

The surprising history of pink

1. Color associations

Discuss these questions with a partner.

- What feelings or ideas do you associate with the color pink? What about blue?
- In your culture, are certain colors considered "for boys" or "for girls"?
- Has this always been the case, or has it changed over time?

2. Key vocabulary

Match the words from the video with their definitions.

1. Survey	d. An investigation into the opinions of a group of people.
2. Dainty	e. Delicately small and pretty.
3. Symbolic	f. Representing an idea or quality.
4. Inauguration	h. A formal ceremony to mark the start of a public official's job.
5. Ballgown	a. A long, elegant dress for a formal event.
6. Complexion	b. The natural color and appearance of a person's skin.

7. **Arbitrary**

g. Based on random choice rather than a system or reason.

8. **Canny**

c. Clever and having good judgment.

3. Video: First watch

Watch the video for the first time and choose the correct answers to understand the main ideas.

- Before the 1950s, the color blue was sometimes suggested for...
 - boys
 - girls
 - both
- Who made pink a very popular color for women in the 1950s?
 - Diana Vreeland
 - Donna Mae Mims
 - Mamie Eisenhower
- What happened to the color pink after it became strongly associated with women?
 - It was only worn by traditional women.
 - It started to be used by women who wanted to challenge traditions.
 - It became unpopular.

[Watch the video on YouTube](#)

4. A closer look

Watch the video again and fill in the gaps with the exact words you hear.

1. In 1918, a catalogue suggested that little girls should all wear blue because it's a **delicate** and **dainty** color.
2. It was only after the war that pink got the **symbolic association** that we have today.
3. Mamie Eisenhower came out in an enormous **rhinestone-studded** pink ballgown.
4. She thought that the pink really brought out her **complexion**.
5. It was a very **arbitrary** decision that she just loved pink and everybody else decided this is the color that lady-like women wear.

5. Grammar focus: Past simple tense

We use the **Past Simple** to talk about completed actions, events, or situations in the past. The video uses it to describe historical events.

- Example: In 1953, Dwight Eisenhower **became** president.
- Example: Mamie Eisenhower **loved** the color pink.

Complete the sentences with the correct **Past Simple** form of the verb in brackets. These sentences retell parts of the story from the video.

1. A 1918 catalogue **suggested** (suggest) that girls should wear blue.
2. After World War II, many things in society **changed** (change).
3. Mamie Eisenhower **wore** (wear) a famous pink dress to her husband's inauguration.
4. She **gave** (give) quotes to newspapers about her life.
5. The movie *Funny Face* **included** (include) a song called "Think Pink."
6. Later, powerful women like Hillary Clinton **used** (use) the color to send a different message.

6. Useful phrases for describing trends

Study these phrases from the video that are useful for talking about history and social trends.

Introducing a time period:

- "In [year/the 1950s]..."
- "Around this time..."
- "It was only after [an event] that..."

Describing associations and changes:

- "...which colors they **associated with** girls..."
- "...pink got the **symbolic association** that we have today."
- "Pink **became a popular color**, not only in clothing..."
- "...you start to see the color pink **representing** women..."

Giving examples:

- "The champion racecar driver Donna Mae Mims is a **really good example of this**."
- "...**the likes of which** you never would've seen during the war."

7. Talking points: Colors and stereotypes

Discuss these questions with a partner. Use some of the vocabulary and phrases from the lesson.

1. After watching the video, has your opinion about the color pink changed at all?
2. The video shows how one influential person can change a cultural trend. Can you think of a modern example of a celebrity or public figure who has made something popular?

3. The video mentions Hillary Clinton wearing pink to "break the glass ceiling". What do you think this phrase means? How can clothing be used to make a political statement?
4. Do you think it's important for companies to avoid using gender stereotypes (like pink for girls, blue for boys) in toys and clothes for children? Why or why not?