

# History

**How wheels have changed our wardrobe**

RecyCOOL Lessons

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# How wheels have changed our wardrobe

## **Description of this lesson**

The lesson explains causes, consequences, reasons, for the times of change in fashion trends and the fashion industry. It focuses on the history of travel clothing and the invention of practical travel materials, all closely related to transportation development in the 19th and 20th centuries. To better understand transportation history and its relation to fashion, this lesson contains a short timeline of the development of transportation in the 19th and 20th centuries and mentions the most famous events related to the history of transportation. By solving the tasks, the learner will gain a picture of how people used to travel in the past and imagine what awaits us in the future.

## **Objective**

The objective of this lesson is to help learners understand the history of changes in the fashion industry, all influenced by the development of transportation in the 19th century.

## **After this lesson you will be able to**

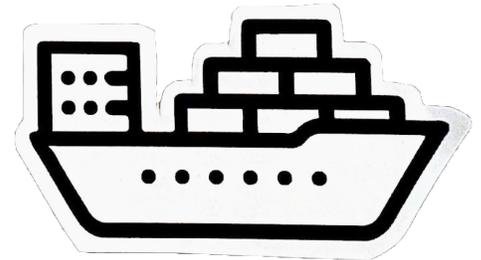
- understand how fashion changes throughout history and the connection with the industry and transportation development
- explain why it is essential to decide on travel clothes that make the most sense for a trip, whilst also choosing sustainably

## **Tools and materials**

old newspapers, PC or laptop, paper, crayons, ruler, pencil and eraser

## TRANSPORTATION:

The movement of goods and persons from place to place and the various means by which such movement is accomplished.



What is travel fashion?

In our modern world, do we distinguish “travel clothes” from everyday dresses in any way?

Have you ever thought about what kind of bags people have used throughout history to pack travel clothes? What kind of travel bags do we choose today?

How does this affect our planning and choices?

Once upon a time, going on a trip or excursion was not an easy task, and an enormous undertaking was choosing the right travel clothes. Because the clothes were huge, and made of wool or heavy linen, it also took a tremendous amount of help to carry all the weight in the wooden trunks that were used at that time to transport belongings.

Soot, dust, and mud were inevitable on voyages in history because people traveled in carriages, steam trains, or steamboats. To hide the dirt, they always traveled in dark clothes. So, there was the rule of ‘one outfit for the trip, another for the destination’.

How much time is needed to get ready for a trip abroad today?

Throughout history and the development of society, fashion styles have changed and evolved. The clothes that people wore, the way they made them, and the fabrics they used for making the garments throughout history offer information about people's social and personal circumstances of a particular historical age.

One of the most important contributions to the development of society was the development of transportation. The story of transportation has also strongly influenced fashion and the way of dressing. In the 20th century transportation has evolved over each decade and with each newly invented means of transportation, fashion has changed and the fashion industry has developed.

"By the early 1900s, travel had gotten considerably less dirty, so travel outfits became more about fashion and etiquette than utility. In June of 1925, Vogue declared, "The boat is the country, and the train [is] town in the morning," to help women know what sorts of fashions to wear on a trip. (Apparently that made perfect sense to women of the day.) Women started to wear trousers in the 1920s, and the first athletic wear for men and women was introduced (though, it would be considered extremely formal compared to today)."

The invention of new fabrics, such as nylon (1938), or rayon, experienced a revolutionary boom in the mid 20th century. Clothes made of synthetic fibers immediately became very popular and sought after. The reason was much easier maintenance, washing and less creasing. And such clothes were more convenient to pack for travel. Also, the innovation of zippers in 1937 and other fastenings, rather than hooks and laces, inspired new designs of travel gear.



Photo credit: [Bluffworks](#)

“The upswing for the zipper came in 1937 when the zipper beat the button in the 1937 “Battle of the Fly” and French fashion designers began to rave over the zipper. Esquire magazine declared the zipper the “Newest Tailoring Idea for Men” and of zipper’s many virtues it would exclude the “possibility of unintentional and embarrassing disarray.”

## Modern transportation timeline

The timeline shows how fast transportation developed in the 20th century. You can easily see how innovations in transportation marked every decade of the 20th century. Of course, this development was also reflected in fashion, specifically travel fashion

In the mid 19th century transport was revolutionized by railways. Karl Benz and Gottlieb Daimler made the first cars in 1885 and 1886.

The motorbike was also patented in 1885.

The Legendary Inauguration Ceremony of the Suez Canal in 1869. In the 1880s, we saw the invention of the safety bicycle and cycling soon became a popular hobby.

In 1883, a long-distance passenger train service, The Orient Express, was created (this service retired in 2009).

At sea, steamships started to replace sails. It was a process during the late nineteenth century (1850–1890).

**AIR – SEA – ROAD transportation development in the 20th century:**

1903 The Wright brothers invented and flew the first airplane.

1912 ocean liners (RMS Titanic)

1920s trains and ocean liners were the dominant mass transportation methods (particularly in the Suez canal)

1930s invention of jet airliner Douglas DC-3

1940s & 1950s development of the cars – longer road trips.  
1949, the world's first jet-propelled airliner, the British De Havilland Comet, makes its maiden test flight in England

1960s this was the "Supersonic" plane era – and saw the Concorde invented, in France and the UK – although this was retired in 2003

1970s trains and bus services were improved, with better comfort and freight departments

1980s long-distance travel via flight became the common mode of transportation

1990–2000 We saw the first ideas for electric plug-in vehicles technology, for a sustainable future

2010 air travel became something that is no longer a "luxury". The frequency of air travel is increasing with the expansion of global business, i.e. market globalization. Also, affordable airfares encourage people to travel more and travel by air

2020 The fixation for the future is now focussed on commercialized space travel, with Elon Musk building an elaborate SpaceX rocket





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The 20th century brought many changes in the way of traveling. Rising standards have resulted in the global migration of people. Travel has become a part of everyday life, be it short trips or long travel.

What was once reserved for the upper classes is now available to all of society. Inventions and innovations in transportation have changed the world – alongside the inventions of new materials, designs and the disappearance of rigid dress codes.

# Task

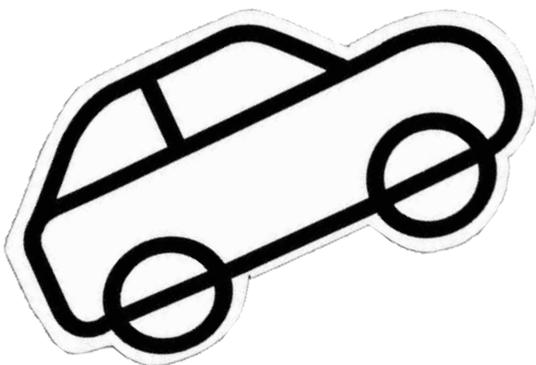
What are the benefits of the textile revolution and the transportation revolution in the 20th century?

How did that affect the 21st century?

Use the internet or find some old fashion magazines and try to find pictures of travel clothing from different periods. Compare today's classic travel outfit with those in the pictures.

Use a timeline of the means of transportation from the lesson to explore the fashion of the periods of important historical transportation events (e.g., the Titanic, the Suez in 1869, The Orient Express, the Concorde).

Create (draw a picture of) clothes, shoes and accessories that we will wear on our first trip to Mars.



# Reflection

New modes of transportation through history have developed modern fashion. **Styles, cuts, and practicality of technical fibers have become an important segment in travel fashion, especially with airline restrictions when light luggage often remains the only option.**

However, today we must stop and rethink. How much has this historical development led to mass production and consumption of artificial fibers with devastating consequences for the environment in which we live?

Can we travel today in all-natural fiber clothing?

Do you know that natural fibers for travel exist, such as a hemp / tencel blend?

- Tencel Lyocell is a cellulose fabric, a type of eco-viscose made by processing a wood pulp into yarn and woven into cloth. It can be blended with other fibers to create different fabric styles.

They are easy to care for but still help you look and feel your best.

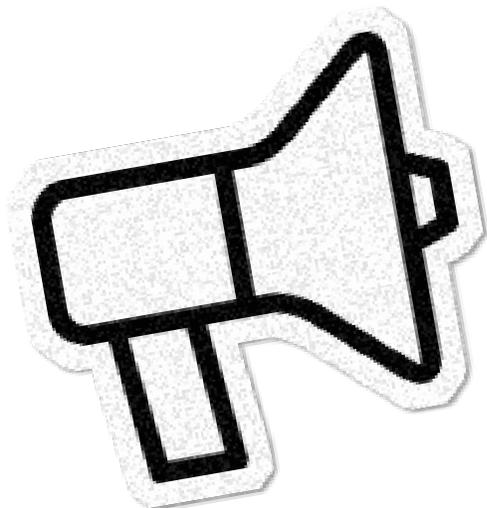
After everything you've read, can you make a list of travel equipment that will be on the right track to sustainability?

**When you are preparing for a trip, there is always a desire to update your wardrobe. So if you need to buy something, we suggest you find fashion brands that produce more Earth-friendly fashion.**

They use natural materials and the fibers that make up the fabric are organically grown, or biodegradable. Brands are starting to deal with innovative plant-based materials, and they recycle. It is also good to look for brands that consider the working conditions and fair wages of the workers who make their clothes.

**Second-hand and vintage clothes are always a good option. Although these actions alone do not make a brand ethical or sustainable if they have no transparency in their supply chain – when shopping for brands abroad or whilst traveling, this is a good place for you to start.**

And finally, explore, find new facts, make a change in your habits, or in short: **BE CURIOUS – FIND OUT– DO SOMETHING**  
(Fashion Revolution)



# Resources

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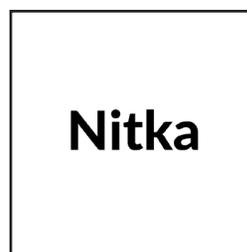
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