

FABRICS, FLAIR & FUN: Exploring the World of Fashion

Overview:

The initial lesson in the TeachersCount series will focus on helping students learn about themselves and the world through fashion. Students will explore local and global fashion, examine connections between identity, fashion and culture, and compare and contrast fashion from varied time periods. They will conduct surveys, do online research, write in reflective journals, work in collaborative groups, and create presentations. The overall goal of the lesson plan is to enhance students' literacy development by providing engaging learning materials designed to promote creativity and critical thinking skills.

Grade Level:

6-12

Subjects:

Language Arts, English, Social Studies, History,
Geography

Learning Objectives:

Students will do the following:

- Respond to writing prompts
- Conduct survey research
- Conduct Internet research
- Summarize, interpret and synthesize information from a variety of resources
- Classify and connect information
- Create an artistic representation that captures factual information

Learning Activities

Building Background

Activity One: Favorite Clothing Memory

1. Tell the class that they are going to participate in a “Think, Pair, Share” activity. First, ask the students to respond in writing to the following prompt:

Memories are made up of many elements. You can remember smells, sights, and sounds. When you remember an event, you can often remember what you were wearing. Think about an event from the past that was made memorable by what you were wearing.

Then divide the class into groups of two, and ask them to share their responses.

After a brief period, ask for student volunteers to share their thoughts and ideas with the entire class.

Steps for Learning

Activity One: Design a Tee Shirt

The purpose of this activity is to encourage students to reflect on the intersections between identity, fashion and culture. They will read an article focusing on these issues, and compare their responses to those of the author.

1. Divide the class into four groups. Ask each group to answer its assigned question.

Group One

- What is fashion?

Group Two

- Who dictates fashion?

Group Three

- Do clothes separate people into groups?

Group Four

- Is fashion an endless popularity contest?

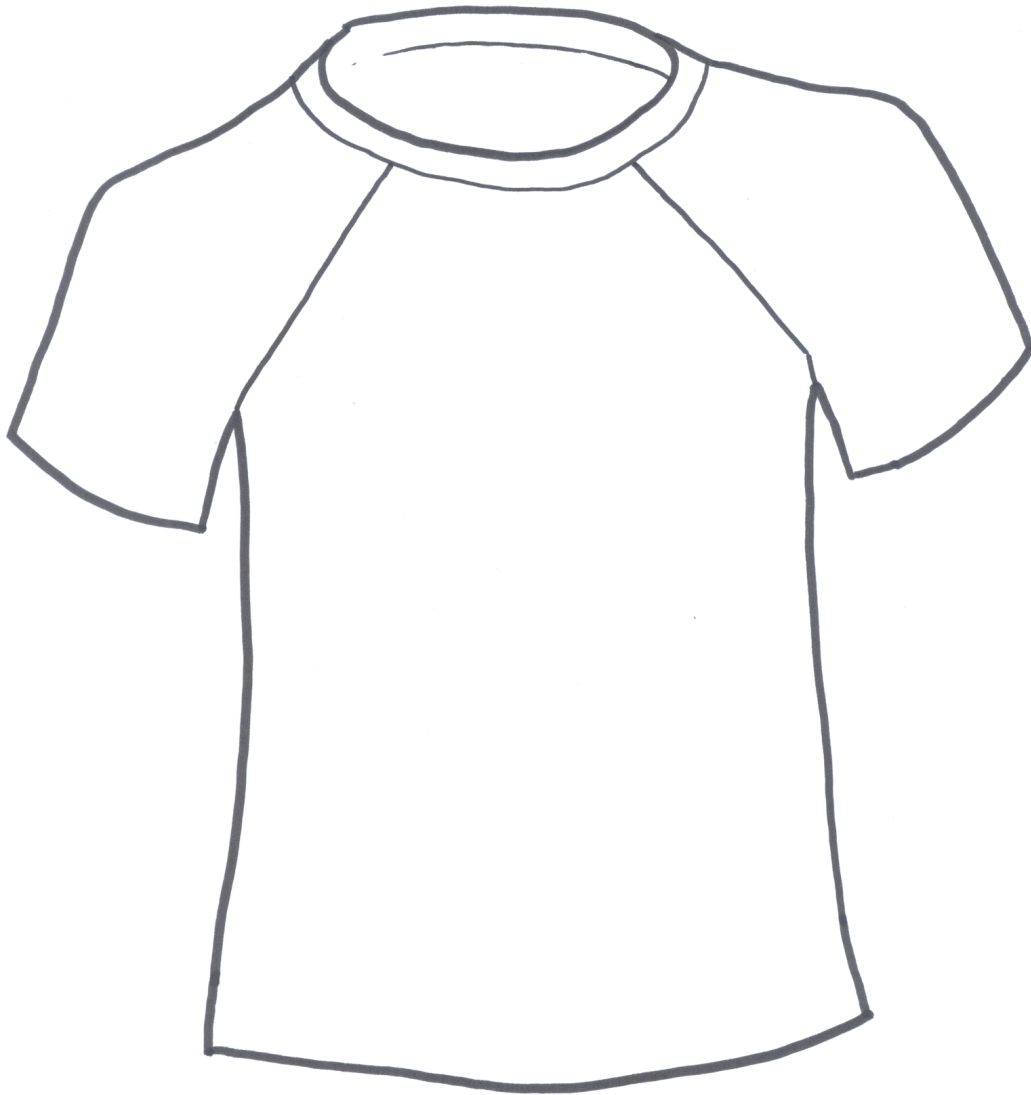
Tell the students that they are going to read an article that suggests answers to the questions they answered in their groups. Ask students to read the PBS Newshour article "What is Fashion," which can be found at <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/infocus/fashion/whatisfashion.html>, and compare their thoughts with those expressed in the article.

3. Ask your students to brainstorm a list of responses to the following questions:

- Why do people wear what they wear?
- How do you choose your clothes?
- How do your clothes reflect who you are?
- What is fashionable in your school?
- How do you define fashion?
- Do you judge people by what they wear?

4. Ask the students to design a tee shirt that captures their views on fashion, clothing and identity. You may use the template provided, or you can use actual tee shirts and have students paint or draw their messages, slogans or quotations. You can also use a software program that allows you to print pictures or photographs, and print them onto special transfer paper made for ironing on tee shirts. Create a class exhibit where students can display either their drawings or their tee shirts.

design a tee



WRITE YOUR MESSAGE ON THE TEE SHIRT.

Activity Two: Tag Maps

The purpose of this activity is to help students learn where the clothes they wear are made, and how clothing choice is influenced by a variety of factors.

1. Ask each student to bring in samples of clothing tags that state where the item was made. You may also provide examples.

2. Divide the class into small groups, and ask each group to create an exhibit. The exhibit should contain the following elements:

- Clothing tags
- A map of the country where the clothing was made
- Five facts about the country
- Descriptions of the clothing the tags originated from (i.e., tee shirts, jeans, jackets).

Provide the following resources for students to use in constructing their exhibits:

Maps

- National Geographic
<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/atlas/>
- Yahoooligans Directory
http://yahooligans.yahoo.com/School_Bell/Social_Studies/Geography/Maps/Country_Maps/

Country Facts

- The World Fact Book Almanac
<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>

- Yahoooligans Directory
http://yahooligans.yahoo.com/Around_the_World/Countries/

3. Lead a class discussion based on the following questions:

- How does climate affect one's clothing choices?
- How does culture affect one's clothing choices?
- How does religion affect one's clothing choices?

4. As a class, construct a mural compiling each group's exhibit. Invite others in the school or community to view the students' work.

Activity Three: What We Wear & Who We Are

The purpose of this activity is to make connections between clothing, self-image, and historical contexts.

1. Ask the class to conduct fashion surveys. Ask each student to collect information from two family members about what they wore when they attended high school. Include the following questions in your survey:

- What was your favorite look in high school?
- What was happening in the world when you were in high school?
- Do you think world or national events influenced the way people dressed?
- Did your parents object to the way you dressed? Why or why not?
- What do you think now about how you looked in high school?

- Did you dress differently than your peers, or did you tend to conform to what others wore? Why?

Tell the students to bring in photographs that reflect fashions particular to that time period. You may also use high school yearbooks as resources.

2. Share and discuss the students' survey results. Next, ask each student to answer the survey questions from their own perspectives.

Lead a class discussion on the similarities and differences between their own responses and those collected in the surveys.

3. As a class, visit the following websites that focus on fashion trends in the United States:

- <http://www.factmonster.com/ipka/A0878570.html>
- <http://www.factmonster.com/ipka/A0767729.html>

4. Ask your students to respond to the following questions in a writing journal:

- Why do you dress the way you do?
- How does the world influence the way you dress?
- What message does the way you dress convey about about who you are?
- How much of what we wear is part of who we are?

Extension Activities

Activity One: How is Clothing Made?

1. Ask your students to conduct Internet research on how silk, cotton, nylon, polyester and wool are made using the following Think Quest resource:

<http://library.thinkquest.org/C004179/textiles.html>. Ask the students to construct a concept web that explains the process using the Read.Write.Think webbing tool that is available at

http://interactives.mped.org/view_interactive.aspx?id=127&title=.

Activity Two: Ethnic Traditions in Fashion

1. Ask your students to write a brief reaction to the following article entitled "When an Ethnic Tradition Becomes a Fad" at <http://www.pacificnews.org/yo/stories/98/980325-fad.html>.

The students should state a clear position as to whether or not they agree with the author's viewpoint and include support for their views. Allow students to present their opinions to the entire class.

National Education Standards

www.mcrel.org

WRITING

Standard 1:

Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process

<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Benchmark.asp?SubjectID=7&StandardID=1>

Level III (Grade 6-8)

1. Prewriting: Uses a variety of prewriting strategies (e.g., makes outlines, uses published pieces as writing models, constructs critical standards, brainstorms, builds background knowledge)

Standard 4:

Gathers and uses information for research purposes

<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Benchmark.asp?SubjectID=7&StandardID=4>

Level III (Grade 6-8)

1. Gathers data for research topics from interviews (e.g., prepares and asks relevant questions, makes notes of responses, compiles responses)

6. Organizes information and ideas from multiple sources in systematic ways (e.g., time lines, outlines, notes, graphic representations)

Level IV (Grades 9-12)

2. Uses a variety of print and electronic sources to gather information for research topics (e.g., news sources such as magazines, radio, television, newspapers; government publications; microfiche; telephone information services;

databases; field studies; speeches; technical documents; periodicals; Internet)

6. Uses strategies to adapt writing for different purposes (e.g., to explain, inform, analyze, entertain, reflect, persuade)

READING

Standard 7:

Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts

<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Benchmark.asp?SubjectID=7&StandardID=7>

Level III (Grade 6-8)

1. Uses reading skills and strategies to understand a variety of informational texts (e.g., textbooks; biographical sketches; letters; diaries; directions; procedures; magazines; essays; primary source historical documents; editorials; news stories; periodicals; bus routes; catalogs; technical directions; consumer, workplace, and public documents)

3. Summarizes and paraphrases information in texts (e.g., arranges information in chronological, logical, or sequential order; conveys main ideas, critical details, and underlying meaning; uses own words or quoted materials; preserves author's perspective and voice)

Level IV (Grades 9-12)

1. Uses reading skills and strategies to understand a variety of informational texts (e.g., textbooks, biographical sketches, letters, diaries, directions, procedures, magazines, essays, primary source historical documents, editorials, news stories, periodicals, catalogs, job-related materials, schedules, speeches, memoranda, public documents, maps)

WORKING WITH OTHERS

Standard 1:

Contributes to the overall effort of a group

<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Benchmark.asp?SubjectID=22&StandardID=1>

Level IV (Grade K-12)

GEOGRAPHY

Standard 4:

Understands the physical and human characteristics of place

<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/standardDetails.asp?subjectID=8&standardID=4>

Level III (Grades 6-8)

1. Knows the human characteristics of places (e.g., cultural characteristics such as religion, language, politics, technology, family structure, gender; population characteristics; land uses; levels of development)