

Historic Fashion Activity



In the early 1800s, clothing looked very different than it does today. Women and girls were only allowed to wear dresses, never pants. These dresses were in a *neoclassical* style, mimicking what people thought was worn in ancient, or classical, Greece and Rome.

Classical styles also influenced architecture and decorative arts, like furniture. Learn more in our Museums 101 video on YouTube!

Cut out the paper dolls on the next few pages for fun! You can decorate their faces or draw heads on them.



Fashionable women's dresses had high waistlines, with simple, clean lines. These dresses were quite loose from the waistline down, usually with low necklines. The dresses were made of light fabric, so shawls were necessary for staying warm. These shawls also created a draped effect like the cloth craved on Classical statues. The dresses had no pockets, so women carried small wrist bags called a *reticules*.

Men's clothing was simple and plain in color and design, without many fancy decorations. Tight pants were fashionable, emphasizing the shape of men's legs, modeled after Greek and Roman statues. A man's outfit mainly consisted of three items: a vest (called a waistcoat), a coat, and pants (called breeches or pantaloons). Short pants (with a buckle at the knee) and tall boots were fashionable.





