoms of un-hemmed jeans torn from walking on them.

1980's A 1982 TV commercial announced that “nothing” came between Brooke Shields and her Calvins. Tight designer jeans became the rage. Many designers made their mark, but by the end of the decade, Levis were still the most popular and sought after jeans worldwide. Jeans were stone washed. Some received beads, jewels and sequins.

1990s The nineties brought denim shirts into the office, jeans jackets refashioned in leather, satin and corduroy, as well as jeans worn very loose. It was the era of casual clothing and the “relaxed fit” worked for everyone from aging baby boomers to hip-hop fans.

Classics & Streetwear

All American, a Style Book by Tommy Hilfiger (NY: Universe Publishing) suggests that the following items are classics.

- ◆ High tops
- ◆ Loafers, sneakers, wing tips
- ◆ Tank tops
- ◆ Bomber jackets
- ◆ Cargo pants
- ◆ Chinos, jeans, gray flannel and gray tropical wool trousers
- ◆ Carpenter pants
- ◆ Western shirts
- ◆ Stadium coat
- ◆ Ski jacket ski pants
- ◆ Cardigans
- ◆ Jeans jacket
- ◆ Military shirts
- ◆ Ray Ban aviators and wayfarers
- ◆ Ribbed turtlenecks
- ◆ Hawaiian shirts
- ◆ Boxers and briefs
- ◆ Button down and tab collar shirts
- ◆ Baseball cap, ski caps
- ◆ Flannel, denim, corduroy and chambray shirts
- ◆ Sandals; Doc Martens
- ◆ Military jackets
- ◆ Topsiders
- ◆ Basketball shorts
- ◆ Speedo swim suits