



Expression through fashion

GRADES 7-8

The 1920s were a time of great societal change. These changes were reflected in the new fashions which emerged.

Learn more about the 1920s and how we express ourselves through fashion with the following activities:

ART ACTIVITIES

Create a fashion mood board with collage

Making a mood board is often the first step in the fashion design process. Search through magazines to find images that inspire you. To develop a colour palette (the range of colours that will be in your design), find images that feature colours and combinations that you like. Include images of any interesting fabrics and textures too. Tape or glue these images to a piece of cardboard along with any other images that inspire you.

Explore pattern through printmaking

Cut a piece of cardboard to about 10 x 10 cm. This will be the base for your printing block. Next, cut small pieces of cardboard into various shapes. Move these shapes around on the cardboard base until you are happy with the arrangement; these shapes make the pattern in your print. Glue them to the base. To make a print, spread a layer of acrylic paint onto your printing block (just the raised cardboard shapes) and press it onto a piece of paper (like you are using a stamp). Experiment with repeating patterns.

Take inspiration from 1920s prints with stripes, polka dots, repeating shapes, and plaids. Experiment with different colour combinations. Patterns from the 1920s often used complementary colour combinations such as orange and blue or pink and light green.



Unknown Maker

Dress

around 1925-1935, rayon and metal
Donated by Marilyn Bennett, 2005
(C05-002.15)

Design an outfit that represents 2020

Penny Bennett's dress features many key elements of 1920s fashion such as the loose, boxy fit, the light weight, patterned fabric and the just below the knee length. If you had to think of the important elements of fashion in 2020 what would they be? Imagine an outfit that represents 2020. Write it down, draw it or if you have the clothes at home, wear them and take a photo.

If you'd like to extend the lesson beyond visual art, here are some other activities

Get inspired by the 1920s

Watch a film or read a book set in the 1920s. You can access free online movies and ebooks through your local library's website. *The Great Gatsby* is a good one to start with.

Compare the 1920s to the present

1920 was one hundred years ago and a lot has changed in that time. Research what life was like in Canada in the 1920s. Create a Venn diagram that compares life in 1920 and 2020. Topics to explore could include fashion, music, gender roles, technology, entertainment, education, art and many more.



Write a letter to your future self

A lot can change in one year! Think about what aspects of your life will change over the next year. Write a letter to your future self. It can include your hopes and predictions. What do you want to change? Seal the letter in an envelope and put it in a safe place.

Create an outfit inspired by 1920s fashion using your own clothes

In the 1920s it was fashionable for women to wear dresses with a loose fit, beaded evening gowns, fur coats, long jewellery and small hats. Men's fashion included suits, patterned ties and bowler hats in white, beige or pastel colours. Your outfit can mix men and women's fashions. Look up pictures from the 1920s for inspiration.

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around 1925-1935, rayon and metal
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GLOSSARY

Complementary colours: colours that are directly opposite each other on the colour wheel (e.g., red and green, blue and orange, yellow and violet).

Fashion: a popular trend at a specific time, place and context. Fashion can refer to styles of clothing, hair, makeup, body proportions, behaviour and much more.

Gender identity: an individual's inner sense of gender. That inner sense of gender may or may not correspond to the sex assigned to the individual at birth.

Gender expression: the way a person publicly expresses their gender identity. This is often done through appearance, dress and behaviour.