Number #1 Victorian Era Clothing

Do Not Write On This Paper

(It will be used in other class periods)

Source 1: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victorian_fashion>

**Victorian fashion**

Victorian fashioncomprises the various fashions and trends in [British culture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_of_the_United_Kingdom) that emerged and developed in the [United Kingdom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom) and the [British Empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Empire) throughout the [Victorian era](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victorian_era), roughly 1830s to 1900s (decade). The period saw many changes in fashion, including changes in styles, fashion technology and the methods of distribution.

Under [Queen Victoria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queen_Victoria)'s rules, England enjoyed a period of economic growth along with technological advancement. Mass production of sewing machines in the 1850s as well as the advent of synthetic dyes introduced major changes in fashion.Clothing could be made quicker and more cheaply. Advancement in printing and proliferation of fashion magazines allowed the masses to participate in the evolving trends of high fashion, opening the market of mass consumption and advertising. By 1905, clothing was increasingly factory made and often sold in large, fixed-price department stores, spurring a new age of consumerism with the rising middle class who benefited from the [industrial revolution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Industrial_Revolution).

## **Men's fashion**

During the [1840s](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1840s_in_fashion), men wore tight-fitting, calf length [frock coats](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frock_coat) and a [waistcoat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waistcoat) or vest. The vests were single- or double-breasted, with shawl or notched collars, and might be finished in double points at the lowered waist. For more formal occasions, a cutaway morning coat was worn with light trousers during the daytime, and a dark tail coat and trousers was worn in the evening.

The shirts were made of linen or cotton with low collars, occasionally turned down, and were worn with wide [cravats](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cravat) or neck ties. Trousers had fly fronts, and [breeches](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Breeches) were used for formal functions and when horseback riding. Men wore [top hats](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Top_hat), with wide brims in sunny weather.

During the [1870s](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1870s_in_fashion), three-piece suits grew in popularity along with patterned fabrics for shirts. Neckties were the four-in-hand and, later, the [Ascot ties](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ascot_tie). A narrow ribbon tie was an alternative for tropical climates, especially in the Americas. Both frock coats and sack coats became shorter. Flat straw boaters were worn when boating.

Throughout much of the Victorian era most men wore fairly short hair. This was often accompanied by various forms of facial hair including moustaches, side-burns, and full beards. A clean-shaven face did not come back into fashion until the end of the 1880s and early 1890s.

## **Women's Fashions**

During the [Victorian Era](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victorian_era), a woman's place was at home. Unlike in the earlier centuries when women could help their husbands and brothers in family businesses, in the nineteenth century, the gender roles became more defined than ever. Their dress styles reflected their lifestyle. Victorian fashion was not intended to be utilitarian.

Clothes were seen as an expression of women’s place in society and were hence, differentiated in terms of [social class](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_class). [Upper class women](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Upper_class), who did not need to work, often wore a tightly laced [corset](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corset) over a [bodice](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bodice) or [chemisette](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chemisette). [Middle class women](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_class) exhibited similar dress styles; however, the decorations were not as extravagant.

**Neck-line** [Bertha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bertha) is the low shoulder neck-line worn by women during the [Victorian Era](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victorian_Era). The cut exposed a woman’s shoulders and it sometimes was trimmed over with a three to six inch deep lace flounce, or the bodice has neckline draped with several horizontal bands of fabric pleats. However, the exposure of neck-line was only restricted to the upper and middle class, working class women during the time period were not allowed to reveal so much flesh. The [décolleté style](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=D%C3%A9collet%C3%A9_style&action=edit&redlink=1) made shawls to become an essential feature of dresses.

**Boning** [Corsets](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corset) were used in women’s gowns for emphasizing the small waist of the female body. They function as an undergarment which can be adjusted to bound tightly around the waist, hold and train a person’s waistline, so to slim and conform it to a fashionable silhouette. It also helped stop the bodice from horizontal creasing. With the corset, a very small tight fitting waist would be shown. Yet, corsets have been blamed for causing lots of diseases because of the tight waist bound. Ill condition examples were [curvature of the spine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scoliosis), deformities of the ribs and [birth defects](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Congenital_disorder).

**Sleeves** Sleeves were tightly fit during the early [Victorian era](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victorian_era). It matched with the tight fit women’s small waist in the design, and the shoulder sleeve seamline was drooped more to show a tighter fit on the arm. This eventually limited women’s movements with the sleeves.

**Silhouette** Silhouette changed over time supported by the evolution of the undergarment. In earlier days, wide skirts were supported by fabrics like linen which used horsehair in the weave. [Crinolines](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crinoline) were used to give skirts a beehive shape, with at least six layers petticoats worn under the skirt, which could weigh as much as fourteen pounds. Later, the [cage crinoline](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crinoline) was developed. Women were freed from the heavy petticoats, and were able to move their legs freely beneath the cage.

Source 2: <http://www.victorianchildren.org/victorian-dress-and-victorian-style-clothing/>

### **Wealthy Victorian Boys Clothing**

By modern standards young Victorian boys dressed like girls. They mainly wore frocks and pleated skirts until the age of three or four. Sometime around the 1860’s the Scottish Highlander look became popular complete with plaid skirt and all. These were worn by boys between four and eight years old. Also at this time Victorian boys started wearing the Knickerbocker suit. A style most likely borrowed from the Americans.

### **Wealthy Victorian Girls Clothing**

Children’s clothing evolved as time went by during the Victorian era . Many of these styles mirrored the adult styles of the day to some extent. There were some differences though.

For example, girls skirts might be shorter than the adult skirt.Little girls skirts would go down to the knees. Then around ten years af age the length would be somewhere around mid-calf. Around the age of 16 a girls skirt would be full length down to the ankles just like their mothers. In fact, by this time the well to do young ladies would be dressing in the same fashion as adults.Until the late 1800’s girls were still wearing corsets.