



DUNDAS
MUSEUM &
ARCHIVES

DISCO

“I learn!”

Silhouettes in Time: 19th Century Fashion in Dundas

GRADE 11 SOCIAL STUDIES

Understanding Fashion

If you look back in history of the women who are most memorable and most stylish, they were never the followers of fashion. They were the ones who were unique in their style, breakers of the rules. They were authentic, genuine, original. They were not following the trends.

Nina Garcia



Sarah Burton's designs took off with the wedding dress worn by Kate Middleton

Although people have always been consumers of fashion, influenced by trends for better or worse, the powers of advertising seduction have never been more sophisticated; nor have they ever appealed to such a young consumer. *Silhouettes in Time: 19th Century Fashion in Dundas* will engage the student participants, through concepts related to historical literacy, to think critically about the world of fashion that surrounds them and become more thoughtful, critical consumers. The potential of the heuristic moment is enriched in comparing their research findings of the world of contemporary fashion with that of the 19th century – the Victorian Era - as they will directly experience it at the Dundas Museum through an exhibit of Victorian fashion and the Dundas stories associated with each garment.

Pre-Visit Research

Prior to participating in the program at the DMA, your students will engage in some personal reflection as well as small group investigation. The intention of these activities is to engage the students in pursuing the objectives of *Strand A: Research and Inquiry* (pp. 124-125). They will focus the students' investigation of various aspects of contemporary fashion, preparing them for a consideration of fashion in the 19th century when they come to the museum.



Pauline von Metternich, an Austrian princess and musical patron popularized designs by Edward Worth



Some say the invention of the Spinning Jenny marked the beginning of the Industrial Revolution: a machine that replaced human beings!

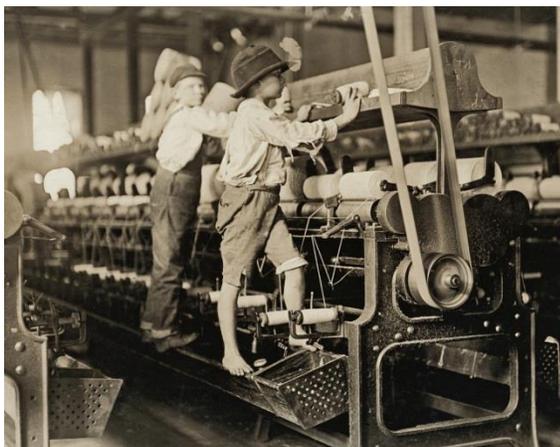
After reflecting individually on just what it means to be “fashionable,” your students will explore four areas of the contemporary world of fashion: 1) who are the most influential trendsetters today? Both designers and personalities who popularize what’s fashionable? 2) What about the relationship between fashion and health? Tattoos and body piercings are popular. So are high-heeled shoes. But are these healthy fashion choices? 3) how the world of technology influences fashion. Can I make a dress at home with a 3D printer? Or read my tweets on my dress made of fabric with embedded LED lights? Finally, how is fashion marketed? The powers of advertising persuasion are indeed formidable! What role do social media play in convincing the consumer to buy, buy, buy!

This sets the stage for a leap back in time to experience these same four areas of the fashion world in the 19th century. Has anything really changed in almost two centuries?

With the guidance of our archivist, your class will have the chance to look at fashion catalogues and newspaper advertisements from the late 19th century. Students will engage in some hands-on activities tossing a shuttle through a loom, spinning yarn with a drop spindle, carding wool and removing seeds from a raw cotton boll! But all these labour intensive pursuits would change with the advent of the Industrial Revolution.



Manipulating photographs: an image that is unattainable? What about advertising ethics?



Children working in "sweatshops" - not just a modern phenomenon!

To conclude your visit to the DMA, your students will explore the exhibition of Victorian Era fashion – *Silhouettes in Time* – currently on display.

Through a comparison of the present world of fashion with that of the 19th century, your students will engage in several aspects of historical thinking: continuity and change, cause and consequence, historical significance, and an evaluation of primary source evidence.

And the fun's not over yet...

You will return to class with several possibilities for follow-up activities that focus specifically on the fashion industry of Dundas, home to such household names as Grafton's and Lennard's and the famous cotton mill. Or perhaps some research on fashion in Dundas today: a survey of shops along King Street that tell us what's trendy in The Valley Town.



From *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9-12, 2013, Social Sciences and Humanities*, this Education Module offered by the DMA addresses the following expectations: A1, 2, 3, 4; B1, 2, 3; C1; D2. (pp. 124-131).

**This model is wearing a bicycle helmet.
Can you find it?**