



MORGUE FILE

1960s | 1970s | 1980s

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**FASH 319-001:
TWENTIETH CENTURY
FASHION
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1960s

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COMING OF AGE

The 1960s saw major social shifts as “baby boomers” came of age and youthfulness took center stage in music and style. This empowered generation challenged traditional ideals, influenced by technological advances, television, politics, and the Soviet Union's Space Age vision, which sparked sci-fi media and futurism in home design and fashions. Hemlines reached new highs with miniskirts and colorful, patterned minidresses that symbolized women's lib. First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy became a fashion icon, influencing many areas of women's style. Menswear also evolved, with men embracing more expressive threads. Key designers included André Courrèges, Mary Quant, and Emanuel Ungaro.

WAR...WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR?

The era's political landscape was marked by the Cold War, the Vietnam War, civil rights battles, and the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and President John F. Kennedy. Civil rights activism surged in America, with frequent boycotts, sit-ins, and protests, particularly centered around Black liberation. The 1969 Stonewall riots raised awareness of LGBTQ+ rights, becoming a milestone in queer history.

POP CULTURE MANIA

Music, film, and television played pivotal roles in fashion and society. Politically engaged youth fueled the hippie movement, advocating for peace and free love. Music festivals like the 1967 Summer of Love and Woodstock in 1969 celebrated peace and community. Pop art and psychedelic styles shaped art, fashion, and textiles. Motown and rock 'n' roll defined the sound of the decade, with artists like Jimi Hendrix and Diana Ross and the Supremes shaping music and fashion trends. Fans expressed musical tastes through fashion and learned dances specific to genres, as rising hemlines allowed for greater freedom of movement.



WOMEN'S DAY WEAR

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STAY SHIFTY

Popularized by First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy, shift dresses featured colorful pastels and airy whites. The '60s embraced flower power through floral prints and bold patterns from brands like Marimekko while Lilly Pulitzer's sleeveless "Lilly" dress became iconic. Hemlines rose to mid-thigh halfway through the decade, driven by youthful designers like Mary Quant and André Courrèges.



YOUNG HEARTS

The hippie and counterculture movements ushered in bohemian and globally inspired styles, embracing more free-flowing silhouettes that challenged traditionally rigid fashions. Young people rebelled against the formality of previous generations, favoring casual attire that expressed individuality. Additionally, medieval influences in bridalwear were embraced as the '70s approached.



SPACE AGE

As synthetic textiles advanced and the Mod lifestyle thrived, Space Age influences took fashion by storm. Designers like Paco Rabanne and André Courrèges brought this vision to life using vinyl, plastic, metal, and other unconventional materials, crafting futuristic, playful silhouettes. Helmet-like hats sometimes completed the look, adding a bold, otherworldly flare.

WOMEN'S EVENING WEAR

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COCKTAIL, PLEASE

Dresses for cocktail parties and dancing were commonly made from lustrous fabrics, such as satin, and featured dimensional lace, and beaded fabric with fur and feather trim.



TROUSER ENSEMBLES

Ensembles rose in popularity as pants for women became increasingly accepted. Pant ensembles entered eveningwear in a variety of styles, including tuxedo, pajama, and harem. Many designers offered evening trouser ensembles, including Courrèges who frequently offered them in the Space Age aesthetic.



A SHORT EVENING

Evening dresses were no exception to the shortened hem. Designers such as John Bates adopted short skirts in his work early on, offering popular lightweight evening dresses. Bill Blass created evening sheaths, and Geoffrey Beene designed playful babydoll dresses with beaded bodices.



BOND...JAMES BOND

Men hoping to emulate the suave masculinity of Sean Connery as James Bond opted for well-tailored suits, or Connery's signature white dinner jacket. Bond represented modern male elegance even while fighting crime, signifying that dressing well was not synonymous with effeminacy.



PEACE & LOVE

Menswear became increasingly influenced by hippie culture, with men opting for grown-out, shaggy haircuts, embroidered Afghan-style jackets, and reworked jeans with intentional fraying, bleaching, and pocket removal to achieve the "aged" look. Elements of Native American traditional dress appeared in fringed vests. These stylistic choices evoked the "peace & love" sentiments essential to the time.



PEACOCK REVOLUTION

Popularized by queer fashion and Mod subculture toward the start of the '70s, men's dress became increasingly experimental and informal, giving way to the Peacock Revolution. Men of all sexualities embraced an air of flamboyancy in dress, wearing bell-bottom trousers, elongated jackets with slim waists and widened lapels, colorful shirts with psychedelic patterns, and bold jewelry.



BEEHIVE BUZZ

First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy's iconic bouffant, or "beehive," hairstyle initiated a major impact on fashion, popularizing the voluminous look beneath her pillbox hats, a style she also brought to the style spotlight. Achieved through backcombing, teasing, and hairspray, the doo became a staple among Motown artists.



STELLAR HELMETS

Space Age influences manifested in hats, such as tight bonnets, referred to as "helmets" and "baby bonnets," that framed the face and sometimes tied under the chin. Andres Courrèges became largely associated with this style, which was also popular for bridal dress.



PATCH-RIOTISM

Fueled by the rebellious spirit of the young generation and anti-war sentiments, fashion became an outlet for political commentary. Wearing patches and appliqués with American flag motifs became popular as people turned to altering and upcycling their own clothing, particularly denim pieces.

1970s

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GROOVY, BABY, GROOVY

Fashion in the 1970s grew more informal and eclectic, building on 1960s styles. The hippie chic aesthetic persisted, with global influences, such as Indian-inspired prints, gaining popularity. Bohemian elements reflected a free-spirited attitude in dress while hems dropped to retro lows. Social movements like women's liberation, gay rights, and "Black Power" challenged lifestyle and fashion norms, reshaping ideas of modesty and traditional gender roles. Unisex fashion became prominent, menswear relaxed, and trousers for women became common in both casual and formal wear. With virtually no rules of dress, people embraced individual style and eclecticism. Key designers, including Sonia Rykiel, Issey Miyake, Vivienne Westwood, and Yves Saint Laurent, introduced worldly influences into familiar staples.

STAYIN' ALIVE AMID STRIFE

The decade's turbulent political scene included the continuation of the Vietnam War, assassinations of U.S. leaders, the 1973 oil embargo which caused economic stressors, and Richard Nixon's shocking 1974 resignation after the Watergate scandal. Though the Vietnam War ended in 1975, earlier optimism for the future had faded amid economic and political

LET'S DANCE...AND ORGANIZE

Art and media tackled issues like feminism, racism, and environmentalism, marked by the first Earth Day on April 22, 1970. Disco defined the sound of the era, with television programs like *Soul Train* bring Black and queer music, fashion, and culture into peoples' living rooms. Nightclubs like New York's Studio 54 hosted all-night dance parties while the punk scene rejected conformity to seeming extremity. Retro revivals continued to gain popularity in mainstream pop culture.



WOMEN'S DAY WEAR

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KNIT WIT

Knits were offered various styles, including lean, bulky, ribbed, cabled, novelty, and belted. Parisian designer Sonia Rykiel became known as the “Queen of Knits” for her unique take on knitwear that encouraged layering and experimentation with adventurous colors.



HIGH TO LOW

Following the ‘60s miniskirt revolution, women tended to view longer hems as matronly. While slow to reach mass acceptance, the midi length eventually became a prominent silhouette by the mid-’70s, as women felt it portrayed a more refined elegance. Valentino notably favored the style for this reason.



FREE THE NIP

As the braless movement gained traction, women ditched brasseries and donned halter, crop and tube tops. Typically worn for leisure, these styles reflected feminist sentiments and the pursuit of women’s sexual liberation, as well as relaxing modesty standards in fashion evolved from the ‘60s.

WOMEN'S EVENING WEAR

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PANTS ON FIRE

Now, women wore pants for both day and night occasions. It was not uncommon to see fashionable pajama sets at cocktail parties and evening engagements, with Halston among designers offering this style. Pantsuits were a hit, and pleating, gathering, and ankle-wrapping appeared as the '80s approached.



NIGHTY NIGHT

Drawing on themes of sensuality and intimacy, lingerie stepped out of the bedroom and into evening functions with women donning charmeuse camisoles that clung to the body with thin spaghetti straps.



LONG NIGHTS

As hemlines lowered, the popularity of maxi-length skirts and dresses rose for nighttime events, blurring the lines between expectations of casual and formal dress.



DENIM COPYCATS

Denim maintained its hold on popular fashion. Even when men were not wearing denim jeans, they opted for jean-cut trousers in corduroy, called “cords”, leather, suede, knits, and wovens. Pants were often tight-fitting, continuing the low-rise “hip huggers” trend from the ‘60s.



DRESS TO RECESS

Informal dressing extended into the workplace as leisure suits became mainstream early in the decade. Casual, sometimes shirt-like jackets often had patch pockets and matched one’s trousers for a complementary appearance.



HE WORE TRUE VELVET

Velvet was common for men’s suiting and outerwear and could be paired with jeans for entertaining guests. Jackets were often cut long and tailored to the waist with wide lapels and were sometimes double-vented in the back. The lean fit of men’s clothing generally emphasized the figure, reflecting sensual themes.

ACCESSORIES

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HIGH STEPPING

Platform shoes, clogs and boots, typically designed with squared or rounded toes, were nongendered staples '70s dress. Musical artists, such as the Isley Brothers popularized platforms in their performances, paired with bell bottom trousers and jumpsuits.



BELT IT OUT

Offered in diverse styles, belts became fashion statements in their own right, worn layered, loose, low-waisted, or wide. Cummerbund and obi varieties were also seen. Some belts were made of stretch material that contoured the waist while others were embellished with studs, fringe, tassels, braiding, lacing, or grommets.



BLING IT ON

Men began broader experimentation with jewelry, from chain necklaces and bracelets to medallions and beaded accessories. Rings commonly incorporated knot motifs and influences from global cultures. On the more eccentric front, GQ promoted a gold eyepatch accented with pavé diamonds in 1978 for men's eveningwear.

1980s

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GLAMOUR IN EXCESS

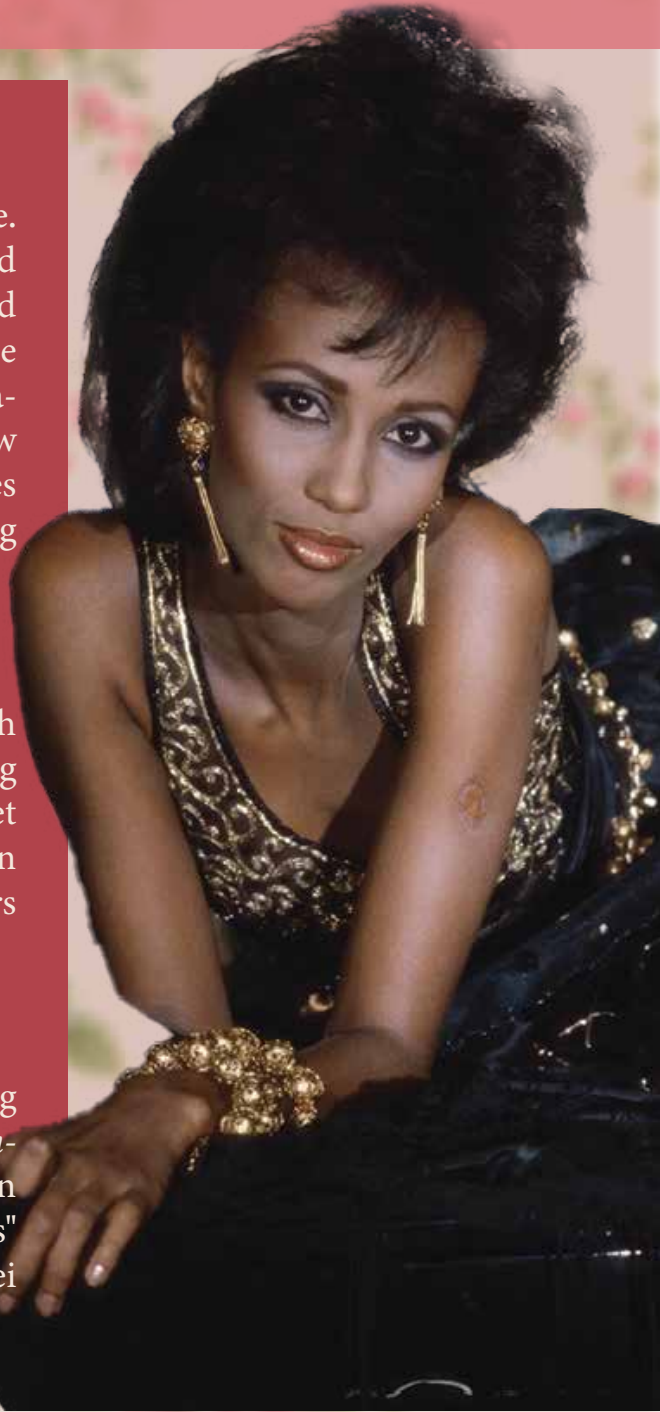
The 1980s marked a period of conveying status through materialism and extravagance. Exaggerated silhouettes featured boxy forms and V-shapes with wide, padded shoulders and narrow waists. Oversized accessories and jewelry layering were common, while cosmetics and hairstyles were equally bold, influenced by celebrities like Madonna and Lady Diana. While many embraced mainstream fashion, subcultures with distinct styles also emerged. Conservative politics spread globally, spurring the *yuppie*, who embodied preppy luxury, while New Wave and post-punk groups countered popular trends. Hip hop and rap popularized styles from Black and African cultures. *Power dressing* emphasized "dressing for success" with strong suits, power ties, and lavish accessories, and athleticwear blended into everyday wardrobes.

TARNISHED GLITZ

Despite the glitz of the decade, trials arose, including the HIV/AIDS epidemic, which perpetuated harmful stereotypes about the gay community and impacted designers identifying as LGBTQ+ like Halston, Perry Ellis, and Gia Carangi. The 1987 "Black Monday" stock market crash had global repercussions, while protests in Beijing's Tiananmen Square turned violent in 1989, the same year the Berlin Wall fell. Simultaneously, technology advanced and computers entered more homes and workplaces. Designers incorporated new tech into their work.

LIGHTS, CAMERA, FASHION!

Entertainment maintained its fashion influence, with shows like *Dynasty* showcasing extravagance, *MTV* debuting in 1981 to highlight fashion in music videos, and films like *Flashdance* (1983) popularizing aerobics and exercise wear. John Hughes highlighted teen fashion and culture in films like *Pretty in Pink* and *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*. The rise of "identity politics" spurred unique fashion trends throughout the decade, with notable designers including Rei Kawakubo, Catherine Walker, Halston, and Karl Lagerfeld.



WOMEN'S DAY WEAR

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POWER PLAY

Women's power dressing took retro cues as a refreshed V-shaped silhouette rose to prominence, characterized by wide shoulders and narrow skirts. Seemingly everything in the closet gained volume. Oversized jackets with rolled-up sleeves, loose-fitting trousers, and other masculine-influenced elements produced the "boyfriend" look in women's dressing.



LEG DAY

Leggings acted both as a layering tool and as a trouser alternative. Women often wore them under short skirts—or "rah" skirts—tunics and long jackets. In the late '70s, designer Issey Miyake offered his own rendition of leggings, and as New Wave and rock music went mainstream in the '80s, they became part of on-trend looks.



LOVELY BLOUSES

Romantic silhouettes and details graced blouses and shirtwaists with added shoulder pads, lace insets, decorative buttons, and standing collars, among other details. Blouses were often paired with full skirts while knee-length pencil skirts frequently complimented shirtwaists. Quirky colors and patterns offered a flair of playfulness and fun.

WOMEN'S EVENING WEAR

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LUXE ORNAMENTATION

Embellishments were important status indicators in evening fashion—think “more is more.” Emanuel Ungaro designed gowns with large bows and plastic buttons, and Catherine Walker decorated Lady Diana’s evening garments with elaborate beading and passementerie. Couture especially pushed embellishments as a tool for conveying social stature.



DAPPER DAMES

As menswear melded into womenswear, trousers continued to appear in eveningwear, playing on the tuxedo style of the ‘70s in the form of pantsuits. Some dresses also incorporated masculine tuxedo elements.



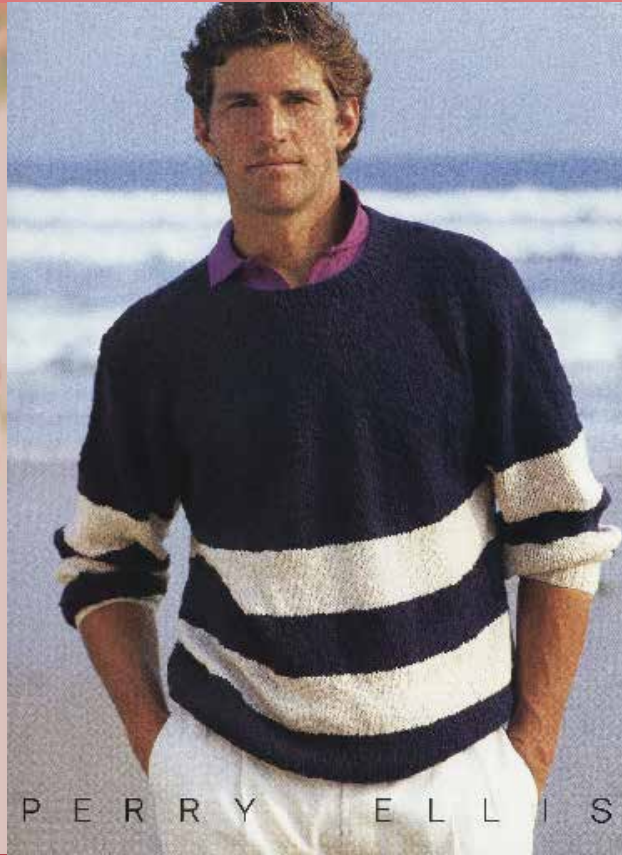
VOLUME UP

Short cocktail dresses were common in eveningwear, sometimes accompanied by hats, yet full-skirted dresses were also seen. Silk taffeta saw a resurgence in popularity for theatrical looks with leg-of-mutton sleeves, voluminous skirts, bold ruffles and peplums, and velvet bodices. Lady Diana’s wedding dress embodied the boldness and volume that women then sought after.



SUIT-ABLE

Men's suiting followed the "dress for success" theme and revivals of the 1920s and 1930s appeared across menswear. Sweaters tied around shoulders was a standout trend and vests became a focal point in three-piece suits, often worn in contrasting colors or fabrics. Like womenswear, wide shoulders and narrow waists created the dominant "V" silhouette.



SWEATER FRENZY

Sweaters were especially favored in the fisherman, Fair Isle, and argyle varieties. Cardigans were ribbed, cabled or flat knit with some featuring lapels. Necklines took crew and V-shapes. As fashion technology developed, designer Jhane Barnes created computer-generated knit patterns that pushed the boundaries of innovation in fashion design.



ROOMY TROUSERS

Before narrowing at the end of the decade, men's trousers typically conformed to a baggier silhouette with wide legs and front pleats, often inverted box or multiple pleats. This also applied to denim. Trousers typically sat at waist height or above.



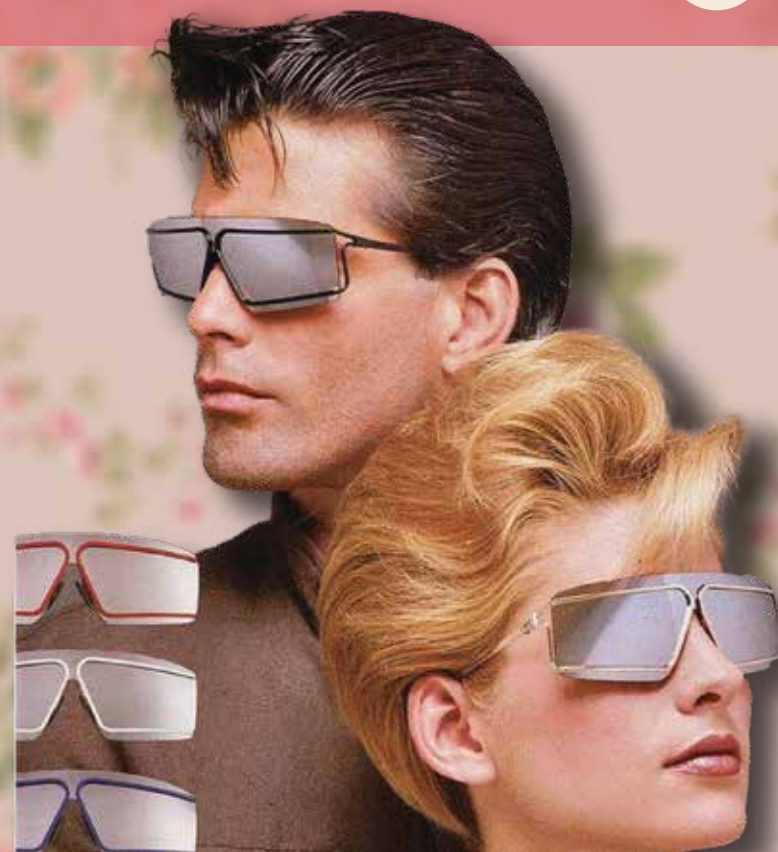
SLOUCHY STEPS

While tall pumps were exceedingly popular in the '80s, boots also captivated fashion-forward consumers. Ranging from ankle to knee height, many wore boots cuffed and slouched, creating extra volume around the ankle.



JUMBO JEWELS

Statement jewelry was a defining aspect of '80s fashion. Layering and stacking was common, and pieces were often supersized. Designs frequently reflected historical influences, such as collar cameos, pearls, and oversized rosaries and brooches. Costume jewelry was particularly popular, embraced by notable designers, such as Karl Lagerfeld.



COOL SHADES

Pop culture became saturated with sunglasses in music, film, high fashion, and advertisements. They even appeared in evening looks. Tom Cruise spotlighted Ray-Ban Wayfarers after wearing them in the film *Risky Business* (1983), and the same year, Corey Hart's song *Sunglasses at Night* became a radio hit. Other popular sunglass shapes included the 1950s-style "cat-eye" and aviators.

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