

Blue Jeans

"Jeans represent democracy in fashion."

—Giorgio Armani, fashion designer



Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. What is your favourite brand of jeans, and why?
2. How often do you wear jeans?
3. When or where are blue jeans inappropriate?
4. Why do so many people like wearing blue jeans?

B. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many words and meanings as you can.

Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| _____ 1. durability | a) to disallow or remove |
| _____ 2. patent | b) an act of resistance against authority |
| _____ 3. sturdy | c) strength |
| _____ 4. rebellion | d) togetherness |
| _____ 5. ban | e) a personal expression made through one's clothing |
| _____ 6. solidarity | f) to obtain a licence to the rights of one's unique invention |
| _____ 7. sloppy | g) loose |
| _____ 8. fashion statement | h) strong |
| _____ 9. designer | i) made by well-known fashion brands |
| _____ 10. baggy | j) unkept, not tidy |

Reading

1. Some people wear jeans because they think it makes them look cool. Others wear jeans for comfort or **durability**. Regardless of the reason, jeans, also known as denim*, are popular and fashionable around the world.
2. The first Americans to wear blue jeans were miners and ranchers in the West. In the 1860s, jeans were known as “waist overalls” and were made by Levi Strauss & Co. Levi Strauss was a German-born New Yorker who moved to California during the gold rush. In 1873, he partnered with Jacob Davis to **patent** pants with rivets. Rivets are the tiny metal buttons on the pocket seams of jeans. The purpose of the rivets is to make the seams **sturdier**.
3. During World War II, women wore denim overalls while working in factories. “Rosie the Riveter” was a song about a woman who did her part for the American war effort. Rosie became an icon who inspired women to work while the men were away. In posters and ads, Rosie was usually dressed in denim overalls.
4. In the 1950s, blue jeans were associated with **rebellion**. When schools began **banning** jeans, this style of pants became even more attractive to young people. Actor Marlon Brando sported jeans in *The Wild One*, while James Dean wore them in *Rebel Without a Cause*. At this time, the word jeans** became very popular. Nobody called these pants overalls anymore.
5. In the 1960s, wearing blue jeans was a sign of **solidarity** between America’s working class and middle class. The middle class wanted to show the government that they didn’t support the Vietnam War. Many college students also wore jeans while protesting.
6. In the ‘50s and ‘60s, American women were criticized for dressing **sloppily** if they wore jeans. In the 1970s, many women began wearing denim again. For some it was an act of rebellion. For others it was a **fashion statement**. Many different styles of jeans emerged, including flares and bell-bottoms.
7. The 1980s was the era of **designer** jeans. Since then, many fads have come and gone. Today, many designers have adopted an “anything goes” attitude. Jeans are designed for different genders, sizes, ages, body types, and purposes. While some people love wearing jeans that fit tightly to their bodies, others prefer **baggier** styles. Today’s jeans are also available in any colour imaginable. Styles and washes that went out of fashion have come back in.

*Note:

The word “denim” comes from the French town of de Nimes where jean material originated.

**Note:

The word “jeans” comes from Genoa, Italy, where sailors first wore indigo-dyed clothing.

Comprehension

A. Write Questions

Create your own comprehension questions about the reading using the following question words. Quiz a partner.

1. Who?

3. Where?

5. Why?

2. Who?

4. When?

6. How?

B. Timeline

Place the following in chronological order (1–8). One item is not mentioned in the reading. Place a star beside it and guess where it belongs.

- _____ Designer jeans became popular.
- _____ James Dean wore jeans in *Rebel Without a Cause*.
- _____ Rosie the Riveter inspired women to go to work.
- _____ Bell-bottom jeans became a popular '70s style.
- _____ Many men left America to battle overseas in World War II.
- _____ College students protested the Vietnam War in jeans.
- _____ Levi Strauss opened a business with his brothers in California.
- _____ Levis Strauss & Jacob Davis co-patented riveted trousers.

Vocabulary Review

Circle the error in each sentence below. Rewrite the sentence in your notebook to make it correct. Use the vocabulary on page 1 to help you.

1. Many workers enjoy wearing jeans because the material is sloppy.
2. In the 1980s, people all over the world were sporting designing jeans.
3. Jacob Davis and Levi Strauss worked together to ban riveted trousers.
4. James Dean and Marlon Brando were actors who were associated with rebellious.
5. My sister likes skinny jeans, but I prefer jeans that are bags.
6. He is making a fashion sentence with those '80s-style, acid-wash jeans.

Grammar Review

COMPARATIVE ADJECTIVES

More or **-er**? Write the correct answer from inside the brackets on the line to complete each sentence.

1. My new jeans are sturdy. They are _____ than my old pair.
(sturdier / more sturdy)
2. Your jeans are baggy. They are _____ than mine.
(more baggy / baggier)
3. Her sewing is getting sloppy. Her seams are _____ than they used to be.
(sloppier / more sloppy)
4. This brand makes clothes that are _____ than the other designers.
(durabler / more durable)
5. My old jeans are _____ than these ones.
(cozier / more cozy)
6. James Dean was _____ than Marlon Brando.
(cuter / more cute)

You Be the Designer

Work together with a partner or group to design a new kind of jeans. Your jeans can be traditional pants, shorts, a skirt, a jacket, etc. Add any **embellishments** that you please! Draw the jeans and describe them to your class. Whose jeans look the coolest/cutest/craziest/coziest?

Class Survey

MY KIND OF DENIM

Walk around your class and find out what kind of jeans your classmates prefer. Write their names in the chart under their answers.

Example Questions:

- Which type of leg opening do you prefer?
- What is your favourite style of waistline?
- Which fit do you find the most comfortable?
- Which do you like better, a button fly or a zipper?
- What is your favourite brand of jeans?

LEG OPENING					
boot-cut	bell-bottom	flare	straight	narrow	
FIT					
straight-leg	relaxed	skinny	baggy	carpenter	jegging <i>tight & stretchy</i>

Class Survey cont.

WAIST							
hipster <i>super low</i>		low-rise		mid-rise		high-rise	
WASH							
stone <i>vintage</i>	dark	light	black	white	grey	died <i>coloured</i>	acid
FLY							
button fly				zipper fly			
BRAND							