

Famous Things

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The Necktie

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The Necktie

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. Do most businessmen in your country wear neckties?
2. Is the bow tie popular in your country?
3. Do you know where the custom of wearing neckties originated?
4. When do you think men first started wearing neckties?
5. Have you ever seen a woman wearing a necktie?



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A necktie is a piece of cloth that is worn around the neck, usually by a man.

The modern necktie developed from the colorful scarves that soldiers in Croatia wore in the 1600s. When some Croatian soldiers were sent to France to fight in the Thirty Years War, the French were very impressed with the soldiers' neck scarves. King Louis XIV of France liked them so much that he started wearing one. Soon gentlemen all over France and the rest of Europe were wearing neck scarves.

King Charles of England was living in France at this time and when he returned to England in 1660, he introduced the neck scarf to Englishmen. Beginning in the late 1600s and throughout the 1700s, scarves were made out of fine lace imported from Belgium and Italy. Fashionable men in Europe and the United States wore lace at their neck, whether they were military leaders or gentlemen.

In the 1800s, leaders of men's fashion decided that lace was too fussy and men began to wear a simple white neck cloth instead. Even poor men could afford this fashion.

Since then, the neck scarf has gone through several changes. An American developed the shape of the modern necktie and the English were among the first to use color and patterns in their ties. Bow ties were created to be worn with tuxedos for formal wear.

Ties are now made in a rainbow of colors and patterns from many different types of material. Business suits and ties are worn by businessmen all over the world.

Women have worn ties in the past. They wore them during World War I when they worked in businesses and factories while men were off fighting. Today, not many women wear ties, but almost 80% of the ties sold in the United States are bought by women for men.

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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

A. True or False. Read the statements below. If the statement is true, write T beside the sentence. If it is false, write F. If it is false, correct the information.

1. The modern necktie developed from a 17th century Croatian custom. _____
2. The French started to copy the style of the Croatian soldiers. _____
3. In the 1700's, most fashionable European men wore lace scarves. _____
4. In the 1800's, only rich men wore neck scarves. _____
5. Nowadays, in the U.S., women buy more ties than men. _____

B. Practice asking and answering the following questions with your partner. Then write the answers in complete sentences.

1. How did men's neck scarves become popular in France? _____

2. Who introduced the neck scarf to England? _____

3. Who wore neck scarves in the 1700's? _____

4. What were neck scarves made out of at this time? _____

5. How did men's neck scarves change in the 1800's and why did this happen? _____

6. How has the neck scarf changed since the 1800's? _____

7. When did women wear neckties? _____

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VOCABULARY REVIEW

A. Choose the word(s) with the closest meaning to the underlined words in the following sentences.

- The French were very impressed with the Croatian soldiers' neck scarves.
a) angry b) influenced c) laughed at
- In the 1700's, scarves were made out of fine lace imported from Belgium.
a) sold b) made c) brought into the country
- Fashionable men wore lace scarves, whether they were military leaders or gentlemen.
a) army b) political c) presidents
- In the 1800's, leaders of men's fashion decided that lace was too fussy.
a) fancy b) plain c) expensive
- Even poor men could afford this fashion.
a) copy b) wear c) have enough money to pay for
- Bow ties were created to be worn with tuxedos for formal wear.
a) business suits b) casual suits c) fancy suits often worn at weddings
- Ties are now made in a rainbow of colors and patterns.
a) cool b) large variety c) half circle

B. Materials – Match the article with a common material used to make it. (Note: there may be more than one correct answer.)

- | | |
|------------------|------------|
| _____ 1. sweater | a) leather |
| _____ 2. shirt | b) lace |
| _____ 3. scarf | c) wool |
| _____ 4. shoes | d) denim |
| _____ 5. jeans | e) silk |
| _____ 6. collar | f) cotton |

