

History

Fashion repeating itself, just like history

RecyCOOL Lessons

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Fashion repeating itself, just like history

Description of the lesson

Firstly, we will introduce the trends that are coming back into fashion and why we think this might be. Students will learn about the history and mechanism of changing styles in fashion, analyse the newest trends on the pictures supplied in the lesson and aim to date the ages of the pieces in question.

They will compare the photographs with the current trends they can spot in the present day, identifying which ones have been influenced by trends throughout history and have made a comeback. They will also be able to discuss trends from the past that the students like but we do not see anymore, and what they would like to be revived.

Objective

Objective of this lesson is to explore fashion trends and understand how and why they repeat.

After this lesson you will be able to

Compare the actual trends with trends from the past and understand that even if they are changing constantly, they still repeat themselves in circles in some ways.

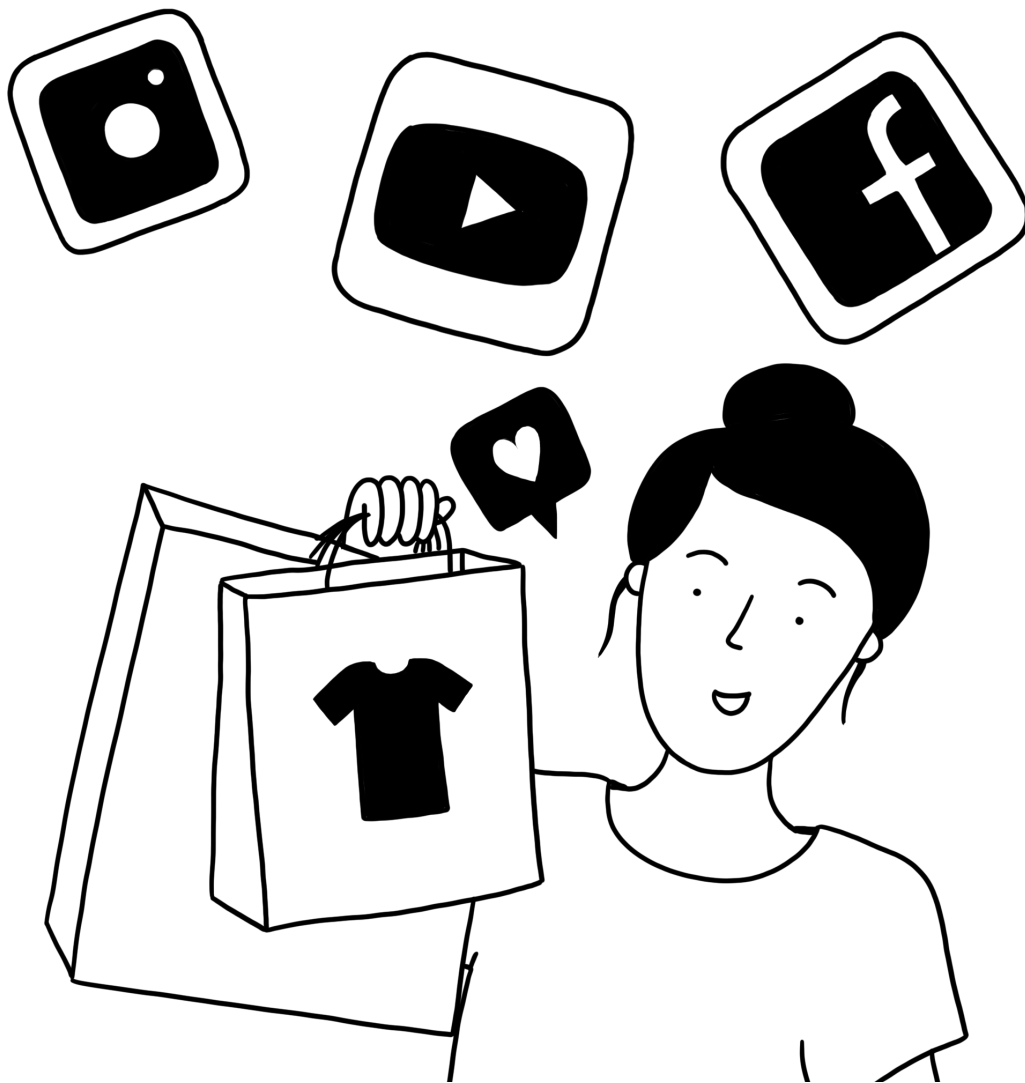
Tools and materials

pen and paper

TRENDS:

A fashion trend refers to a specific style of outfit, clothing, fabric pattern or accessory which is popular with the public or society for a period of time.

This also reflects a particular "zeitgeist" - the general mood or qualities of a particular period of history, as shown by the ideas and beliefs that were common at the time. Often this will change from era to era, which in turn influences the trends, including fashion trends.



Fashion trends repeat. The average amount of time it takes for a certain style to come back into fashion is around 20–30 years. Right now, trends popular in the 1980s and 1990s are once again in style.

Currently popular styles include: crop tops, denim jackets, flannel, shirts tied around the waist, high waisted jeans, overalls, chokers, platform shoes, and Birkenstocks. Although these styles were popular 20–30 years ago, they have come back with changes to make them more appealing to contemporary consumers.

Researchers think that trends repeat because of generational changes as well as designers taking inspiration from the styles their parents wore.

In the coming decade, we should expect to see fashion trends which were popular in the 1990s and 2000s such as halter tops, layered tank tops, boot cut jeans, cargo pants, chokers, headbands, chunky highlights, and bare midriffs. Also trends are here because of planned obsolescence.

That means behind the trends, is hidden a business, design and economic strategy. Our clothes made by fast fashion brands are intentionally planned to fall apart or become unfashionable quickly, pushing the consumer buying new products.

Do you know that trends keep repeating themselves, and you can find trendy pieces in second hand stores from generations before? Would you think you could go to your parents or grandparents closet for inspiration? No? That's what designers and big brands do!

Nowadays fashion items have become more affordable than 100 years ago. During these times a poor woman had only one dress for daily wear and one piece of Sunday dress and a wealthy woman wore different dresses for specific activities of the day.

Every step in fashion history that enabled fashion to become more affordable to the masses, is called "a democratisation of fashion".

After The second World War, the first trendsetting agencies arose in Paris. One of the first was founded by Dominique Peclers. Her purpose was to help smaller brands to be more efficient in competition with bigger brands. The bigger, more famous brands were influencers of style for the smaller designers during this time.

Before the trendsetting agencies the smaller brands had waited until the famous brands had come with their new designs on runways. With the help of trendsetting agencies the smaller brands could bring sooner their new style and follow the zeitgeist, the general mood or quality of a particular period of history, as shown by the ideas, beliefs, etc. common at the time.

Trendsetting agencies are teams of stylists and designers giving consultations – we also know every year a colour of the year by Pantone Color Institute. For example, for the year 2022 it is a blue called Veri Peri and it is likely that most high street brands, after researching the predicted trends, are going to bring some fashion pieces into their collections that are in this colour or shade.

As brands constantly produce new, fresh products in the latest trends and colours for the season – because they know that this will catch the eye of the consumer – you can imagine how this will impact shopping habits; encouraging people to buy more, even when it is not necessarily needed.

One of the waves of democratisation of fashion came in the sixties and seventies of the 20th century, as the launch of something called a “prêt-à-porter collection”. This term translates as “ready-to-wear”. This is a fashion industry term that signifies that an article of clothing was mass-manufactured in a selection of standardised sizes and sold in a finished condition – rather than designed and sewn for one particular person.

After the creation of this type of collection, high end fashion designers began to produce “ready to wear” clothing lines that are more affordable and able to be stocked in retail outlets – something that was never possible before.

Consumption of fashion changed rapidly for Spanish businessman Amancio Ortega, too. He was the first fashion businessman who decided to use outsourcing of production in developing countries. Because of that he could bring cheaper, trendy clothes into shops and therefore, to more and more wardrobes.

His business model is called “fast fashion” and is based on constantly changing styles and designs. Every two weeks there are the newest trends, already on hangers in fashion stores.



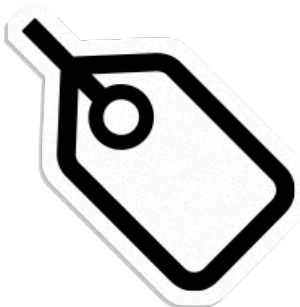
Ultra fast fashion concept is even faster. For example, brands (like Shein) may look for trends on social media using an algorithm. All new pieces are then tested with consumers (the public) in small amounts, and if it performs well then is soon sold on a bigger scale, in huge numbers and variations.

As global clothing production has more than doubled since 2000, [the average person in 2017 bought 60% more items of clothing and kept them for about half as long as 15 years before](#) but about 40% of all clothes purchased were rarely or never worn. The world now consumes about 80 billion new pieces of clothing every year.

This is 400% more than the amount we consumed just two decades ago – and in the end, on average we only wear about 20% of our wardrobe. According to Oxfam, more than two tonnes of clothes were bought each minute in the United Kingdom in 2019!

Also we are seeing a rise of alternative forms of clothing consumption such as reuse, rental and swapping. It has come with a slow fashion movement.

Consumers have become aware of the social and environmental impacts of clothing production, transportation and waste and want to reduce their footprint with their purchasing habits. [The resale fashion market is currently growing 11 times faster than traditional retail.](#)



Task 1

Choose and look at three online fast-fashion or ultra-fast fashion shops or brands and try to define the biggest trends of today.

What kinds of shapes, colours and designs are the most popular in the present times?

Do you miss some older trends that are no longer sought after? Write it down.

Task 2

Look at the pictures below and compare outfits that are in line with contemporary trends, with outfits from 90s and early 2000s catalogues. Which exact trends are repeating (chokers, bell bottom pants...)? Write it down.





lisa.onuoha
Santorini, Greece



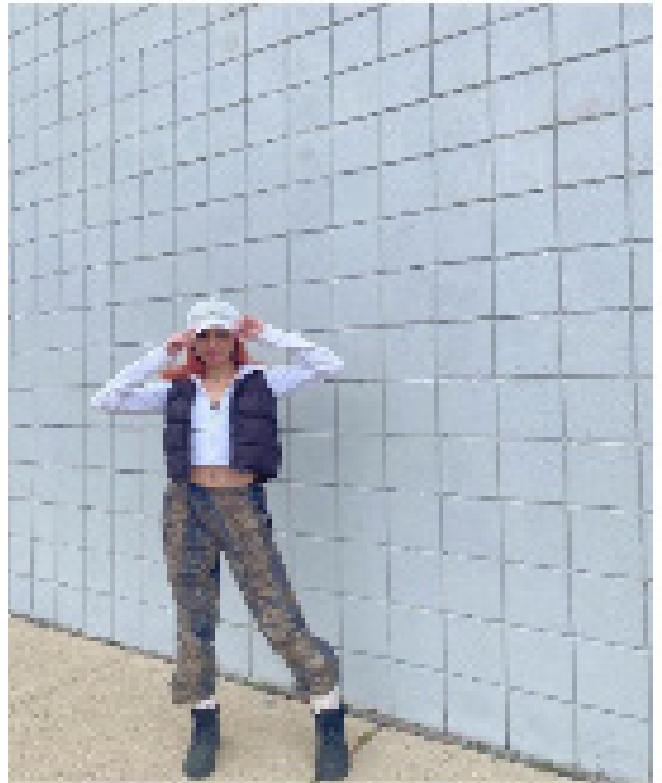
esamanavarrete



themilkclub
Sydney



emilythefairy



Reflection

How many trends from the past did you find in the pictures? When you think about buying this old trend as a new piece of clothing, how do you feel?

Consider looking for new trends in second-hand stores or in your parents' wardrobe. Consumption increased with every step to make clothes more widely affordable. Be aware that there can still be differences between being trendy and having a style!

Don't follow every trend you see on social media...

Karl Lagerfeld said once: "Trendy is the last stage of being tacky."

According to designer Alber Elbaz "Style is the only thing you can't buy. It's not in a shopping bag, a label, or a price tag. It's something reflected from our soul to the outside world—an emotion."

So what should you do if you want to look awesome and be really stylish? You don't really need every new trend you see in the mall but find a style which suits your personality, body shape and lifestyle. It's important to remember that the most sustainable piece of clothing is the one already in your closet.

Think of new and creative ways in which you can style the clothes you already own. You can swap or borrow from a friend, too, rather than buying new.

The legendary fashion editor Dianna Vreeland said:

“You gotta have style. It helps you get down the stairs. It helps you get up in the morning. It’s a way of life. Without it, you’re nobody. I’m not talking about lots of clothes.”

Be curious! Find out. Do something!

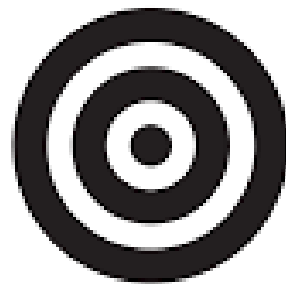
A great hack to avoid consuming trends is to create a capsule wardrobe which is based on your real style. To know more about capsule wardrobe go to our Art lesson called [STYLE IS ALWAYS IN FASHION](#).



BE CURIOUS



FIND OUT



DO SOMETHING

Resources

Oxford University Press. Definition of zeitgeist noun from the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary. 2022. Available at: <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/zeitgeist?q=zeitgeist>

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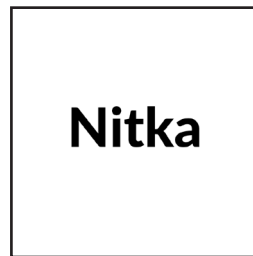
Tan France and Masterclass staff. Ready to Wear Fashion Guide. 2022. Available at: <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/ready-to-wear-fashion-guide#quiz-0>

Carine Mortiere. The Rise of the Resale Second-hand Market. 2021. Available at: <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20211209005033/en/The-Rise-of-the-Resale-Second-hand-Market>

Authors

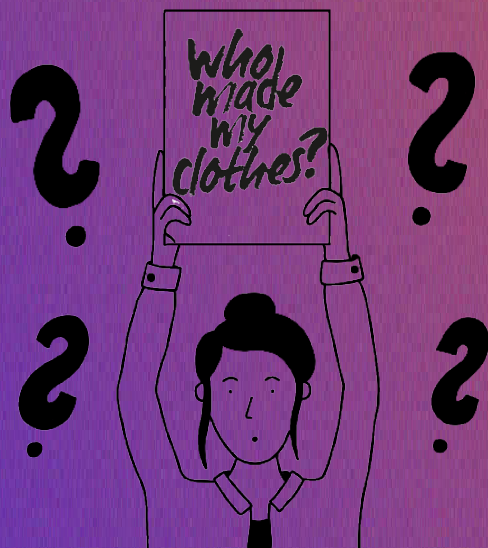
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Partners



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