

Analyzing a Fashion Piece

Part 1: Textiles, History, and Culture

Instructions: As you watch the videos from Kate Irvin, curator of the costume division at the Rhode Island School of Design Museum, answer the questions below. The times listed are when the comments appear in the video. Videos are available at www.choices.edu/genocide

Video 1: “What can the study of textiles, dress, or fashion tell us about history and current events?” (Kate Irvin)

1. Ms. Irvin quotes Virginia Woolf’s novel *Orlando* (0:33). The original quotation is “[Clothes] change our view of the world and the world’s view of us.” In your own words, explain what you think this means. How is the world’s view of us affected by our clothing?

2. Ms. Irvin uses the term “symbolism” (1:53). A symbol is a something that represents or stands for something else, such as a heart emoji meaning love, or a flag representing a country. Give an example of the use of a symbol on an item of clothing.

3. Ms. Irvin talks about where materials for an item of clothing come from (2:24). How might knowing the origins of the materials help researchers understand the history of a region?

Video 2: “How do we analyze an item of clothing?” (Kate Irvin)

List the three steps of analyzing a fashion piece:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Part 2: Analyzing Namibian Fashion

Instructions: Choose two images from the slideshow that represent either two different time periods or two different styles (or both). Make some notes below about the pieces you chose.

	Piece 1	Piece 2
Gather information: What do you notice? What questions can you answer?		
Reflect: What additional questions do you have, or what research would you like to do?		
Interpret: What do your answers tell you about the item, about the culture, or about history?		

