

# Year 10 AIC Costume Design Worksheet

## Task 1 (15-20 mins)

Watch this clip: <https://youtu.be/bgxcWne7uzg>

**Answer these questions about what you've watched:**

Question:	Answer:
Why are costumes, wigs, hair and make-up so important to theatre?	
How are actors involved in the design process?	
What does one need to take into consideration when approaching a period performance?	
Why does one need to take into consideration the type and size of theatre that the performance will take place in when designing costumes?	
How has costume design changed in the last 50 years?	

## Task 2 (15-20 mins)

**Read through these three web pages from BBC Bitesize:**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zdwp2sg/revision/1>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zdwp2sg/revision/2>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zdwp2sg/revision/3>

**Then answer these questions on costume design:**

Question:	Answer:
How does costume help <b>to establish the context</b> of a play?	
How does costume help <b>to communicate the style</b> of a production?	
How does costume help <b>to communicate a character</b> ?	
How and why do you have to take the <b>fit</b> into consideration when designing costumes?	
How and why do you have to take <b>colour</b> into consideration when designing costumes?	
How and why do you have to take the <b>condition</b> of the costume into consideration when designing costume?	
How and why do you have to take the <b>fabric</b> into consideration when designing costumes?	
How and why do you have to take the <b>cut of fabric</b> into consideration when designing costumes?	

### Task 3: (15-20 mins)

Create a costume mood board for each character – either in 3D OR a digital version (you can use the information in the Costume Knowledge Organiser at the bottom of the last page)

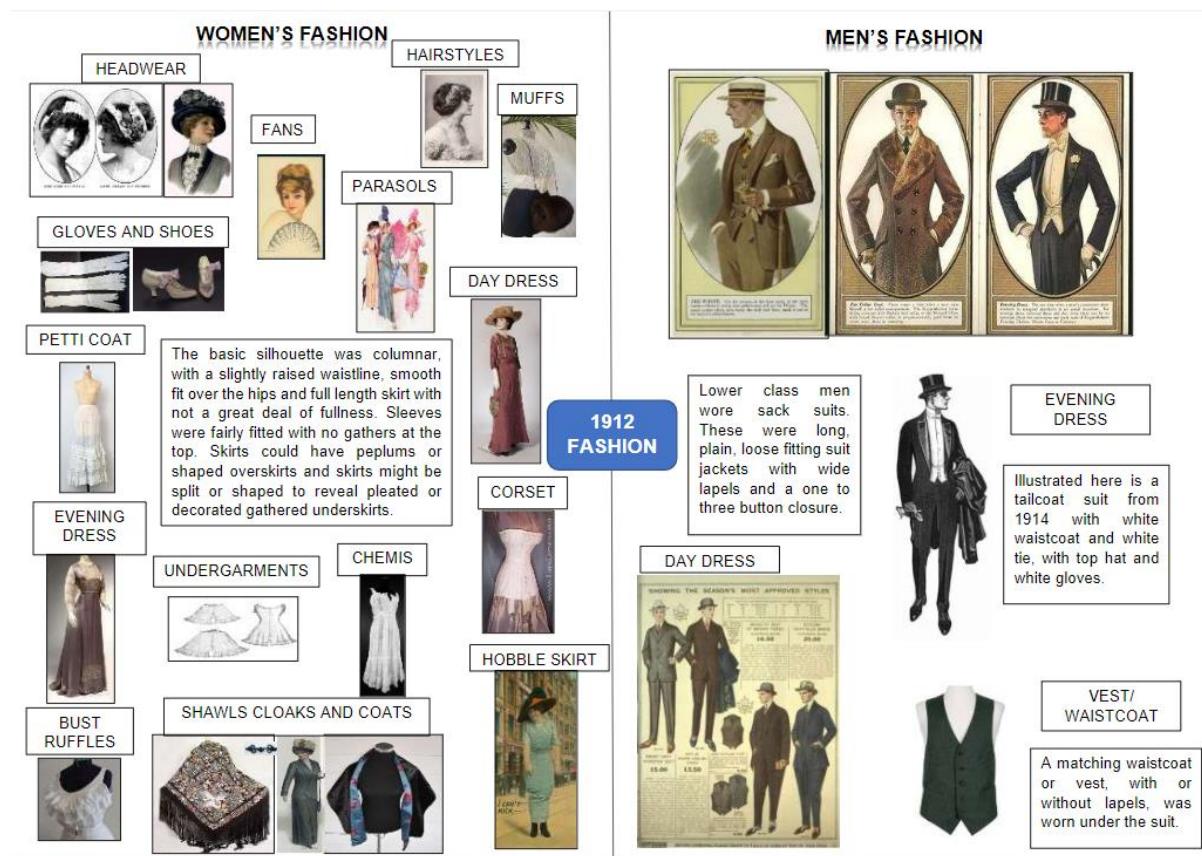
#### Step by Step Instructions:

1. Read the costume description for the character on the worksheet.
2. Go to Google images and search for: 'Edwardian evening dress male (or female)' or 'Edwardian police inspector' or 'Edwardian parlour maid'
3. Copy and paste a couple of the images that you think suits the character best
4. Annotate using the technical words (refer back to examples)

**HINT:** use the era (1912) and/or phrases like: 'Edwardian evening dress' as search terms.

**Task 4: Add annotations** (either by hand if you are sketching or insert text boxes and type in) to justify your choice for each of the following:

- ★ Silhouette/shape
- ★ Colour
- ★ Fabric
- ★ Fit
- ★ Condition



# Costume Design

## 1. Colour

Colour is a very important aspect of a costume. It can convey a symbolic idea or reveal something about the character wearing the costume.



## 2. Fabric (material)

Consider most appropriate fabrics to suit the character, setting and style of the production. For example, in the present day, performers can wear costumes that use **modern synthetic materials**, such as lycra, which gives extra stretch whilst still looking era-specific. Fabric can also provide information about a character's social status; e.g. a wealthy character may wear a silk dress.

## 3. Condition

The condition of the costume can convey information about a character's circumstances. For example, a Victorian street beggar leading a hard life may wear dirty rags with holes to show wear and tear, and may also have make-up to appear dirty with missing teeth, cuts and bruises.

## 5. Cut

The way a costume is cut refers to the shape of fabric pieces used to construct it. For example, a suit can be cut in different ways to help change the performer's physical appearance, making them appear either smaller or larger. Cut can also provide information about the historical setting of the play, e.g. flares are a style of trousers that become wider below the knee and are largely associated with the 1970s.

## Other considerations when designing a costume:

### Texture

The texture of the fabric used on a costume can provide the audience with information about a play's context or insight into a character. For example, a soft cashmere cardigan in pastel tones can suggest that a character is warm and caring, whereas leather and suede in dark colours can appear more threatening. It is important to consider how textured surfaces react differently under stage lighting, e.g. a shiny finish like satin is very reflective under lights.

### Shape

Costume can be used to give a performer a different physical shape, e.g. a body suit may be worn to make a performer appear larger. The outline created by a costume on a performer is called a **silhouette**. Different silhouettes are associated with different fashions throughout history, eg shoulder pads are reminiscent of 1980s **power dressing**.

### Practicalities

The practicalities of a costume must also be considered when working on a design. Some productions can require quick costume changes between scenes, and a costume designer will have to find ways to help this, eg by using Velcro rather than buttons. Comfort and freedom of movement should be considered as well as weight when using different materials and fits.

### Hair and make-up

Hair and make-up are also aspects of costume design. Simple make-up is often used to help pick out the performer's facial features under bright lighting, but make-up serves many other functions. For example, it is used to:

- create special effects such as cuts and bruises
- help a performer appear older, eg to create wrinkles
- change facial features, eg through the use of **prosthetics**

### Adornments

Adornments are the accessories that are added to a costume, eg jewellery, handkerchiefs and bags. The scale or size of adornments needs to be considered as, depending on where they are sitting, it can be difficult for the audience to see details. Adornments may be accentuated to make them clearly visible.

### Health & Safety

Designers must take into consideration H&S issues such as: skin allergies to fabrics and/or washing/cleaning products; hem length to avoid trip hazards; constrictions on breathing such as corsets.

# The Purpose of Costume Design

**Costume** is an important aspect of a production, as it helps to:

- ★ establish a **character**
- ★ create the **world of the play**
- ★ convey the **context** of the play
- ★ support the **style** of the production

## Creating the 'world of the play'

The world of the play is its cultural and historical context as well as the characters' situation and relationships. Old plays can be reinterpreted and their time/setting changed, according to the director's vision. Costume plays an important part in communicating this vision.

## Supporting the style

Costumes support the overall style of a production, along with the other design elements. If a production is naturalistic in style, then costumes should be realistic and recreate everyday life. However, a pantomime, which is far more theatrical, would feature grand and colourful costumes to support the overall style of the show.

## Establishing a character

As well as helping the audience to understand information about the character and the performance as a whole, performers can find it easier to 'become' their character once they try their costume on. Costumes can:

- ★ provide the audience with basic information about a character, such as their age, gender, occupation and economic and social background
- ★ reveal lots of information about a character's personality, e.g. a vain character might wear a flamboyant outfit to draw attention to themselves, while a shy character might wear plain clothes in dull colours
- ★ reveal information about a character's circumstances within the play, helping to tell their story, e.g. a character might begin the play wearing smart clothes but by the end of the play their costume might look creased and untidy to help communicate their journey and what they have experienced.

## Conveying the context of the play

Costumes can also convey the context of the play, including the time period and geographical setting, following fashions and styles that evolve from one decade to the next. Performers wearing dinner jackets, bow ties and top hats could suggest the historical setting of the piece before any dialogue is spoken. Through local cultural dress or references to the climate, costume design can also help to convey the geographical setting of a play