

Lesson Plan for “What They Were Wearing – FASHION” Podcast

[Podbean Link for “What They Were Wearing”](#)

[Spotify Link for “What They Were Wearing”](#)

[Apple Podcasts Link for “What They Were Wearing”](#)

Fashion and Identity in Post-War Germany for Grade 11

Overview

Grade: 11 Canadian/World History

Subject: Post-War Germany, Immigration, Identity through Clothing

Duration: 75 minutes

Objective

Students will:

- Understand how clothing reflects **historical context, class, and identity**.
- Analyze how post-war conditions in Germany shaped **fashion and daily life**.
- Connect immigrant experiences to **cultural adaptation in Canada**.
- Practice **listening comprehension and critical thinking** using a primary-source-based podcast.

Materials

- Podcast “What They Were Wearing”
- Speakers/projector
- Presentation on What They Were Wearing – Fashion (link forthcoming)
- Printed **Podcast Listening Worksheet** (included below)
- Whiteboard or chart paper

Lesson Outline

1. Introduction (10 minutes)

- Begin with a **quick prompt on the board**:
“What does what you wear say about who you are?”
- Students think-pair-share responses.
- Brief discussion connecting clothing to:
 - Identity
 - Culture
 - Economic status
- Introduce topic:
 - Post-WWII Germany
 - Immigration to Canada in the 1950s
 - Clothing as both **necessity and expression**

2. Podcast Listening (20 minutes)

- Distribute worksheet.
- Instruct students to **listen actively and complete the worksheet**.
- Play the podcast (you may pause briefly at key moments if needed).

3. Guided Discussion (15 minutes)

Discuss key ideas as a class:

- Why were clothing materials limited after WWII?
- How did people adapt creatively?
- What role did fashion play in rebuilding identity and hope?
- What surprised the immigrants about clothing in Canada?
- How is clothing tied to **economic systems (mass production vs. handmade)**?

4. Small Group Activity (15 minutes)

Divide class into small groups. Assign each group one theme:

- Group 1: Clothing as survival (post-war shortages)
- Group 2: Fashion as identity and self-expression
- Group 3: Clothing and social class (historical examples)

- Group 4: Immigration and cultural adjustment in Canada

Task:

Create a short response (poster or verbal summary) answering:

- What did clothing reveal about this theme?
- Provide one example from the podcast.

5. Wrap-Up and Interdisciplinary Connections (10 minutes)

- Highlight connections to:
 - **Economics:** mass production, consumerism
 - **Sociology:** identity, class, gender roles
 - **Geography:** global textile trade
- Exit ticket:

“How did clothing reflect both hardship and hope in post-war Germany?”

Podcast Listening Worksheet – What They Were Wearing

Name: _____ Date: _____

Part A: Key Ideas (Fill in while listening)

1. What misconception about German clothing does the podcast challenge?

2. What did most Germans wear in the 1950s?

3. List **two materials** people used to make clothing after WWII:

4. What were “Trümmerfrauen,” and what did they wear?

5. How did care packages help people with clothing?

Part B: Historical Understanding

1. How long have humans been wearing clothing (approximately)?

2. Why did early humans begin wearing clothing?

3. Give one example of how clothing showed **social class** historically:

Part C: Fashion Changes

1. What was Christian Dior's "New Look"?

2. Why was the "New Look" controversial?

Part D: Immigration & Canada

1. What was surprising about clothing in Canada for immigrants?

2. How did Canadian clothing differ from German clothing?

Part E: Critical Thinking

1. Why is clothing more than just practical? Provide one reason.

2. How did clothing reflect people's lives after the war?

3. In your opinion, does clothing today still reflect identity? Why or why not?

Optional Extension

Draw or describe an outfit that represents:

- Post-war Germany OR
- A new immigrant arriving in Canada

Answer Key – “What They Were Wearing – FASHION” Podcast

Part A: Key Ideas

1. **What misconception about German clothing does the podcast challenge?**

That Germans commonly wear dirndls and lederhosen in everyday life.

2. **What did most Germans wear in the 1950s?**

Modern, contemporary clothing typical of the time (e.g., trousers, shirts, dresses).

3. **List two materials people used to make clothing after WWII:**

- Old army uniforms
- Curtains / blankets / parachutes (*any two acceptable*)

1. **What were “Trümmerfrauen,” and what did they wear?**

Women who cleared war rubble; they wore patched or repurposed clothing, often including trousers from soldiers.

2. **How did care packages help people with clothing?**

They provided materials like wool, fabric, sewing kits, and shoe soles to make or repair clothes.

Part B: Historical Understanding

1. **How long have humans been wearing clothing (approximately)?**

Over 170,000 years.

2. **Why did early humans begin wearing clothing?**

To protect themselves from weather (cold, heat, rain) and survive harsh environments.

3. **Give one example of how clothing showed social class historically:**

- Only the wealthy could wear silk or linen
 - Roman purple stripes were reserved for elites
- (*any valid example earns credit*)

Part C: Fashion Changes

1. **What was Christian Dior’s “New Look”?**

A fashion style with soft shoulders, narrow waists, and full skirts emphasizing a feminine silhouette.

2. Why was the “New Look” controversial?

Because it used large amounts of fabric (25–40 meters) at a time when resources were still scarce.

Part D: Immigration & Canada

1. What was surprising about clothing in Canada for immigrants?

Clothing was often less formal, lower quality, or “sloppier” compared to Germany.

2. How did Canadian clothing differ from German clothing?

- Canada: cheaper, mass-produced, disposable
- Germany: durable, long-lasting, higher quality

Part E: Critical Thinking

1. Why is clothing more than just practical? Provide one reason.

Possible answers:

- Expresses identity
- Shows social status
- Reflects culture or beliefs
- Used for self-expression

2. How did clothing reflect people’s lives after the war?

It showed hardship and resourcefulness—people reused materials and focused on survival.

3. In your opinion, does clothing today still reflect identity? Why or why not?

Answers will vary (teacher discretion).

Optional Extension

No single correct answer—assess based on:

- Historical accuracy
- Effort
- Connection to podcast themes

Grading Rubric – Podcast Lesson: “What They Were Wearing”

Level 4 (Excellent – A Range)

- I demonstrate a **thorough understanding** of the podcast and its historical context.
- My worksheet answers are **complete, detailed, and accurate**.
- I make **strong connections** between clothing, identity, and post-war conditions.
- I actively participate in discussions and contribute **insightful ideas**.
- My group work shows **excellent effort**, clear communication, and thoughtful examples.
- My responses go **beyond basic understanding** and show deeper thinking.

Level 3 (Proficient – B Range)

- I demonstrate a **clear understanding** of the podcast content.
- My worksheet answers are **mostly complete and accurate**.
- I make **relevant connections** between clothing and history.
- I participate in class discussions with **appropriate contributions**.
- I contribute to group work and share **clear ideas**.
- My work meets expectations for Grade 11.

Level 2 (Developing – C Range)

- I demonstrate a **partial understanding** of the podcast.
- Some worksheet answers are **incomplete or unclear**.
- My connections to historical ideas are **basic or limited**.
- I participate **inconsistently** in discussions.
- My group work shows **some effort**, but ideas may lack depth or clarity.

Level 1 (Beginning – D Range)

- I demonstrate a **limited understanding** of the podcast.
- Worksheet answers are **mostly incomplete, inaccurate, or missing**.
- I struggle to connect clothing to historical context.
- I rarely participate in discussions.
- My group work shows **minimal effort or engagement**.

Teacher Feedback Focus

Your teacher will look specifically at:

- Accuracy of your answers
- Depth of your thinking
- Participation and effort
- Ability to connect ideas to history and identity