1920’s Fashion - The Flapper Era

Flapper era fashion came about in a very tumultuous time. During the 1920’s America was in the midst of an era of great change. World War I saw women joining the workforce in a bid to aid the war effort and there was a general movement towards female independence. The term ‘flapper’ was coined in Britain in 1912 and is generally attributed to the fact that these newly independent women were likened to birds leaving the nest. After enjoying a taste of the euphoria and freedom that came with entering the workplace, these women flourished and actively resisted any mention of returning to the kitchen.

Other notable changes in the Twenties include:

- Female voting rights
- The Harlem Renaissance
- The prohibition era
- The rise of the middle class
- The convenience of automobiles and electric home appliances allow people more leisure time.

It is interesting to see how these rapid social changes are illustrated in the women’s fashion trends of the decade.

Art:
The 1920’s are epitomised by the advent of the pinup girl. Charles Dana Gibson (1867 - 1944), an American graphic artist is famous for creating one of the very first pin-ups as part of his illustration series entitled “The Gibson Girl”. The image was subsequently emulated in many an art deco paintings and became the role model of the independent 1920’s woman.
Behaviour:
Aside from being renowned for their daring 1920’s fashions, Flapper women were also known for pushing the envelope where acceptable and ladylike behaviour was concerned. Unlike those women that came before them, they didn’t balk at riding bicycles, driving cars, drinking in public, smoking or being sexually liberated. The Roaring Twenties was the time of the ‘petting party’, which in essence was the predecessor of the modern-day sex party.

Early Twenties:
**Flapper era fashion** was essentially an androgynous style that made flapper women look young and boyish. Salient features included:
- Short skirts
- Dropped waistlines
- Long and cylindrical silhouettes
- Wide variety of detail in terms of cuts and trims

Hemlines started out quite modest, but as the decade progressed it rose steadily to the point where knees (gasp!) were exposed as the Flappers shimmied their way across the dance floor to the progressive sounds of jazz. Dresses were straight and loose, waistlines slung low, arms bare and busts flattened with tightly wound cloth. Plus, to add insult to injury, flappers started using makeup – something that was previously only associated with actresses and prostitutes!

*Key trend: the ‘one hour dress’*

The simpler silhouettes of the time gave women a great deal of physical freedom. Corsets were discarded and constricting skirts were abolished, leaving them free to cycle, run, etc. It was also less time-consuming. Not only could they dress themselves much faster, they could also sew their own clothing in a remarkably short time. In 1926 the Women’s Fashion Institute introduced the ‘one hour dress’, which was aptly designed to be assembled from scratch in one hour.
Mid Twenties:

The shirtwaist and skirts of teenagers provided the inspiration for the fashion trends of the early twenties and it was only in high fashion that the much-copied long, straight silhouette got a foothold. As time went by, the silhouette made inroads into day wear and was eventually incorporated in evening wear.

It was in the realm of evening wear that the innovative spirit of the twenties clearly made its mark. Before 1926, knees were a largely unacknowledged part of the female anatomy, but now the flappers were raising hems and exposing their knobbly bits for all to see. Fabric favourites included silk, cotton, linen and wool in a variety of ostentatious combinations.

Flapper era fashion also made use of the very first man-made fabrics, of which rayon was most notable. Knit fabrics that were previously only used to fashion underwear were now also used for outerwear. Colours and prints were assertive, with a palette that included everything from bright primaries to subdued pastels.

**Key trend: bobbed hair**

The bob was first introduced in America subsequent to the First World War and was established as a fashion trend by dancer Irene Castle. After styling her hair in this fashion during a European tour, she stunned home audiences by sporting it during a concert in 1914. Popular media latched on to the concept and popularised it by means of jokes, stories, cartoons, skits, articles and much more.

Interesting fact: Although of late this fashion trend has been ascribed to the actress Louise Brooks, the look had actually been around for almost a decade before she became well known.
Late Twenties:  
As the decade roared to an end, **1920’s fashion** slowly started to revert back to the longer silhouette, with waist lines inching their way back onto the catwalk. Fabrics were cut closer to the body and there was a brief period when evening wear sported both short and long skirts, reaching a hesitant compromise. In reality, the look that has been termed "**flapper era fashion**" was only popular from 1925 to 1928. It represented such a radical shift in fashion consciousness, however, that its legend lives on to this very day. 
And that, in short, is an overview of the most important elements of **1920’s fashion**.
The Great Depression Era

1930’s fashion was greatly influenced by the infamous Wall Street Crash and the subsequent depression that swept the globe. Fashion trends were changing dramatically, but less and less ready-to-wear garments were being sold. During this time in fashion history, reckless spending was frowned upon - clothing was mended repeatedly and women took to home sewing with increasing fervour. The boyish women’s fashion trends of the twenties were replaced with a softer, more feminine style. 1930’s women’s fashion saw the dramatic drop of the hemline to the ankle, where it firmly remained until the decade had ran its course. Dramatic darts were replaced with soft gathering and dress waists returned to follow the natural waistline. Hips were minimised and small waists accentuated by moderately full skirts, while dress bodices were designed to include inset pieces and yokes. Plunging necklines were given great attention in the shape of ruffled collars and scalloped edges. Skirts were more detailed and upper skirt yokes made its first appearance in a v-shape that ran from the one hip to the middle of the yoke and then continued to the opposite hip. Layers and ruffles were introduced, mostly in tiers, while the skirt bottom was accentuated with gathers and pleats. This is one of the eras in women’s fashion history when the entertainment industry exerted more influence than ever. Going to a movie was one of the only affordable means of escapism left to a populace in dire circumstances. Evening wear, especially styles and accessories, were now endorsed with movie star recommendations.
One of the most popular formal styles was the empire-line gown. The dress was normally adorned with puff- or butterfly sleeves. Hemlines remained at the ankle and if a formal touch was required a train was added. Further adornment took the shape of fabric flowers, bows and peplums which were placed at the neckline, shoulder or waist.

Fur was very popular in the 1930’s and was worn both during the day and at night time. The pelts that were most in demand included sable, mink and chinchilla and it was worn as capes, coats, wraps, stoles and dress trimmings. Women’s leisure wear gave a nod to men’s fashion trends. Suits, slacks and leather jackets became popular, while the cloche was replaced with an angled beret.

Shoes came in all shapes and sizes. This includes rounded toes, pumps, flats, ankle-straps, thick heels, moderate heals, slip-ons, lace-ups, buckles and spectator/two-tone styles. Handbags retained their twenties flavour initially (beaded, enamelled), but eventually gave way to a leather craze.

Technology had developed to a point where washable, easy-care fabrics were made available to the public. Up until this point man-made fibres were designed to look and feel like natural fibres; now it was unabashedly synthetic. Nylon was successfully synthesized by the DuPont de Nemours Company in 1935 and was introduced in the form of stockings in 1939 after which its fashion debut was interrupted by the outbreak of World War II. 1930’s men’s fashion history saw the advent of snob appeal. Manufacturers had already realised that by continuously introducing new fashion trends they could get women to spend money on clothing more frequently, but this principle had not been applied to men’s fashion until now.
Undershirts became instantly unfashionable when Clarke Gable took off his shirt in a movie to reveal a bare chest. Single-breasted jackets and plaid prints were replaced by plainer, double-breasted jackets.

The 1930’s saw much improvement in mass production techniques, with the result that a wider scope of consumers now had access to fashionable attire. However, when England and France declared war on Germany on September 3rd, 1939, civilian access to clothing manufacturers were stemmed in order to help the war effort and fashion trends remained stagnant for a while.
In order to discuss **1940’s fashion** we first need to impart the tremendous impact the Second World War had on all aspect of everyday life. Social trends dictate **fashion trends** and the war changed the face of the fashion industry completely. When Paris fell to Germany on June 14, 1940, French **fashion history** was nearly high-jacked by the Germans. The powers that be were seriously considering moving the main French couture houses to Berlin in order to re-establish the seat of haute couture there and claiming the title of fashion capital for themselves. Luckily US destroyers were transferred to Great Britain on September 3, 1940 and the United States of America entered the war officially on December 8, 1941. Before the start of the war, New York fashion designers would annually make their way across the Atlantic to attend French fashion shows. Upon their return they would take the **women’s fashion trends** and **men’s fashion trends** they had observed and copy these couture designs to suit the American market. However, once the Germans had taken control of Paris and the US Navy had stationed battle ships in the Atlantic, they were cut off from this rich source of inspiration. In an attempt to keep up a steady supply of new **fashion trends** they turned to leisure wear, with the result that the country emerged as the leisure wear capital of the world. By the time 1941 rolled around war goods manufacturing had taken centre stage. All stocks of natural fabrics were confiscated by the government and domestic manufacturers were forced to concentrate their efforts on creating substitute fibers to use for domestic garment manufacture. Rayon manufacture received a boost as a result and nylon stockings became available in 1943. War restrictions even inspired **fashion trends**
Throughout 1942 the War Production Board continued to enforce severe restrictions of the amount of fabric used in garments. Regulation L-85 was issued on March 8, 1942, effectively decreeing that every aspect of clothing manufacture was to be regulated by the War Production Board. Stanley Marcus, apparel consultant to the Board, took the stand that it was every designer’s patriotic duty to create clothing that would stay fashionable for multiple seasons. This led to a great turnabout in women’s fashion history. American designers, in a desperate effort to comply with the restrictions enforced by Regulation L-85, introduced a new suit style for women that combined short, straight skirts with jackets no longer than twenty-five inches in length. Similarly sheath evening dresses began to replace the long, flowing gowns that were the staple of the ‘30s. McCall’s distributed patterns that showed how to turn men’s suits into ladies suits and women’s dresses into clothing for children. American women were once again picking up needle and thimble and setting to work to make their own families’ clothing. The Thirties had introduced the notion of thrift, but now it was pushed to the extreme. Fashion magazines dictated that women invest in conservative fashions that would make do for multiple seasons and gave advice on proper garment care for maximum wear. The concept of mix ‘n match separates was introduced and these classic leisure wear styles became popular on college campuses, soon to be adopted by all levels of society. In an attempt to re-establish French domination in the fashion world, 53 French couturiers joined forces in 1945 to bring the world a travelling exhibition of their finest works. The participating designers included Balenciaga, Jacques Fath, Jean Patou, Elsa Schiaparelli and Robert Ricci, son of Nina Ricci.
The exhibition consisted largely of dolls in fully furnished sets, harking back to the 18th century when it was the norm to present fashion in such a manner. The dolls in the exhibition were clothed by couturiers, artisans and textile workers, while artists and theatre workers created the elaborate sets. Top hairdressers created wigs of human hair and the jewelry houses of Cartier and Van Cleef & Arpels were commissioned to create miniature jewelry for the dolls.

The exhibition had the desired effect and by 1946 Paris had reclaimed its title as the seat of fashion.

Once peace was declared, the women of America decided the time was ripe for change and yet another slew of fashion trends ensued. Weary of the severely tailored garments they had to wear during wartime, they were more than ready to return to a softer, more feminine silhouette. In answer to this demand, the house of Dior introduced the New Look in 1947, featuring sweeping lengths and full skirts. Excessive use of fabric was now seen as opulent and women’s fashion returned to the romantic.

Peplums were back with a vengeance. The butterfly, bustle and gathered peplum were in great demand and many varieties of ruffles found their way onto skirt hems, waistlines and bodices. Feminine blouses were teamed with gored-, gathered- and A-line skirts and adorned with neck bows and puffy sleeves. Lace was also en vogue and collars were cut full in a Peter Pan or traditional pointed shirt-collar design.

By the end of the forties underwear had finally made the transition from the corset to the bra and the girdle. After the war was over under-wire bras became available and nylon stockings were once again on the market.
Leather platform shoes were in great demand - their soles studded with ‘nail heads’ in defiance to the severe metal rationing of the war era (a fashion trend that subsequently carried over to leather handbags).

While Paris was attempting to regain its grasp on the world of couture after the War, American designers continued to take great strides in gaining respect and credibility in the realm of leisure wear.

PICTORAL TIMELINE:

1940:
Very little change from the 30’s: shoulders are slightly more emphasized and skirt hems have risen to just under the knee. As if to make up for this flagrant disregard of proper decorum, necklines have risen sharply and continue to stay there for the rest of the decade.
1942: The muscular lines that first appeared in the 30’s are now perfectly suited to the war effort, where women have to take the place in factories of men who left for the front lines.

1943: By now the war has raged for four years and fabric is becoming a scarce and dear commodity. It is used sparingly and magazines have begun offering advice on how to recycle old clothing. Most patterns indicate two different fabrics so it may be easily assembled using parts of other old garments.

1944: Fashion trends veer towards close-fitting garments in two or more fabrics. Shoes are recycled and consequently look somewhat plump.

1947:

By now the average American had endured two years of hard living, considering themselves lucky if they had one full change of clothes on their back. Interest in fashion is tentatively flaring up again, although recycling and fabric economy still remains important. Shoes are still big with thick soles.
**1948:**

A full year after its inception, Dior’s New Look finally reaches the closets of Middle America. Not everyone can afford the large amounts of fabric required to construct a wide skirt yet, so narrow skirts remain in fashion as long as it is teamed with a tight bodice/jacket that cinches the waist.

**1949:**

Wide skirts rule the roost alongside narrow waists and horizontal seams either above or below the waist. For the first time in fashion history two silhouettes reign side by side: the narrow skirt and the classic 1950’s poodle.
1950’s fashion was epitomised by the flamboyant femininity of style icons like Grace Kelly, Audrey Hepburn and Jackie O. Throughout women’s fashion history these grand dames have remained beacons of grace and timeless style, to the extent that contemporary designers such as Luca Luca, Chanel and Alexander McQueen are still paying homage to this era in their designs today.

The hallmarks of 1950’s fashion history were soft silhouettes, wide shoulders, the corseted waist and full hips. These were supplemented with trim bodices, full knee-length skirts, short boxy jackets and blouses teamed with pencil skirts. One style that deviated from this trend was the cocoon-like sac dress and coat that was fitted to the shoulder and bloomed spectacularly at the waist and hips.

Although 1950’s fashion trends were clean, classic and conservative, the politics and social dynamics of the time was anything but. Each polished and refined fashion trend that graced the runway was matched by an inversely radical social change.

**Common Designs:**
The most popular fashion trends of the time included:
- Single- or dual-piece dresses adorned with small collars, fitted blouses and full knee-length skirts.
- Casual dresses with boned bodices, circle skirts and halter straps.
- Similarly fitted eveningwear that had a heart-shaped opaque strapless bodice with a sheer silk or nylon over bodice, usually sleeveless or long-sleeved
- Prom-style evening dresses of tulle in pastel hues, normally accompanied by yards of ruffles, tulle trim and velvet bows.
· Button-up sweaters with a plain neckline, often appliquéd or beaded.
Catwalks were crowded with conservative skirts and high-necked sweaters but in reality the average American consumer was developing and increasingly sloppy outlook on finance. This was a direct result of the introduction of the credit card system, which lead to the birth of consumerism and a disposable attitude towards wealth.
Wartime restrictions had been lifted, but fashion did not loosen its belts. Fabrics like nylon were keeping silhouettes close to the body and gave more elasticity and staying power to leisure wear, lingerie and socks. The younger generation used fashion to rebel against what they saw as needlessly restrictive societal norms.
Conservatism still ruled the roost, but the Rock ‘n Roll attitude had made its way onto catwalks and magazine pages, flaunting the sexual energy of icons such as James Dean and Elvis Presley. This was in direct opposition to a society that demanded women remain virgins until their wedding night and laws that forbid the sale or use of birth control.
But Rock ‘n Roll was more than loud music and tight jeans; it was a way for a largely ignored generation to place themselves on the map. For the first time teenagers were differentiated as a group separate from their parents and younger siblings - a group with their own fashion trends, a market ready to be tapped. No other decade has managed to immortalise such a cataclysmic societal clash in its fashions prior or since.
Young Hollywood cheesecake fashions rubbed shoulders with the pill box hats and white gloves favoured by Presidents’ Wives and ‘ladies who lunch’. Housewives in frilly aprons and nipped-in skirts served meatloaf and two veg to rebellious teenagers in leather and jeans.
This thrilling abundance of styles was echoed on the catwalks of the time and continues to ricochet throughout fashion history to this day.

**Fabrics Available:**
- Natural fibres (linen, cotton, wool, silk)
- Rayon
- Acetate
- Nylon
- Modacrylic
- Acrylic
- Polyester
- Spandex

The most common daytime fabrics used in 1950’s fashion were naturals, rayon, nylon, poly-cotton blends, as well as acrylic and acetate. Sweaters were generally of wool and of cashmere if you wanted to denote status. Eveningwear veered towards brocades, satin, velveteen, taffeta, nylon net, tulle and chiffon in both natural and synthetic fabrics. Sheer fabrics became more popular but were not usually the main material of a garment, except in the case of tulle evening gowns and some very rare day dresses.

**Popular Colours and Prints:**

1950’s fashion trends for daywear included neutrals as well as floral prints, alongside western imagery that was often hand-painted on skirts and scarves. With the advent of the atomic era, bright abstract designs denoting a futuristic feel also became popular. Abstracts in brown, grey and navy were popular for winter time, while eveningwear staples were solids and floral brocades. The more daring opted for sheer chiffon over a flesh-coloured underlay and peacock blues and hot pinks crossed the divide to the right side of ‘acceptable’.
Trims and Detailing:
Sweaters were beaded to within an inch of their lives and circle skirts and novelty garments smothered in rickrack, sequins, glitter and appliqué detailing. Evening detail consisted mainly of pleats and sculpted necklines, as well as low-key rhinestones and cord that added a hit of glamour without making the garment cumbersome or uncomfortable.

The Latest Fads:
- Bobby Soxers (Peter Pan collared blouse, poodle skirt, scarf-tied ponytail and saddle shoes)
- James Dean look-alikes, hoods and motorcycle gangs
- Cat-eye glasses
- Beatniks
- Hawaiian shirts
- Bark-cloth in casual wear
- Ethnic scene prints in day and leisure wear
- Americanaprints with rustic scenes or patriotic eagles, etc.

Innovations:
New fabrics:
- Acrylic (1950)
- Polyester (1953)
- Spandex (1959)
Access to these new fabrics allowed designers to experiment with revolutionary new fashion trends.
1960’s fashion emerged from a decade that was epitomized by sweeping changes throughout the world. It is a time in fashion history when ideas and images were generated that still seem contemporary today. Up until the 1960’s fashion had been mainly marketed towards the wealthy elite, but now the preferences of young people had become important. The beginning of the decade still saw the fashion scene dominated by Parisian haute couture, but the throne was soon to be usurped by the emerging pop scene in London.

The fashion trends that were doing the rounds in Britain were closely linked to music and the mod look was at first based on the simple geometric shapes that has since become indicative of the 60’s. For the first time young people could buy bright, boutique-style clothing at affordable prices - giving rise to the quintessential 1960’s fashion trends that took the US and the rest of Europe by storm.

Having originated on the West Coast of America, the hippy look would cross the Atlantic later in the decade. Both fashion- and textile designers were taking inspiration from non-Western cultures with regard to color, pattern and textiles.

Couture:
Mature women’s fashion trends were leaning towards the elegant, sophisticated apparel of French designers like Balenciaga and Dior. Public figures like Jacquie Kennedy were deviating from very formal fashion to include items such as shorter skirts. Accessories like hats and gloves became less popular.
The intercontinental influence also played an important role in men’s fashion trends. Italian design had inspired a sleek, smart look that was translated into the tailor-made attire favored by the Mods in Britain, the cut and fabric of which were chosen to create maximum impact. The younger generation were rapidly developing a unique style of dress and there was great demand for more affordable outfits in a less traditional style, with the result that the exclusive attitude of the existing couture houses were beginning to seem like a decidedly outdated approach to fashion.

Haute couture was eventually forced to imitate popular clothing labels, a direct reversal of the traditional ‘from the top downwards’ spiral which fashion had followed for the greater part of fashion history. Cardin and Yves Saint Laurent were amongst the couture houses that adapted successfully and most well-known designers were beginning to distribute ready-to-wear ranges in department stores.

Street Style:
Fashion trend setters were beginning to realize that young people desired a wardrobe that did more than copied adult dress. This market segment’s income was at the highest it had been since the end of WWII and the designs of Mary Quant and her contemporaries that had been designed with this consumer group in mind were becoming very popular. Quant’s Bazaar and Barbara Hulanicki’s Biba were providing young people with inexpensive clothing options that suited their busy, urban lifestyle. Separates were en vogue and people were no longer buying outfits for specific occasions or times of the day. The miniskirt was without a doubt the most jaw-dropping fashion trend of the decade.
Designed for the skinny female form, it was teamed with pale foundation and exaggerated eyes. The hairdresser Vidal Sassoon introduced the wedge, which gained popularity alongside the bob and traditionally long, straight hair. Clothing- and textile designers were taking inspiration from the Modern Age by combining space-age silver with bright primary prints taken from Pop Art. New fabrics were also introduced, including PVC, easy-care acrylics and polyesters.

**The Peacock Revolution:**

1960s men’s fashion represented perhaps the most dramatic fashion development of the decade. For over 150 years men’s fashion trends had not deviated from the plain, dark and tailored look. Now, gay fashion was flinging this notion out by the bootstraps, introducing color, frills and cravats. Collarless jackets were worn with vividly printed shirts, slim-fitting trousers and boots. Next, lapels and trousers went boldly where no garment had ever gone before, becoming increasingly exaggerated as the decade progressed. Unisex fashion became popular as men and women shopped for similar items as the same boutiques.

**Celebrities:**

The 60’s was an ear when models could become famous in the blink of an eye. The most iconic of the 1960’s models has to be Lesley Hornby, who went by the name of ‘Twiggy’. She shot to fame at age fifteen when her large eyes and under-developed figure was touted as the most extreme version of the Mod Look. The pages of Vogue and Elle were filled with images of Celia Hammond, Penelope Tree, Verushka and Marisa Berenson (the granddaughter of Elsa Schiaparelli). Black models like Donyale Luna and Naomi Sims broke the mold and challenged the accepted concept of beauty. Photographers who were favored at the time included John French. Terence Donovan. Brian Duffy. Ron Traege and David
Photographers who were favored at the time included John French, Terence Donovan, Brian Duffy, Ron Traege and David Bailey (who first introduced the informal pose in fashion magazines).

**Hippies:**
The term ‘hippie’ is generally used to refer to a subgroup of the 1960s American counterculture. They had become an established social group by 1965, only to dwindle in numbers later in the 1970’s. They, alongside the New Left and Civil Rights movements, represented a three-pronged breakaway from contemporary culture of the time.

Hippies were mostly Caucasian teenagers and young adults between the ages of 15 and 25 that took their ethos from that of the bohemians and beatniks that went before. They opposed established institutions, questioned middle class values, loudly rebelled against the Vietnam War and promoted sexual liberation. They also embraced parts of non-Judeo-Christian religions and established their own communities, which lead to some authorities describing hippies as a religious sect.

Their politics were gentle and non-violent and they put much stock in peace, love and freedom of choice. They viewed dominant culture as corrupt and spoke out against ‘Big Brother’ and ‘The Man’. The hippie era greatly influenced music and the arts, to the extent that aspects of their dress reverberate through fashion history to this very day.
The fashion trends of the 1970’s were diverse, with anything being made into a fashion statement. Some women preferred unsightly and clunky fashion, while others adopted an altogether more feminine style.

This was a period during which many cultures and sub-cultures were revealed, resulting in much wariness amongst the general public. The reality of militant feminism, Civil Rights, the Watergate scandal, and the Vietnam War were brought to attention, creating doubt and fear. However negative the occurrences seemed, they had a profound influence on fashion designers, and the public eagerly awaited the 1970’s fashion trends.

Gone was the idealism of the 1960’s, and concerns about global pollution and depleting the earth’s natural resources began to mount. After the war in the Middle-East and Vietnam, the 1970’s told of a corrupt government with Watergate and Nixon’s resignation, an oil crisis, and the peaceful Khmer Rouge zones in Cambodia being struck by war.

The fashion of the 1970’s was also influenced by movies and television. For the first time there were shows, such as Charlie’s Angels, featuring women as strong and independent, as women who fought the baddies and rescued the innocent. Wonder Woman also became an icon of feminine strength, and her image resulted in boots becoming popular, which were then paired with hot pants or a short skirt. According to 1970’s women’s fashion, boots had to be ornate and decorative, if not bejewelled then printed with a flowery or psychedelic design - anything, as long as they were not boring.

Other fashion trends of the 1970’s were the Punk and Glam trends, where the main object of these trends was to shock.
Designers created shoes with outrageous decorations for stars such as Elton John, David Bowie and Cher. Platform shoes also made a return to fashion, with designers creating stacks of up to eight inches! These platform shoes were then decorated with anything ornate, such as rhinestones and sequins, among other adornments.

Nike made its debut in 1972, at a time when running was becoming a fashionable pastime, and running shoes became a functional necessity. Farah Fawcett often wore a pair of running shoes in scenes from the hit television show Charlie’s Angels. The 1970’s was just the beginning of the athletic trend.

At this time, the media was still conservative, and they sought to bring a sense of calm to the fashion world by highlighting trends that were romantic and classically beautiful. Many historic fashion trends made a return in the 1970’s, with designers showcasing Edwardian-style pumps, gladiator sandals, and square-toed styles similar to those of the 1940’s.

The most prominent designers of the 1970’s were Givenchy, Norell, and Oscar de la Renta. The bell bottoms, miniskirts and long hair of the 1960’s trend continued throughout the 1970’s. Polyester was invented and became a popular fabric used in 1970’s fashion trends, while the alternative to polyester during this time was denim. In the 1970’s skirts were made in three lengths – mini, midi and maxi.

The aforementioned 1970’s fashion trend, Glam, exploded both in the United States and in Britain, with boys adorning themselves in feather boas, ladies shirts, and even make-up. Bands such as the New York Dolls had massive followings, and it was difficult to tell the girls from the boys.
At this point in the mid-70’s fashion had no specific direction, with everything from the glam trend, to earth mother and natural romantics being fashionable. It was from this point that women’s fashion veered towards a masculine style, with women wearing men’s shirts, ties, and fedoras. This trend also developed as a result of the Women’s Liberation Movement, where women demanded equal rights, including the right to wear men’s clothes.

The 1970’s was an era when the rules of fashion abated, leaving space for anything to become a new trend. As far as 1970’s fashion trends were concerned, anything was fashionable as long as it made a statement.
One word successfully describes the **1980’s fashion trends** – excessive. Bigger was better, and the more you had the more you wanted. Shoulder pads were fashionable for both men and women, accessories were added to the maximum, and hair was big! Television shows and movies continued to influence fashion, while the introduction of music television and MTV meant that music as an art form grew on a whole new scale. The visuals from the music videos captured the audience’s attention, adding mystery to the music rather than destroying it, as was feared. True to form of the 1980’s, music videos were larger-than-life in both fashion and narrative, and set many of the **fashion trends** of that decade. The music of the 1980’s was heralded by two great icons, namely Michael Jackson and Madonna. With nine Number 1 singles and a number of other hit songs, Michael Jackson was at the forefront of the music industry. Madonna’s influence in both music and fashion is undeniable, forever changing her generation, and the music industry. Her lyrics were about taboo topics such as virginity and unwed mothers, and her music ranged from dance hits to soulful tributes. Madonna epitomised the **1980’s fashion trends** with her bleached blonde and wildly teased hair, and her penchant for lace, beads, crosses, and fishnet stockings. Although chic, her accessories were always over the top, and her trademark mole was copied onto many cheeks of her young followers. Madonna’s hair style wasn’t the only style of the 1980’s. Big hair was fashionable with tall hairstyles, hair sticking out at unusual angles, and mousse, plastic and metal piled into hair until people could barely hold their heads up.
Big hair was not only a **1980’s fashion trend** – the 1960’s saw the beehive, and the 1970’s saw the afro – but it was the era when styles had the most diversity. In the early 1980’s people experimented with unusual colours and cuts, but by the mid-80’s hair styles had settled down to one main trend – volume. The band Bananarama experienced a variety of cuts and colours, as well as high-volume hair, while bands such as Bon Jovi, Cinderella, Def Leppard and Poison embraced the bigger-is-better, voluminous styles.

Towards the end of the 1980’s the retro look of the 1970’s returned, with short hair being acceptable as long as it was bleached, brightly coloured, or creatively spiked. Hair gels and mousses were used to achieve this, with some products containing glitter to create extra individuality.

Another **fashion trend** was asymmetrical hair styles, with short bangs cut longer around the back and ending in a diagonal point. Other styles were very short on one side of the head and longer on the back and on the other side. Mullets became fashionable during the 1980’s, where hair was short on the top and sides of the head and longer down the back. This style was occasionally taken further by braiding or tightly winding the longer back into a rat tail. Some more daring females even copied this masculine style.

In the mid-1980’s parachute pants became popular amongst men. These were fairly fitted nylon trousers with zippered patch pockets, the usual two on the front and back, as well as an extra one or two on the legs, and ending in zippered ankles. MC Hammer adopted this look, but wore his pants loose and long in the crotch, very baggy, and in a variety of materials and colours. This look was adopted only by the very daring.
By the late 1980’s a major fashion trend was acid-washed jeans. This look was achieved whereby a chemical was used to strip the top layer of colour from the denim, leaving them white with navy blue undertones. To be truly fashionable, an acid-washed denim jacket would be paired with the acid-washed jeans. Although blue was the most common colour of acid-washed denim, some manufacturers also used red, black and even gold styles! The 1980’s fashion trends were also influenced by movies, especially ‘Flashdance’ and ‘Footloose’. ‘Flashdance’ was responsible for the introduction of leg warmers, which came in bright colours and patterns, and were often worn low around the ankle. The truly fashionable would wear two or three different coloured pairs at a time, even in summer! By 1985, leg warmers had completely disappeared from the fashion scene.

More 1980’s women’s fashions include hair bobbles, slides, bands and bun nets in a variety of shapes, sizes and colours; slip petticoat dresses that were white vests and tartan skirts in one, worn with a jumper and matching tights; tee shirts and tops with the Betty Boop character printed on it; fringe jackets which were denim jackets that were tight around the bottom and had fringe sewn onto the sleeves; Farlows Female jeans that were very tight, lightweight jeans that looked like spandex when worn; and waffle jumpers that were knitted in a waffle-type design, and worn by both men and women. The 1980’s were epitomised by excess, with a number of styles and trends making fashion history.
The fashion trends of the 1990’s were originally a rejection of all that was considered fashionable – namely the fashions of the late 1980’s. The result of this was the setting of a new trend. In 1992 grunge styles became fashionable until the late 1990’s, while the retro look reminiscent of the 1960’s and 1970’s was popular throughout this decade.

Early 1990’s
The acid-washed denim look was rejected in 1990 in favour of stonewashed denim in a variety of shades. Denim jackets were still fashionable and, while slim fit jeans were worn until 1994, they were replaced with relaxed fit denim jeans. Men teamed these with white or black tee shirts as per the grunge trends. The high-volume hair styles of the 1980’s were rejected in favour of long, straight hair. In 1991 the bowl cut became popular amongst teenage boys, while the mullet remained a popular style for men up until 1992.

Early 1990’s fashion was characterised by fluorescent coloured clothing, and was popular amongst teenage and pre-teen girls, while some boys wore fluorescent tee shirts. Clothing items produced in fluorescent colours included t-shirts, sweatshirts, socks, shoelaces, hair bands, and fluorescent fanny packs. In 1991 colours such as coral, turquoise and hot pink replaced fluorescent colours, although these bright colours became less popular through 1995. Hoop earrings were popular female fashion in the early 1990’s.

In 1991 parachute pants became popular for men. It had a drawstring waist, tapered legs, and was worn in a relaxed fit. It was available in a variety of bright, neon colours. In 1992 heat-sensitive shirts that changed colour depending on the body’s temperature became very popular.
Grunge and retro-hippie

Grunge was the most important fashion trend of the 1990’s. Fashion was influenced by grunge music, both of which became mainstream in 1992. The look was characterised by plaid flannel shirts, stonewashed jeans, and dark colours, which meant that the popularity of the fluorescent colours of 1990 and 1991 decreased. Doc Marten style shoes and boots were a popular element of the grunge trend, as well as high top sneakers in red and other darker colours.

Grunge became a very distinct trend. Women’s hair was long and straight, and very few men adopted these long styles. 1990’s fashion trends were unisex, and although it was intended as a rebellion against fashion, it became a trend in its own right. Hooded sweatshirts, vests, long sleeved shirts, and shorts made of plaid became very popular.

In 1990 hippie fashion experienced a revival with tie-dye shirts becoming popular. In 1991 sunglasses had the shape of the granny glasses of the 1960’s, and most importantly, in 1992 bell-bottom jeans made a comeback. In 1993, many girls started wearing crocheted vests, which was also considered part of the hippie revival.

In 1992 denim overalls were revived as yet another fashion trend. Denim overalls fitted in well with the grunge and neo-hippie fashions, and remained popular through to 2000 as they accommodated many changing styles. Other popular 1990’s women’s fashions were denim shorts, and white denim which was fashionable from 1992 through to 1998.

More popular fashions for women during the 1990’s include: the ‘Rachel’ haircut, made popular by Jennifer Aniston’s character on ‘Friends’; baby doll dresses; back-pack purses;
GX jeans which were the start of flare-leg jeans; half-heart necklaces, as worn by Laura Palmer on ‘Twin Peaks’; Mary Jane shoes; plastic rubbery bracelets; platforms; spiral perms; thigh-high stockings; tube socks; Union Jack dresses – a mini dress printed with the Union Jack made popular by Geri Halliwell of the Spice Girls; butterfly clips worn in the hair by girls of all ages; and white hair bands worn at the front of the hair.

Popular unisex fashion trends include: baggy jeans; canvas shoes such as Keds; cargo pants; Cole-Haan loafers which were genuine leather and therefore a status symbol; Doc Martens; Guess, Levi and Nike brands; piercings, whether it be your tongue, belly button, eyebrow or nipple or anything else; polar fleece; and tattoos.

The fashion of the 1990’s was characterised by the grunge trend. A rejection of fashion for “anti-fashion”, aspects of this fashion trend continue to influence many modern styles.
Storyboards

A fashion storyboard will usually consist of a full colour illustration of a fashion figure/several figures (male or female) wearing the garments that are being showcased. This storyboard tutorial will show you how to correctly format and create a fashion storyboard for assignments or professionally. A clearly labelled, sizable swatch of your chosen fabric/s should also be included on the board. The storyboard should be thought of as a pictorial representation of your proposed clothing design in full colour, along with technical renderings of each garment individually. More details are available on the technical drawings page.

"A fashion storyboard is a summary of your collection's inspiration and theme. It's a design tool that will help you remain focused and consistent as your line develops. It's also a great communication aid when explaining your vision to others (retailers, media etc.). Magazine tears, fabric swatches, old photos, buttons, ribbons; basically any visual reference you desire are mounted onto a hard board. Be sure to give your story board a title, like a book or film" - fashionincubator.com

Just the sketches individually can look dull, lifeless and very uninteresting. You need a well-planned layout and a strong theme - your ideas must seem commercially successful. Designers need to learn how to use different presentation techniques in order to enhance their artwork. Storyboard templates are included throughout this storyboard tutorial. Planning your presentation:
The design brief will dictate the storyboard’s objective - trends forecasting, fashion design, a thematic board, and so on. Depending on the target market, the brief and the purpose of the presentation, your storyboard should include the following:

A fashion figure, clothed in your designs on a flat working figure
Swatches of your fabric (all the fabrics used)
Colour palettes (all the colours that are used in your designs)
Any trims used
Photographs of the garments

Presentation Techniques:

The **fashion storyboard** must have a strong theme running throughout which captures the mood. Additionally, the presentation must have a title, even if it is a working title at that stage. The theme and title can be determined by the fabrics (Natural Linens), the season (Summer Blues), or the merchandise (Metamorphosis), for example.

**Stance:** Choose the correct and appropriate pose for your **storyboard templates** when you start drawing: classic, sophisticated, funky, moody or sporty are all appropriate moods for a board.

**Positioning:** Don’t allow your fashion figure to look like it’s floating on the page; use shadowing and shading to create the illusion of structure. If you feel competent enough, draw your character in a scene where the clothes enhance the situation.

**Figures:** When using more than one fashion figure on the **fashion storyboard,** you may vary the size of each figure. This creates perspective on the board and looks visually appealing. One large scale figure in the foreground and the rest in the background points out the importance of the clothing as well as giving the viewer a visual treat.
Fabrics: Cutting the fabric with pinking shears (zigzag cut on edges) looks professional and will give the storyboard an interesting feature. Use double sided tape on the edges to keep the fabric from fraying. You can also crumple the fabrics into little rouged balls and stick them down with double sided tape to create a different texture and layering effect for the fashion storyboard. Sometimes the fabric swatches should be able to be felt with the fingers, so try to leave the storyboard open.

Heading: Unless you are competent at numeral or font drawing, use the computer to design the headings wherever possible. It will save you a lot of time and effort. Try to keep the font the same throughout the storyboard, so as to keep within the chosen theme.

Labels: Wherever necessary, print labels for any specific objects that you need to draw attention to (for example: "Extra Wide Jeans" or "Long Coat"). Again, unless you feel competent in drawing font, use a computer to design and print these.

Collages: Anything that you find in magazines, on your computer, in craft stores, fabric shops or your garage is fair game. Use anything that will add to the overall theme of your storyboard, but please remember to not go overboard. Too much additional material on a fashion storyboard can look messy and unprofessional.

Borders: To give your fashion storyboard a sense of finality and perspective, surround your storyboard with a contrasting cardboard frame, using different textures and colours. Cut neatly and use ruled lines, unless you wish to achieve a free-flowing mood. Borders can be hand-drawn, cut from cardboard, a collage or made from different fabrics. Whatever you choose, remember to make it neat.
**Backgrounds:** If necessary, use plain or mildly textured/printed board as a background; don’t allow it to drown the focal point, which is of course YOUR CLOTHING.

Every fashion illustrator has their own style; these **storyboard templates** are examples from the relevant illustrator’s portfolios off the internet. PLEASE do not copy these ideas or try to make templates from their drawings, as you would be infringing copyright law. Try to eventually produce your own **fashion templates** from scratch.

**Fashion storyboards** are most often coupled with a mood board an inspiration board containing a collection of pictures or colours, card and fabric that evoke an emotional response. Designers can use mood boards to decide on the right colours that evoke these feelings, as the mood board enables you to see a theme that runs throughout your selection. You can make use of various media to create interest on the mood board: buttons, ribbon, wool, sand, corrugated board etc.

Be as creative as possible when developing your **storyboard template**, use your imagination to its full potential. However, please bear in mind the following:

- Always position your figure as the main focus: (Reference Andrea Allen)
- Don’t allow your board to become messy and unstructured in your endeavour to be creative – keep it simple and focused on the theme and figure: (Reference Cindy Chu)
- Use the correct fashion template for your theme. For example, if the theme is classic Victorian don’t use an outlandish figure template. If your theme is contemporary, use the appropriate poses: (Reference Louisa Olivencia)
- Remember to illustrate accessories, bags and jewellery along with your clothing as this creates a polished finish: (Reference
Angelo Russica)
· Figures should be presented symmetrically wherever possible as it keeps the eye focused (See the fashion storyboard below). Using a larger figure amongst two smaller ones on the left and right can also look good. It will seem like the two smaller figures are in the background. Sometimes it's effective to use the same figure for all the different outfits, creating a repetitive tiled effect: (Reference Diptri Irla)
· Always remember to have a main heading such as "Trends for winter" or "Black and White". However, if you date your board, it will make it short lived as trends change quickly: (Reference Justin Gloston)
· Using swatches that are neatly cut out but irregular in shape will create a professional look to your storyboard. Using sticky tape on the back of the fabric prevents fraying and gives a good end result. You can also use pinking shears to create a zigzag edge: (Reference Theresia Fanda)
· Don't use too many unrelated colour varieties on one board, such as pastels with bright colours as well as neutrals; dirty and clean shades should be grouped together. There has to be a theme or collection of complementing colours. This is the general rule, unless you are specifically going for a multicoloured design: (Reference Annie Kim)
· Buy paint sample swatches from the paint store, use those as a colour pallet, but don’t have too many things hanging off your board; this seems untidy.
· Use as much detail as possible, draw in the texture, beading, trims, fabric print, and weave in your design. Use as much visual ornamentation as you can. Use shading and highlights for the skin and hair to give a more realistic touch to your designs: (Reference Sarah Louise Petty)
· Your technical drawings can be pasted on the rear of the board, or neatly pasted on the front, although this can sometimes look cluttered.
· You may use computer printed headings and labels, but don't forget to colour code these headings with your theme. Don't just print out a black & white heading if it will clash with your board. Print the heading as large as possible without interfering with the overall look; a small floaty heading which is difficult to read will look unprofessional and possibly be overlooked. The paper should be as high quality as possible if you are printing your design onto this medium.
· Why not use foam with double sided mounting tape to stick your figures down? It creates a raised look for your figure. It looks very professional and gives your board a three dimensional look: (Reference Christine Dauguet)
· Find bits of material – feathers, edging, embellishment or beads to stick on the board – that go with your theme. Keep this addition tidy and within the borders of your storyboard. Material that flaps or hangs over the border looks messy, unprofessional, and gives the impression that you don’t care about your project.
· ALWAYS stick to the requirements of your brief: the due date, amount of outfits required, theme etc. Use the correct board size that is stipulated and try to buy rigid board which will not bend under the weight of your additions. 1200 micron is commonly used, but you can use slightly thinner. The rule should be that you can rest it up against a stand without it folding and warping – this is not impressive during presentations!
· Have all the information regarding your board to hand, or have it memorised. You might be asked about fabrication, target market segment (sportswear, evening wear, ready to wear, couture etc) and you should know all of this off hand. Fabrics are the most important aspects to remember, don't just say "cotton" if it's viscose cotton, Lycra cotton or stretch cotton - be specific. Bear in mind that everything you do from now on has to be showcased in your portfolio. Look after the fashion storyboards that you create – covering them in plastic wrap is usually the easiest and cheapest way to go about this.