

Fashion's Ecological Threads

Fashion History · Answer Key · 15 Questions

1. The iconic stiletto heel, popularized in the mid-20th century, drew inspiration from the anatomy of which animal to achieve its slender form and height?

- A) Ostrich
- B) Gazelle
- C) Flamingo**
- D) Stork

2. Before the widespread cultivation of cotton, what ancient fiber, derived from a plant whose cultivation requires significant water and can lead to soil degradation, was a primary textile in many early civilizations, including ancient Egypt?

- A) Hemp
- B) Flax**
- C) Ramie
- D) Jute

3. During the Rococo period, elaborate powdered wigs, often styled with feathers and jewels, were a status symbol. What common insect was often a pest associated with these elaborate hairstyles, leading to the development of specialized combs and cleaning techniques?

- A) Cockroaches
- B) Fleas**
- C) Silverfish
- D) Bedbugs

4. The development of aniline dyes in the mid-19th century revolutionized fashion by providing vibrant, stable colors. However, the initial production of these synthetic dyes was a byproduct of which industrial process, heavily reliant on fossil fuels?

- A) Coal tar distillation**
- B) Petroleum refining
- C) Natural gas processing
- D) Wood distillation

5. The fascination with peacock feathers in late Victorian and Edwardian fashion was partly inspired by the 'Aesthetic Movement' and its appreciation for nature. What chemical element, used in the production of certain iridescent dyes to mimic the feather's sheen, has significant environmental toxicity?

A) Chromium

- B) Cadmium
- C) Mercury
- D) Lead

6. The widespread adoption of silk in European fashion, particularly during the Renaissance, led to increased trade and a demand that significantly impacted the ecosystems of the silkworm's natural habitat, primarily through the cultivation of which plant?

A) Mulberry

- B) Willow
- C) Oak
- D) Pine

7. The opulent use of ermine fur in royal and ecclesiastical garments symbolized purity and status. The process of obtaining ermine pelts historically involved hunting the stoat, a small mammal whose natural environment is threatened by what specific type of habitat destruction?

A) Deforestation

- B) Desertification
- C) Urban sprawl
- D) Wetland drainage

8. The use of whalebone (baleen) as a stiffening agent in corsetry during the 18th and 19th centuries contributed to the severe decline of whale populations. This practice highlights the historical exploitation of marine mammals for commercial purposes, often involving the harvesting of which specific part of the whale?

- A) Blubber
- B) Teeth

C) Baleen plates

- D) Spermaceti

9. The 'New Look' of the 1950s, with its voluminous skirts, required substantial amounts of fabric. This increased demand for textiles, particularly rayon and acetate, contributed to the rise of industries that often had significant water pollution issues due to the chemical processes involved in transforming wood pulp, a natural resource.

- A) Viscose**
- B) Nylon
- C) Polyester
- D) Acrylic

10. During the Age of Exploration, exotic animal skins like those of leopards and tigers were highly prized for luxury garments. The hunting and trade of these apex predators contributed to their endangerment through the disruption of their natural food chains and habitats. Which of these animals is still critically endangered due to such pressures?

- A) Lion
- B) Cheetah
- C) Snow Leopard**
- D) Jaguar

11. The popularity of paisley patterns, originating in Persia and India, often depicted stylized floral motifs and 'boteh' shapes. While aesthetically pleasing, the widespread use of these designs on printed fabrics contributed to the environmental burden of dye production and wastewater discharge, a challenge that intensified with industrial printing techniques.

- A) Indigo
- B) Madder**
- C) Cochineal
- D) Woad

12. The opulent use of feathers from exotic birds, such as egrets and plumes, in hats and embellishments during the late 19th and early 20th centuries led to the near extinction of many species. This demand spurred the creation of conservation organizations dedicated to protecting these bird populations from unsustainable harvesting, often targeting the birds during what critical life stage?

- A) Mating season**
- B) Molting period
- C) Juvenile stage
- D) Winter migration

13. The 1960s saw a surge in the use of synthetic fibers like polyester and acrylic. While offering new styles and affordability, their production is energy-intensive and relies heavily on petroleum, a non-renewable resource. This shift marked a significant increase in fashion's reliance on what type of material source?

A) Petrochemicals

- B) Minerals
- C) Fossil fuels
- D) Natural gas

14. The trend of importing and processing exotic leathers, such as crocodile and snake skin, for luxury goods has had a profound impact on wildlife populations and their habitats. These animals are often found in specific wetland or rainforest ecosystems, the degradation of which exacerbates their endangerment.

- A) Coral reefs
- B) Deserts

C) Tropical rainforests

- D) Alpine meadows

15. The development of vat dyeing techniques, particularly for cotton, provided long-lasting and vibrant colors, famously seen in workwear like denim. However, some vat dyes, if not processed correctly, can release harmful byproducts into waterways, impacting aquatic life. This concern has led to increased research into more environmentally friendly dyeing methods, often involving microorganisms or plant-based pigments.

A) Anthraquinone dyes

- B) Azo dyes
- C) Reactive dyes
- D) Disperse dyes