Teacher's Key

The Surprising Histories of Everyday Clothes: Jeans to Heels (Level B2)

Vocabulary Matching

1 originate = **N**
2 sturdy = **A**
3 patent = **H**
4 issue = **L**
5 rebellion = **G**
6 waterproof = **M**
7 impractical = **I**
8 coordinate = **E**
9 adopt = **D**
10 prestige = **O**
11 mercenary = **J**
12 unveil = **K**
13 sensation = **B**
14 scandalous = **C**
15 evolve = **F**

Fill in the Blank

1 originate
2 sturdy
3 patent
4 issue
5 rebellion
6 waterproof
7 impractical
8 coordinate
9 adopt
10 prestige
11 unveil
12 sensation
13 scandalous
14 evolve

True or False

1 **True.** Strauss sold him his cloth.
2 **False.** It says the name did not become common until about 1960.
3 **True.** They had short sleeves and a round neck.
4 **False.** James Dean wore one in that film.
5 **True.** Historians say it is impossible to know which was first.
6 **False.** Rain coats for officers had existed since the 1800s.
7 **True.** The real change came in World War I.
8 **False.** They were made mainly for women.
9 **True.** The museum says heeled footwear had been worn in Western Asia for hundreds of years.
10 **False.** They refused, so Louis Réard hired a dancer.

Language Focus: Past Perfect for Earlier Events

Example answer: By the time he wrote to Levi Strauss, Davis **had added** rivets to work pants.

Comprehension Questions: Model Answers

1 Jacob Davis, a tailor in Reno, added metal rivets to work pants and, with Levi Strauss, received a patent on May 20, 1873. Levi Strauss & Co. says the name jeans did not become common until about 1960; before that they were called waist overalls.

2 It began as a white cotton undershirt issued by the U.S. Navy in 1913 and was mostly worn under other clothes. American servicemen in the Pacific wore it as outerwear in World War II, and in the 1950s Marlon Brando (A Streetcar Named Desire, 1951) and James Dean (Rebel Without a Cause, 1955) made it a symbol of youthful rebellion.

3 Rain coats for officers had existed since the 1800s, so the coat was not invented for the war. During the war it took its modern shape, with shoulder straps and metal rings on the belt.

4 Both moved from earlier uses (rain coats; women's wrist watches) to military use in the World War I era and then to civilian use. Both were tied to the practical needs of officers and soldiers.

5 The Bata Shoe Museum says the exact origin remains to be discovered. It says heeled footwear had been worn in Western Asia for hundreds of years before Europe, and that it was linked to horseback riding because a heel helped keep the foot in the stirrup.

6 Around the turn of the 17th century European men adopted heels as a sign of power and prestige, and wore them for more than 130 years. In the 1700s heels fell out of men's fashion, and later they were associated mainly with women.

7 Cravat comes from the French word for Croatian, because French fashion in the 1650s copied the scarves of light cavalry in the Thirty Years' War. The modern necktie only appeared in the 19th century.

8 It was named after Bikini Atoll, where the United States had tested a nuclear weapon four days earlier. Réard hoped his swimsuit would cause a similar sensation, that is, a very large public reaction.

9 Examples: nobody can say whether Burberry or Aquascutum created the trench coat, and the exact origin of the high heel is unknown. Patterns: war appears again and again, and several items changed who wore them.

10 Not Given. The reading says both companies claim to have created it and nobody can say which came first.

11 No. The writer says war appears again and again in these stories but does not say fashion history is mostly about war.

12 To leave the reader with the idea that popular history is uncertain, and to model caution: even well-known stories may have no clear first inventor or origin.

Notes on the Evidence

- Sources checked (September 2026). Levi Strauss & Co., The History of Denim (fetched search excerpt: patent 139,121 granted 20 May 1873 to Strauss and Davis; company says the garments were called waist overalls or overalls until 1960 when baby boomers adopted jeans). History.com and a Deseret News report on Davis (Davis lacked the money for the patent fee and asked Strauss to fund it; Reno tailor). The Henry Ford museum, Tees-R-Us (1913 Navy undershirt; WWII servicemen in the Pacific wearing T-shirts as outerwear; Brando 1951 and Dean 1955). Smithsonian Magazine, The Classy Rise of the Trench Coat (excerpt: not exactly invented for the war; took its recognizable shape during it; rubberized macks from 1823; gabardine 1879). Wikipedia, Trench coat (Burberry and Aquascutum both claim it; optional purchase by officers; epaulettes and D-rings added in WWI). Bata Shoe Museum, Standing Tall, via Google Arts & Culture and other coverage (origin remains to be discovered; heeled footwear in Western Asia for hundreds of years; introduced to Western fashion around the turn of the 17th century; worn by men for over 130 years; fell out of men's fashion in the 18th century). Etymonline and NPR (cravat from French cravate; 1650s; OED first English use 1656; Louis XIV; necktie in the 19th century). HISTORY.com (bikini, 5 July 1946, Piscine Molitor, Micheline Bernardini, named after the Bikini Atoll test; Spain and Italy banned it and later relented). Most sources were read as excerpts, not full pages.
- Corrections to the earlier version. (1) Jeans: the earlier text implied that jeans was the usual name for decades; the company says waist overalls and overalls were used until about 1960. (2) T-shirt: kept the Navy 1913 date (The Henry Ford). One popular blog says the Navy issued buttonless undershirts in 1905; sources disagree, so the reading gives 1913 as the museum's date. The earlier claim that the shirt was 'light and breathable' and that sailors often worked in undershirts was not confirmed and was dropped. Dates for Brando vary (1950 and 1951 appear in popular sources; the film was released in 1951). (3) Trench coat: the earlier text said officers needed something lighter than wool greatcoats, which I did not confirm. The reading follows Smithsonian: rain coats existed earlier and the coat took its shape during WWI. (4) Wristwatch: the earlier text said that the change came in WWI. Sources describe earlier military use in the Boer War and a disputed claim that Girard-Perregaux made watches for the German Navy in 1880 (some call it a legend), so the reading mentions the Boer War and treats WWI as the main change. Most wristwatch sources are watch-industry blogs, not academic. (5) High heels: the earlier text said that, according to the Bata Shoe Museum, soldiers in Persia wore heeled boots as early as the 10th century. The museum's own online exhibition says the origin remains to be discovered and gives no century; secondary reports say 9th or 10th century. The reading does not give a century. The claim that Louis XIV's red heels were reserved for his court comes from popular accounts, and the museum's wording is that they signalled royal favor; the reading omits it. (6) Necktie: the earlier text said the modern necktie is traced to the 1600s; sources say the cravat dates from the 1650s and the modern necktie from the 19th century. Etymonline notes that cravate was a generic term for light cavalry from the Habsburg frontier, not only Croats. (7) Bikini: confirmed; the earlier text is accurate. Some popular sources give Bernardini's age as 18 or 19; the reading omits it. (8) Removed for length: sneakers (Keds 1916; the word sneakers already appeared in an 1887 Boston Journal quotation, so the popular attribution to a 1917 advertising writer is uncertain), cardigan, balaclava, Wellington boots, and Panama hat. These were not verified in this session. The earlier text also said 'twelve things'; the reading now covers seven items.
- Vocabulary and resources. The earlier list had 20 items; this one has 15. Kept from it: originate, patent, sturdy, waterproof, impractical, adopt, unveil, scandalous, evolve. Dropped: breathable, mass-produced, rival, disastrous, notorious, associate, modify, stability, aristocrat, misleading. Added: issue, rebellion, coordinate, prestige, mercenary, sensation. Sources kept from the earlier list: Levi Strauss & Co., Smithsonian, Bata Shoe Museum, HISTORY. Dropped because I did not open them: Encyclopedia.com T-shirt, Britannica sneakers, Wikipedia trench watch, Wordorigins, History Facts, Mental Floss. Added: The Henry Ford T-shirt page. The Korea-specific discussion question was removed, following the project rule.
- Caution. Some clothing histories are popularized by companies, museums, and blogs, and their claims are often repeated without independent checking. The reading marks the uncertain stories. The Hindi and Arabic translations have not been checked by a native speaker. Discussion question 6 refers to a swimsuit that was considered scandalous in 1946; this is historical and not about current dress.