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Resources for Teachers

Primary Sources

[Black Fashion Designers](#)

This 2017 exhibit from the Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology featured 60 designers. The website includes r such as a discussion by three generations of black models.

[Ebony](#) magazine

Browse digitized copies of *Ebony Magazine* from the 1950s to 2000.

[Fashion and Race Database](#)

“How does race influence the fashion system and the way we ‘fashion’ ourselves in society?” The essays and images on this website allow users to move from a single object or creator to essays that provide broad context. It includes curated reading lists on a range of topic and links to videotaped public lectures with scholars working in the field.

[Freedom on the Move](#)

Connect the recent history of fashion to older histories about people who ran away from their enslavers. Runaway ads from before the U.S. Civil War include descriptions of what people wore as well as appearance, personality, and circumstances. The website includes a searchable database and lesson plans.

[Haute Couture in 1949](#)

What did high fashion look like when Le Gip first entered the field? This 14 minute video of Dior’s 1949 show is in French but that in itself conveys some of the obstacles he faced.

[Stax Museum of American Soul Music](#)

Explore the graphic identity of Stax Records (1957-1975), an independent record label that produced over 300 LP’s. The digital collection includes album covers, posters, advertisements, and the company newsletter.

[Vintage Fashion Guild \(VFG\)](#)

The VFG was founded in 2002 by vintage fashion sellers. Their website includes a searchable database of vintage labels, fabrics, styles and more.

Online Reading

[15 Indigenous Designers on What Sustainable Fashion Is Missing.](#)

Allaire, Christian. *Vogue*. May 7, 2020.

[Fashioning the Self in Slavery and Freedom](#)

Jonathan Michael Square (Parsons School of Design) explores the intersection of slavery and fashion, with broader connections to questions of race, identity, and equity.

- See his [#FashioningTheBlackBody Reading List](#), published in 2017 by *The Fashion Studies Journal*.

[Stitches of Resistance: Reclaiming the Narratives of the Enslaved Seamstresses in Martha](#)

[Washington's Purple Silk Gown](#) by Cynthia E. Chin, *History*, March 24, 2021.

Chin uses a dress worn by Martha Washington to learn about Moll, Caroline Branham, Charlotte, Betty, and Ona Judge, the enslaved seamstresses who made it.

[Why Fashion Is Key to Understanding the World of *Black Panther*](#)

Tanisha C. Ford, *The Atlantic*, February 15, 2018

- “The costumes had to fit seamlessly into the film, telling a story of their own but not competing with or distracting from the plot. The result is a dramatic look that makes clear that Wakandans use clothing as an important form of self- and community expression, to honor their ancestors, and to maintain a progressive social order.” Ruth Carter’s designs for *Black Panther* offer a rich resource for students to talk about race and fashion.

Video games and representation

Users of all ages spend countless hours playing video games. Visual information supports concise storytelling but this is often achieved through the use of stereotypes and coded imagery. Character skins are marketing tools for increasingly sophisticated corporations in the fashion industry. Students can be more discerning consumers if they understand the visual language of fashion and race.

[Video Games Are Becoming a High-Fashion Playground](#)

Christian Allaire, *Vogue*, Oct. 12, 2021

- “Virtual cosmetics—as in the clothes, hair, and makeup with which you customize your character—are becoming important facets even in action or horror-focused games like *Grand Theft Auto*, *Dead by Daylight*, and *Fortnite*.”

[Gaming is Pushing Fashion into an Identity Crisis](#)

Taylor Scarabelli, *High Snobiety*

- “In an ideal world, successful fashion brands could design virtual costumes for games, or teach developers how to create well-researched skins that provide both functionality and fantasy — without offending players. In turn, brands and their designers would have the opportunity to experiment with garment construction untethered from real world constraints like gravity and the human form.” *High Snobiety* is a print magazine, streetwear blog, media brand and production agency that highlights new trends.
- This discussion of how the video games we enjoy make money for other people, and how consumers shape marketing strategies, could spark good classroom discussion.