Environmental History of Fashion

Fashion History · Practice Test · 20 Questions

1. In the late 19th century, which bird species' plumes were so highly valued in the millinery trade that it led to the formation of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)?

A) Great Crested Grebe
B) Peregrine Falcon
C) Snowy Owl
D) Common Kingfisher

2. What specific substance, derived from the waxy secretion of the lac insect (Kerria lacca), was historically used as a primary ingredient in wood varnishes and high-gloss finishes for fashion accessories?

A) Shellac
B) Lanolin
C) Ambergris
D) Beeswax

3. During the 17th century, the 'beaver hat' became the standard for European fashion. Which chemical compound, used in the felting process, caused neurological damage to hatters, giving rise to the 'mad hatter' trope?

A) Mercury nitrate
B) Lead acetate
C) Arsenic trioxide
D) Copper sulfate

4. The fashion for 'Tyrian purple' dye in antiquity was derived from the mucus of which marine mollusk species?

A) Bolinus brandaris
B) Haliotis iris
C) Mytilus edulis
D) Conus textile

5. In the 18th century, which exotic fiber, derived from the filaments produced by a marine bivalve, was known as 'sea silk' or 'pinna silk'?

A) Byssus
B) Kelp thread
C) Coral fiber
D) Algae lace

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6. Which plant, traditionally used to produce indigo dye, caused significant ecological disruption and soil depletion in the British colonial Caribbean during the 18th century?

A) Indigofera tinctoria
B) Isatis tinctoria
C) Polygonum tinctorium
D) Lonchocarpus cyanescens

7. What is the historical origin of the textile known as 'mohair', which is famously derived from the fleece of the Angora goat?

A) Tibet
B) Anatolia
C) Andalusia
D) Persia

8. In Victorian fashion, taxidermy birds were frequently mounted onto hats. Which species was most commonly used due to its vibrant plumage and small size?

A) Ruby-throated Hummingbird
B) Common Starling
C) European Robin
D) Barn Swallow

9. The 'Pashmina' textile is historically produced from the undercoat of the Changthangi goat. In which high-altitude ecosystem does this goat naturally reside?

A) Ladakh Plateau
B) Andes Mountains
C) Ethiopian Highlands
D) Alps

10. Which animal byproduct, historically used to stiffen the fabric of corsets and bodices, is derived from the baleen plates of a whale?

A) Whalebone
B) Ambergris
C) Spermaceti
D) Scrimshaw

11. Before the advent of synthetic pigments, the bright red dye 'cochineal' was harvested from the crushed bodies of which insect?

A) Dactylopius coccus
B) Apis mellifera
C) Coccus ilicis
D) Formica rufa

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12. Which fibrous plant, known as 'New Zealand flax', was extensively traded by Maori people for European clothing manufacture in the 19th century?

A) Phormium tenax
B) Linum usitatissimum
C) Boehmeria nivea
D) Agave sisalana

13. What historically significant, toxic mineral was widely used in the 19th century to create 'Scheele's Green' pigment in printed dress fabrics?

A) Copper arsenite
B) Chromium oxide
C) Cobalt blue
D) Lead chromate

14. Which aquatic creature's shell was the primary historical source for high-quality 'tortoiseshell' used in luxury fashion combs and eyeglass frames?

A) Eretmochelys imbricata
B) Chelonia mydas
C) Caretta caretta
D) Dermochelys coriacea

15. The fibers of the 'vicuña', the finest animal fiber in the world, were historically reserved exclusively for the use of which ruling class?

A) Inca royalty
B) Byzantine emperors
C) Ming dynasty
D) Bourbon monarchy

16. Which tree resin, often containing preserved insects, was highly prized for jewelry and buttons throughout the 18th and 19th centuries?

A) Amber
B) Copal
C) Dammar
D) Mastic

17. What was the primary environmental catalyst for the widespread adoption of cotton over wool in the textile industry of the late 18th century?

A) Invention of the cotton gin
B) Change in sheep breeding
C) Deforestation in Europe
D) Increase in global cooling

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18. Which parasitic insect, historically harvested in the Mediterranean, was used to produce the 'kermes' red dye before the introduction of American cochineal?

A) Kermes vermilio
B) Porphyrophora polonica
C) Dactylopius opuntiae
D) Coccus hesperidum

19. In the 19th century, 'egret' plumes were highly sought after for ladies' hats. From which family of birds were these decorative breeding feathers harvested?

A) Ardeidae
B) Accipitridae
C) Strigiformes
D) Ciconiidae

20. The term 'catgut', used in the historical manufacture of stringed accessories and sewing thread, is actually derived from the intestines of which animal?

A) Sheep
B) Cats
C) Rabbits
D) Goats

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