

ENGLISH LEARNING FOR CURIOUS MINDS



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Episode #274

The Rise of The Great Fashion Houses

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[00:00:00] Hello, hello hello, and welcome to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo English.

[00:00:12] The show where you can listen to fascinating stories, and learn weird and wonderful things about the world at the same time as improving your English.

[00:00:21] I'm Alastair Budge, and today we are going to be talking about The Rise of the Great Fashion Houses.

[00:00:28] This is actually part two of a three-part series on Fashion.

[00:00:33] Part one was on some of the historical [curiosities](#)¹ of fashion, where we looked at how changes in society have led to changes in fashion over the years.

¹ strange and interesting facts

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[00:00:43] And part three is going to be on the rise of fast fashion, of modern cheap, [disposable](#)², fashion, where we'll look at how this is impacting society, impacting fashion, and impacting the environment.

[00:00:57] OK then, The Rise of the Great Fashion Houses.

[00:01:03] In this episode we'll focus on four fashion houses in particular:

[00:01:08] Chanel Gucci, Dior and Versace.

[00:01:11] They all, in their own different ways, have [left a mark](#)³ on the world of fashion, and are some of the most valuable and [desirable](#)⁴ brands in the world.

[00:01:22] As you may know, Dior and Chanel are French, while Gucci and Versace are Italian.

[00:01:28] And France and Italy are two countries that are [intrinsically](#)⁵ linked with fashion, with high quality clothes and people dressing well.

[00:01:37] One country that isn't always [associated](#)⁶ with great fashion sense is the country I'm from, England.

² dismissed or not followed after a while

³ had an important effect

⁴ worth having, wanted

⁵ in a way that is a very important and basic characteristic of them

⁶ related, connected

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[00:01:46] So it might surprise you to find out that the person most commonly [credited](#)⁷ as being the world's first fashion designer was, in fact, an Englishman.

[00:01:58] His name was Charles Frederick Worth, and he established what's believed to be the first fashion house, the House of Worth, in 1858.

[00:02:09] OK, there was a French connection, he lived, worked, and was no doubt inspired, in Paris, but he was born in the English market town of Bourne, in central England, which is, I should add, not considered to be a world fashion capital.

[00:02:27] Worth's [innovation](#)⁸ was to allow his clients to choose the colours, [cloth](#)⁹, and style of the dress before work started on it.

[00:02:37] He was also the first person to [attach](#)¹⁰ a [label](#)¹¹ inside the finished pieces of clothing, putting his [mark](#)¹² on the item.

[00:02:47] If this doesn't sound particularly [innovative](#)¹³ or new to you, it's important to remember how people chose clothes for the majority of history.

⁷ considered important

⁸ new idea or method

⁹ type of woven material, fabric

¹⁰ fasten, stick

¹¹ a piece of paper or other material giving information about it

¹² symbol, name or logo

¹³ using new ideas or methods

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[00:02:58] If you were rich, you would have someone who would take your measurements and make your clothes to measure. If you were very rich, if you were Marie Antoinette for example, you might have a personal [dressmaker¹⁴](#), someone whose entire job was to make your dresses.

[00:03:17] If you were not rich, you would probably make your clothes yourself from bought [cloth](#), or someone in your [household¹⁵](#) would do it for you.

[00:03:26] There simply wasn't the [concept¹⁶](#) of pre-made clothes. This only really existed for military uniforms, where everyone had to wear the same thing, the clothes were male, and being the perfect fit wasn't of great importance.

[00:03:42] I imagine that you are wearing pre-made clothes now - you went to a shop, found a t-shirt and a pair of trousers that fitted you, and you bought them.

[00:03:53] That "[off the peg¹⁷](#)" style only really started in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

[00:04:00] But we're not talking about "[off the peg](#)" fashion now, we're talking about something much more [glamorous¹⁸](#).

¹⁴ someone whose job was to make your dresses

¹⁵ the house and people who live together in it

¹⁶ idea, principle

¹⁷ made in standard sizes

¹⁸ attractive and expensive

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[00:04:07] And there are few women more **associated** with **glamour**¹⁹ than the creator of our first fashion house, Gabrielle “Coco” Chanel.

[00:04:17] The great fashion house Chanel was founded in 1910 and, coming as it did at the start of the 20th century, and led by its **eponymous**²⁰ founder, Coco Chanel, it **signalled a break**²¹ with the **complex**²², **over-engineered**²³ and **oppressive**²⁴ women’s fashion of the previous century.

[00:04:37] Out with **corsets**²⁵ and **frills**²⁶!

[00:04:40] In with **fluid**²⁷, stylish and **boy-like**²⁸ or **androgynous**²⁹ shapes.

¹⁹ attractive and expensive style, beauty

²⁰ having given his name to the fashion house

²¹ caused a stop, a pause

²² involving a lot of different parts, complicated

²³ having more details than necessary, too complicated

²⁴ difficult to use, troublesome

²⁵ tight pieces of underwear worn from below the chest to the hips, to shape the figure

²⁶ narrow pieces of cloth with a lot of folds that were attached or sewn to the edge of a dress as decoration

²⁷ comfortable, easy to use

²⁸ having the shape of a boy

²⁹ partly male and partly female in appearance

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[00:04:46] Think of the [wide-legged](#)³⁰, pyjama-style trousers and simple [striped](#)³¹ tops in the style of fisherman from Brittany in the north of France that became fashionable in the 1920s.

[00:04:59] The philosophy was, as Coco Chanel put it, “Nothing is more beautiful than freedom of the body.”

[00:05:07] Her revolutionary designs became [emblems](#)³² of female [emancipation](#)³³, but of a particularly stylish or [chic](#)³⁴ kind.

[00:05:16] Coming after a world war when women had needed to do many of the jobs previously done by men, the fashion reflected female [aspiration](#)³⁵ and lifestyle.

[00:05:28] Beginning with a small shop or – to use the French word borrowed into English – [boutique](#)³⁶ in Deauville, Normandy in northern France, Coco Chanel

³⁰ trousers with very wide legs throughout their whole length

³¹ having long narrow lines or strips

³² symbols

³³ freeing, liberation

³⁴ stylish

³⁵ things that they hoped to achieve

³⁶ a small shop selling clothes

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branched out³⁷ also into costume jewellery, famously saying that the point of jewellery “isn’t to make a woman look rich but to **adorn**³⁸ her—not the same thing.”

[00:05:52] **Adorn** means to make something more beautiful.

[00:05:56] It’s an important statement, as historically the point of jewellery had been **precisely**³⁹ to **show off**⁴⁰ how rich you were.

[00:06:04] Coco Chanel’s **nautical**⁴¹ look spread: those **iconic**⁴² Breton tops were **favoured**⁴³ and therefore popularised by such world-famous figures as Pablo Picasso and became one of the characteristic styles we associate with brand of Chanel.

[00:06:22] Another was something that became called the Little Black Dress.

[00:06:27] If you can’t picture this “little black dress”, it’s simply a **loose fitting**⁴⁴ black dress.

³⁷ extended or expanded its activities

³⁸ make her more beautiful

³⁹ exactly

⁴⁰ show or display something in order to get attention

⁴¹ relating to the look of sailors

⁴² very famous and popular

⁴³ preferred, popular

⁴⁴ not fitting tightly or very close to the body

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[00:06:34] It might not sound revolutionary to you now, especially as if you were to go to Paris you'd probably find a large percentage of the population wearing black, but at the time black was [reserved](#)⁴⁵ for funerals, and it certainly wasn't a colour worn by stylish women, who would typically wear bright colours.

[00:06:56] Chanel changed all that, and by creating this small but [elegant](#)⁴⁶ black dress, she gave women a stylish option, adding that it allowed any woman to "walk around like a millionaire", and with it she pushed forward a fashion revolution.

[00:07:14] Further [iconic](#) Chanel creations included the [so-called](#)⁴⁷ Chanel suit.

[00:07:20] As well as reflecting the increasing part that women were starting to play in public life, this two-piece suit was inspired by [menswear](#)⁴⁸ and, in particular, sportswear.

[00:07:33] There is an interesting additional factor to this creation. The richest man in Britain, the Duke of Westminster was Coco Chanel's lover at the time.

[00:07:44] She observed his no doubt [splendid](#)⁴⁹ and huge wardrobe or sets of clothes.

⁴⁵ used only

⁴⁶ stylish, showing grace

⁴⁷ commonly named as

⁴⁸ clothing for men

⁴⁹ beautiful and impressive

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[00:07:50] It was not just the [cut⁵⁰](#), the style of his jackets, but also the material that was used that [caught her eye⁵¹](#).

[00:07:59] This was something called [tweed⁵²](#), a rough outdoor cloth [woven⁵³](#) in the western highlands of Scotland and not previously thought to be suitable material for the finest, [haute couture⁵⁴](#), clothes.

[00:08:13] Chanel would go on to make [tweed](#) an [integral⁵⁵](#) part of the design of her two-piece suit jacket.

[00:08:20] Such stars as Audrey Hepburn, Grace Kelly, Brigitte Bardot and Princess Diana would wear it, all adding to the fame and desirability not just of the Chanel Suit, but of everything Chanel would create.

[00:08:34] And, over 110 years after the first Chanel [boutique](#) was opened, Chanel is a multibillion dollar brand and as desirable as ever.

[00:08:44] Now, for our next stop we need to go east and south to Italy and, more specifically, to Florence.

⁵⁰ style

⁵¹ made her pay attention to it

⁵² a rough outdoor cloth originally produced in Scotland.

⁵³ made by using threads and needle, knitted

⁵⁴ expensive, fashionable clothes produced by famous fashion houses

⁵⁵ necessary, very important

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[00:08:53] It was here that a man called Guccio Gucci opened his first shop in 1921.

[00:08:59] As a young man, Gucci had worked as a [porter](#)⁵⁶ at the [luxurious](#)⁵⁷ Savoy Hotel in London where he observed the [luggage](#)⁵⁸ of the wealthy.

[00:09:10] Gucci's [background](#)⁵⁹ was in the family business, which made [luggage](#), suitcases and so on, as well as equipment for horse riders.

[00:09:20] Soon, Guccio Gucci, helped by his three sons, was [branching out](#)⁶⁰.

[00:09:27] Interestingly, it was an [embargo](#)⁶¹ or set of [sanctions](#)⁶² [imposed](#)⁶³ upon Italy by the League of Nations in 1935 because of Italy's invasion of Abyssinia—or Ethiopia, as it's called today—it was this that forced an important [innovation](#) for Gucci.

[00:09:46] The [sanctions](#) led to a shortage of leather, so Gucci had to start using [fabrics](#)⁶⁴, which he used to his advantage.

⁵⁶ a person whose job is to carry the travellers' bags

⁵⁷ very comfortable and expensive

⁵⁸ bags and suitcases people used when they were travelling

⁵⁹ education, experience, and social conditions

⁶⁰ becoming more successful, expanding

⁶¹ an official ban on or stop to trade with a particular country

⁶² penalties, punishments

⁶³ forced, put in place

⁶⁴ cloths made by weaving, knitting

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[00:09:56] Gucci wanted a way to make his bags more **distinctive**⁶⁵, more **recognisable**⁶⁶ and because you can easily print on **fabrics**, Gucci created what would become his signature **interlocking**⁶⁷ diamond symbol, which was **stamped**⁶⁸ onto every bag, making it instantly **recognisable**.

[00:10:15] Shops **proliferated**⁶⁹ or grew fast.

[00:10:19] In the post-war period, Gucci shops opened all across Europe, then New York, Tokyo, and Hong Kong, and there are now around 500 Gucci stores worldwide.

[00:10:31] Perhaps the most significant **boost**⁷⁰ to the fortunes of Gucci came in 1990 when the previously unknown but brilliant young designer Tom Ford joined the company.

[00:10:43] When he became Creative Director in 1994, his influence was massive.

[00:10:48] In 1995, his famous Fall 95 collection marked a **lucrative**⁷¹ new period for the company.

⁶⁵ characteristic, special

⁶⁶ easy to recognise or identify

⁶⁷ having parts joined or fit together

⁶⁸ fixed, imprinted

⁶⁹ grew very fast

⁷⁰ increase

⁷¹ producing a lot of money

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[00:10:56] Such stars as Gwyneth Paltrow, Jennifer Lopez and Madonna were photographed on the famous red carpet wearing Gucci.

[00:11:04] An important additional factor behind the company's success was, perhaps [counterintuitively](#)⁷², the decreasing influence of the Gucci family.

[00:11:15] This process began in 1989 when an American [holdings company](#)⁷³, called Investcorp, bought almost half of the company's shares.

[00:11:25] In 1993 Maurizio Gucci, the grandson of the founder, Guccio Gucci, sold his shares to Investcorp, meaning that the Gucci family no longer controlled the Gucci brand.

[00:11:39] At this point, I need to introduce the rather [gruesome](#)⁷⁴ but [colourful](#)⁷⁵ and [intriguing](#)⁷⁶ topic of the troubled Gucci family history and the murder of Maurizio, Guccio's grandson, in 1995.

[00:11:53] If you have seen the film, House of Gucci, you will be familiar with all of this.

⁷² contrary to what one would expect, not according to common sense

⁷³ a company that doesn't sell anything and whose purpose is to control and own shares of other companies

⁷⁴ extremely unpleasant, shocking

⁷⁵ full of interest

⁷⁶ very interesting, fascinating

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[00:11:59] In short, Maurizio was murdered by a paid [assassin⁷⁷](#) or hitman, in Milan as he was about to go into the company's offices.

[00:12:09] The hitman shot him three times in the back and shoulder and then finally in the head.

[00:12:15] Sensationally, the person found guilty of ordering and paying for his murder was Maurizio's former wife Patrizia.

[00:12:25] She [ended up⁷⁸](#) serving 18 years in prison, and was released in 2016.

[00:12:31] She was actually offered the opportunity to be freed 5 years earlier, in 2011 under the condition that she found some sort of work, but she refused, declaring "I've never worked a day in my life, and I'm certainly not going to start now".

[00:12:48] Now, it is back to France for our third fashion house, and it's here that we'll meet a man who went from extreme wealth to extreme poverty, and then back again.

[00:12:59] It's Christian Dior.

[00:13:01] Christian Dior's [eponymous](#) fashion house, Dior, was created in 1946, right at the end of the Second World War.

[00:13:10] It was both the best and the worst time to be launching a luxury fashion house.

⁷⁷ hired killer, hitman

⁷⁸ came to a situation of

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[00:13:16] Paris had been occupied by the Nazis from June 1940 until August 1944.

Europe was just recovering from the most [catastrophic](#)⁷⁹ war in its history, clothing was [rationed](#)⁸⁰, and there wasn't much money going around to spend on beautiful clothes.

[00:13:34] Paris might have been a cultural centre for style and fashion at the start of the 20th century, but the city was [a shadow of its former self](#)⁸¹.

[00:13:45] But Christian Dior sensed an opportunity.

[00:13:48] He had come from a family that was rich—his family owned a wealthy [fertiliser](#)⁸² company—but then had lost it all after the Great Depression.

[00:13:58] Dior did his [apprenticeship](#)⁸³, he [cut his teeth](#)⁸⁴, with designers such as Robert Piguet and Lucien Lelong, where he was forced to design clothes for the wives of Nazi officers.

[00:14:11] And in 1946, after Paris was free from the Nazis, he [set out on his own](#)⁸⁵.

⁷⁹ having caused great destruction

⁸⁰ limited to a fixed amount for each person

⁸¹ in a much worse state than it was before

⁸² substances that were used on the land to make plants grow faster and well

⁸³ training or trial period

⁸⁴ got his first practice or experience

⁸⁵ he began to work by himself

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[00:14:19] Now, let's remember that women's clothes during the second world war had been **focussed on⁸⁶ practicality⁸⁷**.

[00:14:27] Given the **rationing⁸⁸**, it was all about making the most with what you had, and not wasting anything.

[00:14:34] Dior took this idea and **threw it out of the window⁸⁹**, he **got rid of⁹⁰** it completely.

[00:14:41] He wanted a return to the **glamour** of the past, wanting women who wore his clothes to feel that they were wearing something **luxurious, over the top⁹¹**, and fabulous.

[00:14:51] He designed flowery dresses, the complete opposite of the **drab⁹²**, brown and grey wartime uniforms.

⁸⁶ given a lot of attention to

⁸⁷ the quality of being useful or functional

⁸⁸ limited amount available to each person

⁸⁹ stopped using it

⁹⁰ removed, did away with it

⁹¹ extreme, excessive

⁹² boring, simple

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[00:14:59] This was, for the time, **radical**⁹³, but it set Dior on the path to success, and by the late 1940s Christian Dior was responsible for 75% of Paris' fashion exports and a **whopping**⁹⁴ 5% of France's total exports.

[00:15:19] His style was **seized upon**⁹⁵ by critics and customers alike, with the editor of the famous American magazine, Harper's Bazaar, saying "This is a new look".

[00:15:31] It certainly was a new look, but Dior wouldn't live long enough to see it for any real length of time.

[00:15:38] In 1957, just 11 years after he started his fashion house, he was dead, after suffering a heart attack at the age of 52.

[00:15:49] Luckily he had already **appointed**⁹⁶ a **successor**⁹⁷, a man he hired when he was only 19 years old.

[00:15:55] The man's name was Yves Saint Laurent, but Yves Saint Laurent's **tenure**⁹⁸ at Dior wouldn't actually last very long.

⁹³ bringing great change

⁹⁴ surprisingly large

⁹⁵ accepted and used right away with excitement

⁹⁶ officially chosen

⁹⁷ someone who would continue his work after his death

⁹⁸ the period of time during which he owned it

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[00:16:02] He was [out⁹⁹](#) by 1960, just 3 years after Christian Dior's death.

[00:16:08] But, as you'll no doubt know, this wouldn't be the [end of the road¹⁰⁰](#) for Yves Saint Laurent, and he went on to launch his own incredibly successful fashion house.

[00:16:18] And as for Dior, it is another global [powerhouse¹⁰¹](#), and is now controlled by LVMH, the huge corporation that includes brands such as Moët & Chandon, Hennessy, Louis Vuitton, and Bulgari.

[00:16:34] Now, on to our final fashion house, Versace, or as it should be pronounced, Versace.

[00:16:41] If you say the word Versace to anyone, they will certainly think immediately of [luxurious](#) and very expensive items.

[00:16:49] They may well [call to mind¹⁰²](#) Versace's famous symbol, the head of Medusa.

⁹⁹ no longer involved

¹⁰⁰ the end of his career

¹⁰¹ a very successful and famous company

¹⁰² remember

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[00:16:55] As you may know, Medusa is a [mythological](#)¹⁰³ figure, a beautiful woman with snakes for hair, who had the ability to [mesmerise](#)¹⁰⁴ people and make men fall in love with her.

[00:17:08] The Italian founder of Versace, Gianni Versace, said that he chose this [emblem](#)¹⁰⁵ because he hoped that people would fall in love with the brand and have no way of going back.

[00:17:21] The Versace story begins later than that of Chanel, Gucci, or Dior, when in 1978 Gianni Versace founded his first [boutique](#) in Milan.

[00:17:34] Soon known for his [innovative](#) designs, with their [flashy](#)¹⁰⁶ prints and bright but stylish colours, the company's rise was [swift](#)¹⁰⁷.

[00:17:43] Like Chanel, Gucci and Dior, he expanded into other areas, but clothing was always central.

¹⁰³ appearing in myths, not real

¹⁰⁴ have their complete attention, hypnotise

¹⁰⁵ symbol

¹⁰⁶ bright, impressive and attractive

¹⁰⁷ quick

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[00:17:51] His perhaps unique approach was to always make sure that his clothes were worn by the [up and coming](#)¹⁰⁸ celebrities of the day, meaning his creations would always be in the news.

[00:18:03] Gianni Versace was both a friend and a clothes supplier to such [iconic](#) stars as Elton John, Michael Jackson, and Princess Diana.

[00:18:13] He was also credited with creating the phenomenon of the supermodel, frequently photographed with names such as Naomi Campbell and Claudia Schiffer, and making sure that the most glamorous models of the day were pictured wearing clothes he had designed.

[00:18:30] As with the tale of Gucci, there is a [grim](#)¹⁰⁹ and tragic end to the story of Gianni Versace. This was his [senseless](#)¹¹⁰ murder on the steps of his Florida mansion in July 1997.

[00:18:44] But unlike with Gucci, there was no evil wife.

[00:18:48] He was the fourth victim of a serial killer called Andrew Cunanan, who was found [dead by his own hand](#)¹¹¹ within weeks of Gianni's murder.

¹⁰⁸ becoming successful, promising

¹⁰⁹ very serious and worrying

¹¹⁰ not reasonable, needless

¹¹¹ as a result of his own actions, having committed suicide

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[00:18:57] So, there we go. In brief, the stories of four of the most powerful and important fashion houses in the world, and five if we include our perhaps unlikely Englishman at the start.

[00:19:10] **It goes without saying**¹¹² that, although the target audience for these great fashion houses might be people who are willing to spend hundreds if not thousands of Euros on one item of clothing, the **trickle-down effect**¹¹³ that they have had on what we all wear has been **immense**¹¹⁴.

[00:19:27] First and foremost, these designers were artists, and the human body was their **canvas**¹¹⁵.

[00:19:34] Sure, the clothes they made might have been incredibly expensive, but as Aldo Gucci famously once said, “quality is remembered long after the price is forgotten”.

[00:19:48] OK then, that is it for today's episode on The Rise of the Great Fashion Houses.

¹¹² it is obvious or generally accepted

¹¹³ relating to the idea that fashion trends move from the higher classes to the lower classes in society, in a way that everyone is affected

¹¹⁴ extremely large or great

¹¹⁵ a strong rough cloth used by artists for painting on

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[00:19:54] I hope it's been an interesting one, and no matter whether you are the sort of person who only wears Versace or you've never stepped into one of these shops in your life, well I hope you've learnt something new.

[00:20:06] As a reminder, this is part two of our three part series on Fashion.

[00:20:11] Part one was on the [curiosities](#) of fashion, where we looked at some unusual fashions through the ages, and the reasons that fashions change, and next up, in part three, we'll look at the world of fast fashion.

[00:20:24] As always, I would love to know what you thought of this episode.

[00:20:28] What other fashion designers have had a similar or even greater influence than the four I mentioned?

[00:20:35] Who do you think had the most interesting life?

[00:20:37] Whose influence was the most important?

[00:20:40] And, if you are the sort of person who is really into designer clothes, if you could only pick one of the four, who would it be and why?

[00:20:49] You can head right into our community forum, which is at community.leonardoenglish.com and get chatting away to other curious minds.

[00:20:57] You've been listening to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo English.

[00:21:02] I'm Alastair Budge, you stay safe, and I'll catch you in the next episode

[END OF EPISODE]

Key vocabulary

Word	Definition
Curiosities	strange and interesting facts
Disposable	dismissed or not followed after a while
Left a mark	had an important effect
Desirable	worth having, wanted
Intrinsically	in a way that is a very important and basic characteristic of them
Associated	related, connected
Credited	considered important
Innovation	new idea or method
Cloth	type of woven material, fabric
Attach	fasten, stick
Label	a piece of paper or other material giving information about it
Mark	symbol, name or logo

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Innovative	using new ideas or methods
Dressmaker	someone whose job was to make your dresses
Household	the house and people who live together in it
Concept	idea, principle
Off the peg	made in standard sizes
Glamorous	attractive and expensive
Glamour	attractive and expensive style, beauty
Eponymous	having given his name to the fashion house
Signalled a break	caused a stop, a pause
Complex	involving a lot of different parts, complicated
Over-engineered	having more details than necessary, too complicated
Oppressive	difficult to use, troublesome
Corsets	tight pieces of underwear worn from below the chest to the hips, to shape the figure
Frills	narrow pieces of cloth with a lot of folds that were attached or sewn to the edge of a dress as decoration

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Fluid	comfortable, easy to use
Boy-like	having the shape of a boy
Androgynous	partly male and partly female in appearance
Wide-legged	trousers with very wide legs throughout their whole length
Striped	having long narrow lines or strips
Emblems	symbols
Emancipation	freeing, liberation
Chic	stylish
Aspiration	things that they hoped to achieve
Boutique	a small shop selling clothes
Branched out	extended or expanded its activities
Adorn	make her more beautiful
Precisely	exactly
Show off	show or display something in order to get attention
Nautical	relating to the look of sailors

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Iconic	very famous and popular
Favoured	preferred, popular
Loose fitting	not fitting tightly or very close to the body
Reserved	used only
Elegant	stylish, showing grace
So-called	commonly named as
Menswear	clothing for men
Splendid	beautiful and impressive
Cut	style
Caught her eye	made her pay attention to it
Tweed	a rough outdoor cloth originally produced in Scotland.
Woven	made by using threads and needle, knitted
Haute couture	expensive, fashionable clothes produced by famous fashion houses
Integral	necessary, very important
Porter	a person whose job is to carry the travellers' bags

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Luxurious	very comfortable and expensive
Luggage	bags and suitcases people used when they were travelling
Background	education, experience, and social conditions
Branching out	becoming more successful, expanding
Embargo	an official ban on or stop to trade with a particular country
Sanctions	penalties, punishments
Imposed	forced, put in place
Fabrics	cloths made by weaving, knitting
Distinctive	characteristic, special
Recognisable	easy to recognise or identify
Interlocking	having parts joined or fit together
Stamped	fixed, imprinted
Proliferated	grew very fast
Boost	increase
Lucrative	producing a lot of money

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Counterintuitively	contrary to what one would expect, not according to common sense
Holdings company	a company that doesn't sell anything and whose purpose is to control and own shares of other companies
Gruesome	extremely unpleasant, shocking
Colourful	full of interest
Intriguing	very interesting, fascinating
Assassin	hired killer, hitman
Ended up	came to a situation of
Catastrophic	having caused great destruction
Rationed	limited to a fixed amount for each person
A shadow of its former self	in a much worse state than it was before
Fertiliser	substances that were used on the land to make plants grow faster and well
Apprenticeship	training or trial period
Cut his teeth	got his first practice or experience

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Set out on his own	he began to work by himself
Focussed on	given a lot of attention to
Practicality	the quality of being useful or functional
Rationing	limited amount available to each person
Threw it out of the window	stopped using it
Got rid of	removed, did away with it
Over the top	extreme, excessive
Drab	boring, simple
Radical	bringing great change
Whopping	surprisingly large
Seized upon	accepted and used right away with excitement
Appointed	officially chosen
Successor	someone who would continue his work after his death
Tenure	the period of time during which he owned it
Out	no longer involved

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End of the road	the end of his career
Powerhouse	a very successful and famous company
Call to mind	remember
Mythological	appearing in myths, not real
Mesmerise	have their complete attention, hypnotise
Emblem	symbol
Flashy	bright, impressive and attractive
Swift	quick
Up and coming	becoming successful, promising
Grim	very serious and worrying
Senseless	not reasonable, needless
Dead by his own hand	as a result of his own actions, having committed suicide
It goes without saying	it is obvious or generally accepted
Trickle-down effect	relating to the idea that fashion trends move from the higher classes to

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the lower classes in society, in a way that everyone is affected

Immense

extremely large or great

Canvas

a strong rough cloth used by artists for painting on

We'd love to get your feedback on this episode.

What did you like? What could we do better?

What did you struggle to understand?

Let us know in the forum community.leonardoenglish.com