The Importance Of Clothes In Ancient Egypt

In ancient Egypt, it was important for the people of the land to dress according to their climate and status. Linen was the chosen fabric as it was breathable and light, fitting for the desert heat. Each person dressed to what was suitable for their wealth category therefore there were distinct differences between the different groups

In Egypt, flax plants were grown on the edges of the Nile river and harvested by the poor people of the land. Flax is one of the oldest plants to be used to turn into clothing and is also one of the strongest fibres and was therefore suitable for the comfort of the rich and the practicality of working conditions for the poor. The flax was then turned into linen. Linen was used as it was light weight and kept the people cool during the hot weather. Their clothing was predominantly white however, other colours such as red, yellow and blue were used through the process of using natural pigments. Due to the extreme heat, people rarely wore shoes. If so, it was only done during special occasions. Due to leather and fur being an expensive product, the rich and pharaohs were the only ones that could make use of this where as the poor used plant fibres in order to protect their feet which was however, not as strong as leather

Both sexes were able to make use of a gown like garment, draped across the body and called a kalasiris. There was however distinct differences between the male and female wardrobe. The males in Egypt often wore little to no clothing. Men wore loose fitting skirts in which were tied at the waist and accompanied by a decorative belt, depending on their wealth and status. Men had a seductive way of dressing through the use of being bare chested and often wearing limited clothing

Women’s outfits were a lot more conservative than men consisting of one or two straps over the shoulder and sat just above the ankles. Outfits were rarely sewn and were more often than not dropped over the body and tied at a desirable position on the body. Much like Veblen’s theory states, the wealthy could afford not to work and would buy more jewellery than they needed as a way to show their status to the rest of the people. The more jewellery that the wealthy wore, the closer they would be to God as well as them being buried with their riches in sacred pyramids or tombs. James Laver breaks his theory into 3 sections and one being seduction. The use of transparent linen, dark makeup and exotic jewels contributed to a seductive factor in which the rich lived by. Women made use of natural pigments and henna for lipstick, nails, eyeliner and eyeshadow in order to give their face a more enhanced look. The poor women were however only able to wear a heavier linen, not as breathable as the transparent linen. It was however still suitable. Maslows hierarchy of needs states that basic needs are at the bottom and and self fulfilment is at the top. The rich people of the land were able to afford all the luxuries in life where as the poor were only able to afford their basic needs in order to survive. James Laver stated that clothing should be useful rather than attractive and it was therefore suitable and it is therefore sorely the reason that light and breathable fabric was used when creating garments. Despite not being able to afford expensive and sought after jewellery, they created their own necklaces and other good out of coloured pottery beads

Children in Egypt only began wearing clothing at the age of 6 and when they did, they wore the same clothing as their parents. Depending on their wealth status, they wore what was provided

for them. Wealthier kids were given high end and fashionable goods from the beginning where as poorer kids were supplied with a lower standard of clothing and other goods

Pharaohs in Egypt enjoyed showing their wealth off by wearing large crowns also known as ‘pschent’s’, decorated by the finest metals and jewels where as the poorer people in society focused more on contributing to society through the use of working and assisting the wealthy. In ancient Egypt there was most definitely a hierarchy system in which the people worked by and it was shown through the dress wear of the people

Although there was a large hierarchical system in ancient Egypt. It was crucial that each person wore the clothing fitting to their status and climate. It was important for people to understand their needs and wants for dressing on an every day occasion