

FIDM MUSEUM
HISTORY GALLERY



BE A FASHION CURATOR

ACTIVITY BOOK

1ST EDITION
FIDM MUSEUM & GALLERIES

FUN WITH FASHION

Learning about fashion with the FIDM Museum Collection!

Bring a friend: One of the best ways to learn about fashion is to talk about it with friends and family.

Details matter: Make sure to zoom in and out of the photos to learn about what makes fashion spectacular!

Learn and create: Print these activity pages at home. Paint, draw, outline, and have fun while learning about fashion.



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GOWN

Great Britain, about 1765

Helen Larson Historic Fashion Collection FIDM Museum Purchase: Funds donated by the Costumer's Guild West, Inc.

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Let's take a look:

This gown dates to about 1765. It is around 250 years old! A woman in England wore it to fancy parties.



Gown fabric detail

Let's talk about it, and ask questions:

1. What do you think holds the gown out wide at the sides?
2. What kind of fabric is it made of?
3. Can you find the gold and silver thread in the detail photo?
4. Do you think it was made with a sewing machine?
5. Do you think you could fit through a door or walk down a hallway wearing this?
6. This gown is patterned with flowers. Do you like to wear flowers? What are your favorite flowers?

Answers!



Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2008.297a,b

1. Hoops tied around the waist under the skirt. Hoops were usually made out of cotton fabric and stiffened with metal, wood, or even whalebone strips.

Here is an example that dates to 1760-1770.

2. The fabric is mostly made out of silk. Did you know that silk comes from a type of caterpillar cocoon? The cocoon threads are collected by people, and then washed, dyed, and spun into thicker strands before being woven into fabric.

3. The silver thread makes short lines in the background of the fabric. The gold thread makes some of the flowers and the leaves. Lots of silver and gold meant the fabric was expensive to buy. This gown was worn when people used candles to light their houses (not electricity like today), and the metals in the fabric would shine in the candlelight.

4. The sewing machine was not used for making much clothing until almost 100 years after this gown was worn. Instead, this gown was sewn together entirely by hand—with a needle and silk thread. It took a long time to make.

5. Only you can answer this question! Pretend you are wearing the gown, and see! Today, most people would have to walk sideways to fit the wide skirt through a narrow door or hallway. But some houses in 1765 had wider doors and hallways, so it was not a problem then.

6. Share your answer with friends and family!

LET'S GET CREATIVE!

The gown is made from fabric with a flower design, which was popular for women's and men's clothes in 1765.

What fabric design would your gown have?

Draw the fabric you would like to wear using your favorite colors.



Illustration by Harriet Grant