

Gone with the Width: The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Silhouette

Victorian Fashion Teacher Resource Packet

Presented by **Rayma Volkmer**
Indian Creek Historical Fashions
Where History Comes to Life

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Gone with the Width: From Hoops to Bustles is an engaging and interactive living history program that explores the dramatic transformation of women’s fashion during the Victorian era.

Through a **live dressing demonstration**, students witness the evolution from wide crinolines to structured bustles—layer by layer—while discovering how fashion reflected society, identity, and expectations placed on women.

This program blends **history, culture, and visual storytelling**, making it both educational and unforgettable.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Understand the evolution of Victorian fashion from the 1860s–1890s
 - Explore how clothing reflected social roles and expectations
 - Examine the structure and function of historical garments
 - Analyze how fashion influenced movement, behavior, and identity
 - Develop historical perspective through visual and interactive learning
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CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

This program supports:

- U.S. History (19th Century)
- Women’s History
- Cultural & Social Studies
- Art & Design
- Sociology & Identity

- Critical Thinking & Observation Skills
 - Language Arts (discussion and reflection)
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PRE-PROGRAM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What does clothing say about a person or society?
 - How does fashion influence how we move or behave?
 - Why do styles change over time?
 - What might clothing communicate without words?
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KEY VOCABULARY

- Crinoline
 - Hoop Skirt
 - Bustle
 - Corset
 - Silhouette
 - Undergarments
 - Victorian Era
 - Dress Reform
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WHAT STUDENTS WILL EXPERIENCE

During the program, students will:

- Watch a live dressing demonstration from corset to outer gown
- See the dramatic shift from wide hoop skirts to back-focused bustles
- Learn how multiple layers shaped the final silhouette
- Understand how clothing affected movement and daily life

Students don't just hear about fashion—

They watch history take shape before their eyes.

POST-PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Writing Prompt

“Imagine wearing Victorian clothing for an entire day. What would be the most challenging part?”

Discussion Questions

- How did clothing reflect women’s roles in society?
 - What limitations did these garments create?
 - How is modern clothing different—and why?
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Creative Activity

- Design your own Victorian-inspired outfit
 - Sketch the evolution from hoop to bustle
 - Create a “fashion timeline” showing changes over time
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EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- Compare Victorian fashion to modern fashion trends
 - Research the dress reform movement
 - Explore how fashion relates to social change
 - Discuss how clothing communicates identity today
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WHY THIS PROGRAM MATTERS

Fashion is more than clothing—

It is a reflection of:

- Society
- Expectations
- Identity
- Power and limitation

This program helps students see history through a **completely different lens**.

INTERACTIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

This program is highly visual and participatory:

- Students may assist in the dressing demonstration
- Garments are explained in real time
- Questions and interaction are encouraged

This is learning students remember.

GRANT FUNDING INFORMATION

Funding May Be Available

This program may qualify for funding through Humanities Nebraska.


As a **Humanities Nebraska Scholar**, Rayma Volkmer provides programming that meets the standards for humanities-based educational experiences.

How to Apply:

1. Visit Humanities Nebraska
 2. Review available grant opportunities
 3. Submit an application
 4. Schedule your program upon approval
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Note for Educators

Many schools and organizations use grant funding to bring unique, high-quality educational experiences like this into their classrooms.

 Assistance and supporting documentation available upon request



BOOKING INFORMATION

Programs available for:

- School Assemblies
- Classroom Presentations
- Homeschool Groups
- Museum & Library Programs

Serving Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and surrounding regions.



CONTACT

Indian Creek Historical Fashions

Where History Comes to Life

- 👉 Contact to schedule your program
- 👉 Ask about curriculum support and grant funding

Email: victoriangal1971@gmail.com

Phone: 402-223-3309