

Grade 8 -- Informational

The Things People Put on Their Feet

Shoes—we wear them nearly every day. We walk, run, jump, climb, and stand in them for hours on end. Yet we hardly think about them because they are such an ordinary part of our daily lives.

Shoes were not always an important part of people's wardrobes. The ancient Greeks, Egyptians, and Persians made and wore sandals but went barefoot most of the time. These people lived in regions where the weather was temperate, and shoes were not needed to keep their feet warm. Archaeologists have found shoes in the ruins of these civilizations, but they seem to have been worn mainly by royalty, who could afford to employ tailors and shoemakers.

Sandals Were In

As shoes became more common in ancient Egypt, the first ones were simple sandals that were created mainly to protect the soles of the feet from rough surfaces. The easiest way to make shoes in these ancient times was to use materials that were handy. These included tree bark, leaves, and grasses. In ancient Egypt, sandals were made of rushes, grassy plants with hollow stalks. To this day, rushes are used to make chair bottoms, mats, and baskets.

Among the ancient Greeks, sandals were woven of similar plant materials, but the Greeks also made sandals by tying small pieces of wood together with dried grass. In later years, they made sandals with leather from the hides of animals. The first shoes were purely functional, but over time most shoes were dyed and decorated to make fashion statements. Women began to wear soft, enclosed leather shoes, and these grew increasingly fancy in the later years of the Greek civilization.

The Romans wore sandals much like the Greeks did but used more pieces of leather to make them. Some Roman sandals had straps that wrapped around the ankles. Shoemakers often dyed these sandals in bright colors that represented the different jobs held by the people wearing them. The patricians, or privileged classes, wore red sandals with moon-shaped ornaments on the back. Senators wore brown shoes with four black leather straps wound around the lower leg. Consuls, or legal officers, wore white shoes, and soldiers wore heavy leather sandals that were more like boots—but with bare toes!

Meanwhile, people who lived in cold northern climates were making their shoes from the hides of furry animals, such as polar bears and yaks. The soles and tops of these shoes were made from pieces of soft leather sewn together. This type of shoe—whether or not it used fur—was called a moccasin. Some Native American groups made and wore moccasins for thousands of years. Some moccasins were plain, and others were adorned with beadwork.

The Shoemaking Process

As the centuries passed, the primary material for shoes continued to be leather, and the process of making shoes did not change much. A wood and metal framework called a "last" was wrapped with pieces of leather that were then sewn together. As late as the mid-1800s, lasts were straight on both sides; this meant that there was no difference in shape between left and right shoes. It also meant that shoes were uncomfortable and that breaking them in was not easy. The lasts were made in different sizes, but for a long time only two widths were available—thin and stout.

For centuries, shoes were sewn by hand, just as they had been by the ancient Egyptians. Machines to assist shoemakers were not used until the rolling machine was invented in 1845.

This device was used to pound pieces of leather into thin strips. About the same time, Elias Howe invented the sewing machine, and pieces of shoe leather could now be sewn together more quickly. Another inventor, Lyman Reed Blake, created a machine for sewing the soles of shoes to the upper parts. Because shoes could be made faster and more cheaply, people who had never owned shoes before could now afford to buy and wear them.

New Trends, Materials, and Designs

In Europe and North America during the seventeenth century, most people wore boots because they were practical. Even in many large cities, dirt roads were common, and people had to walk along muddy pathways and across streams. By the eighteenth century, however, more city streets were paved with cobblestones, and it was easier to keep shoes clean. Shoes became more decorative, and fancy buckles of gold and silver were often used. Most shoes worn in the United States throughout the nineteenth century were patterned after European styles.

The major change in shoes over the last century has been the use of materials other than leather. Humphrey O'Sullivan invented the first rubber heel for shoes in 1898. Rubber heels were popular because they lasted much longer than heels made of leather. The use of rubber soles came next. The first rubber-soled shoes were called plimsolls, and they were manufactured in the United States in the late 1800s.

The first American nonleather shoes were invented in 1917. The upper material was made of a flexible canvas. These were the first "sneakers," a word that was used because the rubber sole made the shoe very quiet, unlike most leather shoes, which often squeaked when people walked.

Many people today choose athletic shoes for casual wear, but not until the late 1970s were shoes designed with amateur athletes in mind. Shoes made of rubber and canvas were worn by tennis, volleyball, and basketball players. By the 1980s, companies began to design athletic shoes for specific sports to help athletes perform better while protecting their feet and providing comfort.

Shoes have come a long way since the ancient Egyptians. Many more types of materials are used, and shoes have never been more comfortable or supportive for feet. Even so, it is interesting that the basic sandal, worn by people more than four thousand years ago, is still worn today and has not changed much over the years.

1) What does *temperate* mean? (LA.8.1.5.a)

- a) cold
- b) hot
- c) humid
- d) mild

2) What is a synonym for *patrician*? (LA.8.1.5.c)

- a) commoner
- b) servant
- c) slave
- d) wealthy

3) What is the meaning of the word **functional** in paragraph four. (LA.8.1.5.c)

- a) proven
- b) obvious
- c) useful
- d) worthless

4) What is the meaning of the root word **patricians** in paragraph five? (LA.8.1.5.a)

- a) family
- b) father
- c) fear
- d) money

5) What is the author's purpose in writing this passage? (LA.8.1.6.a)

- a) to inform
- b) to contrast
- c) to entertain
- d) to persuade

6) What might the color red symbolize in ancient Greek society? (LA.8.1.6.c)

- a) health
- b) passion
- c) violence
- d) wealth

7) What type of shoe was invented first? (LA.8.1.6.e)

- a) boot
- b) moccasin
- c) sandal
- d) sneaker

8) Why did shoes become more decorative in the eighteenth century? (LA.8.1.6.j)

- a) The upper material was made of flexible canvas.
- b) The primary material for shoes continued to be leather.
- c) The shoes were sewn by hand just as they had been by ancient Egyptians.
- d) The streets were paved with cobblestones so it was easier to keep shoes clean.

C4L Reading - Item Writing Tally Sheet

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Passage Name: The Things People Put on their Feet

Gr8 Vocabulary	DOK Level	DOK 1	DOK 2	DOK 3	Item Total
LA 8.1.5 Vocabulary: Students will build literary, general academic, and content specific grade level vocabulary.					
LA 8.1.5.a <i>Determine meaning of words through structural analysis, using knowledge of Greek, Latin, and Anglo-Saxon roots, prefixes, and suffixes to understand complex words, including words in science, mathematics, and social studies</i>	1, 2	1			1
LA 8.1.5.c <i>Select a context clue strategy to determine meaning of unknown word appropriate to text (e.g., restatement, example, gloss, annotations, sidebar)</i>	2		1		2
LA 8.1.5.d <i>Analyze semantic relationships (e.g., figurative language, connotations, subtle distinctions)</i>	2,3				1
Gr8 Comprehension	DOK Level	DOK 1	DOK 2	DOK 3	Item Total
LA 8.1.6 Comprehension: Students will extract and construct meaning using prior knowledge, applying text information, and monitoring comprehension while reading grade level text.					
LA 8.1.6.a <i>Analyze the meaning, reliability, and validity of the text considering author's purpose, perspective, and information from additional sources</i>	3				1
LA 8.1.6.c <i>Analyze author's use of literary devices (e.g., foreshadowing, personification, idiom, oxymoron, hyperbole, flashback, suspense, symbolism, irony, transitional devices)</i>	2, 3			1	1
LA 8.1.6.d <i>Summarize, analyze, and synthesize informational text using main idea and supporting details</i>	2, 3				
LA 8.1.6.e <i>Apply knowledge of organizational patterns found in informational text (e.g., sequence, description, cause and effect, compare / contrast, fact / opinion, proposition / support)</i>	2				1
LA 8.1.6.f <i>Analyze and evaluate information from text features (e.g., index, annotations, maps, charts, tables, graphs, headings, subheadings, lists)</i>	2, 3				

LA 8.1.6.g <i>Analyze and make inferences based on the characteristics of narrative and informational genres</i>	2, 3				
LA 8.1.6.j <i>Generate and/or answer literal, inferential, critical, and interpretive questions, analyzing and synthesizing prior knowledge, information from the text and additional sources, to support answers</i>	1, 2, 3		1		1