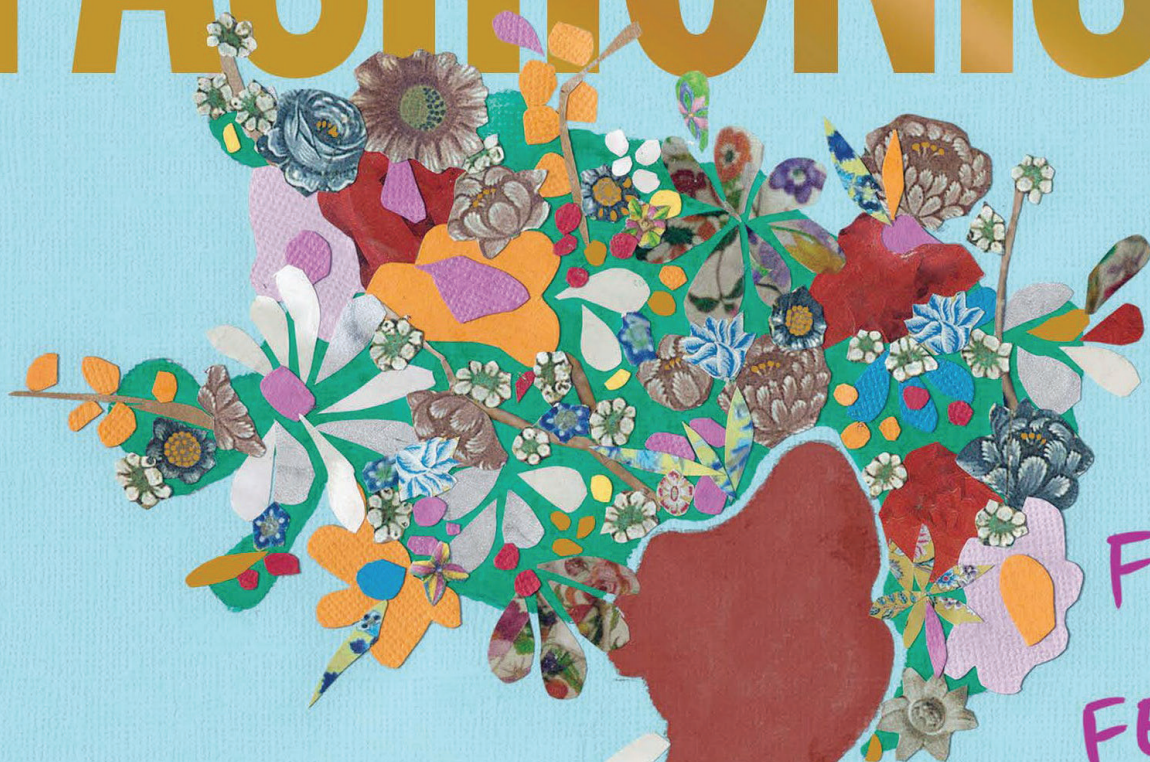


FASHIONISTA



*FASHION
your
FEELINGS*

*Written and
illustrated by*
**MAXINE
BENEBA
CLARKE**

WORK IT
WEAR IT
BELIEVE

TEACHERS RESOURCES

FASHIONISTA

Written and illustrated by

MAXINE BENEBA CLARKE

Teachers Resources by Murray Nance

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INTRODUCTION

Fashionista is a picture book from award-winning writer Maxine Beneba Clarke. The story is a celebration of self-expression through what we wear and how we wear it. Told in Maxine's lyrical style, this sing-song book is all about the power of expressing yourself.

The book is illustrated with artwork also by Maxine Beneba Clarke, who has made the vibrant images in the book using collages with cut-outs of paper and fabric, and watercolour paints and pencil.

AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

When I was a small child, I had a bright-red Mickey Mouse t-shirt. Whenever I wore it, it made me feel brave and bold, and like I could accomplish anything. When I was about sixteen, my mother gave me her wedding dress. It was very simple: white, ruffled, and free-falling with thin straps. She made it herself. I wore it out and about in the suburbs where we lived, as a casual summer dress. When I wore it, I felt beautiful, and as if I was carrying history with me while I walked. I felt extraordinary. No matter who or where we are, simple clothes, and the way we wear them, can say so much about us, and what we want to say to the world. Clothes can speak for us, when we cannot. Fashion is not just about expensive design clothes: fashion can be defiant, revolutionary, wild, compliant, challenging, or camouflaging.

THEMES

The primary theme covered in this book is 'Self-expression' and may relate to a number of curriculum areas.

SELF EXPRESSION

DISCUSSION: What is your favourite outfit to wear? Explain why.

DISCUSSION: Is it important to dress up? If you could dress up as any character, who would it be and why?

DISCUSSION: *Same/different*

Start a discussion around the question of 'Do you think people should dress the same?' using some of the following prompting questions to guide the discussion:

- What would happen if everyone dressed the same?
- How do you feel about school uniform? Explain your reasons.
- Do you think teachers should wear a uniform? Why/why not?

ACTIVITY: *Debate*

Organise a debate between student groups arguing for and against wearing school uniform.

DISCUSSION: Have you ever worn your pyjamas all day? Are some clothes only for certain occasions? Does it matter if you wear clothes for a different purpose?

DISCUSSION: What do you do with clothes you no longer fit or like? Have you ever bought something second-hand?

DISCUSSION: What is the oldest/most important item of clothing you have? What memories do you associate with it? How did wearing it make you feel?

ACTIVITY: *Outfit design*

Design your own personal outfit that best expresses your personality. Write a paragraph about why you chose those types of clothes and what they represent.

ACTIVITY: *Fashion show*

Think about clothes that you love. Bring in your favourite clothes from home and put on your own fashion show. Choose a song you love that expresses how you feel when you wear your clothes.

ACTIVITY: *Researching language*

Research what the word 'fashionista' means. What does 'haute couture' mean? What does 'avant garde' mean?

ACTIVITY: *Avant garde fashion*

Research the most interesting, unusual, or avant garde outfits designed. Discuss what you think they represent. Examples could include designs from Fashion Weeks in New York/London/Paris, celebrities attending the Met Gala, designs worn by Lady Gaga, or clothing designed by Gareth Pugh.

ACTIVITY: *Make-over*

Choose an outfit for a friend. Explain your choices and why you chose them. How does your friend feel about your choices?

DISCUSSION: Do you think choosing the clothes you wear is important? Why/why not?

ACTIVITY: Bring in photos of yourself with different hairstyles. Explain which is your favourite and why. Bring in photos of your parents with different hairstyles/fashion over time.

CURRICULUM TOPICS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE & LITERACY

ACTIVITY: Write a poem about your favourite hobby that uses rhyming words at the end of each line. Brainstorm a list of words that rhyme with each other before writing the poem.

ACTIVITY: Research onomatopoeia. Make a list of words that sound like their action or object. Some examples from the book include: 'mud-stomping', 'puddle-splash', 'boom' and 'chic-a-bam!'.

ACTIVITY: Research alliteration and examine examples in the book such as 'brave in bright brilliant blue hair: deliciously different, dramatic and daring', 'Bold Big Self', 'Ruby-Red dress'. Using a dictionary and student names as a starting point, brainstorm a list of words students could use to write a short sentence (e.g. Robert runs recklessly with rabbits, Becky bounces beautifully behind Brian.)

[Examples [here](#)]

ACTIVITY: Take a photo of yourself in your favourite outfit. Write a descriptive sentence about your look that uses alliteration.

ACTIVITY: Research idioms. How many of them do you know? What does "wear your heart on your sleeve" mean? Test them out on a partner. Extension: look up Cockney rhyming slang.

ACTIVITY: Work in small groups to create a short play that uses only clothes or costumes and miming actions, but no sound or dialogue. Your clothes or costume and actions should communicate what is happening on stage to the audience. Perform your play for the class. Watch an episode of Mr. Bean to examine how body language is used to tell a story.

CREATIVE ARTS

ACTIVITY: *Magazine cover*

Design and make your own magazine cover using pencils, pens or use coloured paper & magazines to create a collage. Include images of things important to you such as hobbies. You could think of a clever title that uses alliteration for your

magazine that uses your name (e.g. Matilda Monthly, Fashion with Fiona, etc).

ACTIVITY: *T-shirt design*

Design an original t-shirt using magazines to create a collage. Include words and images that represent things important to you. Use the t-shirt image below [[t-shirt outline](#)] or create your own.

ACTIVITY: Work with a partner or small group to design and make an outfit out of recycled material. Present it to the class and explain your inspiration. Take a photo of your creation.

DISCUSSION: In small groups, discuss thoughts on school uniform. Do you like it? Why/ why not? What would you change it to if you could?

ACTIVITY: Redesign an element of your school uniform. You could make it personal to you or redesign it completely.

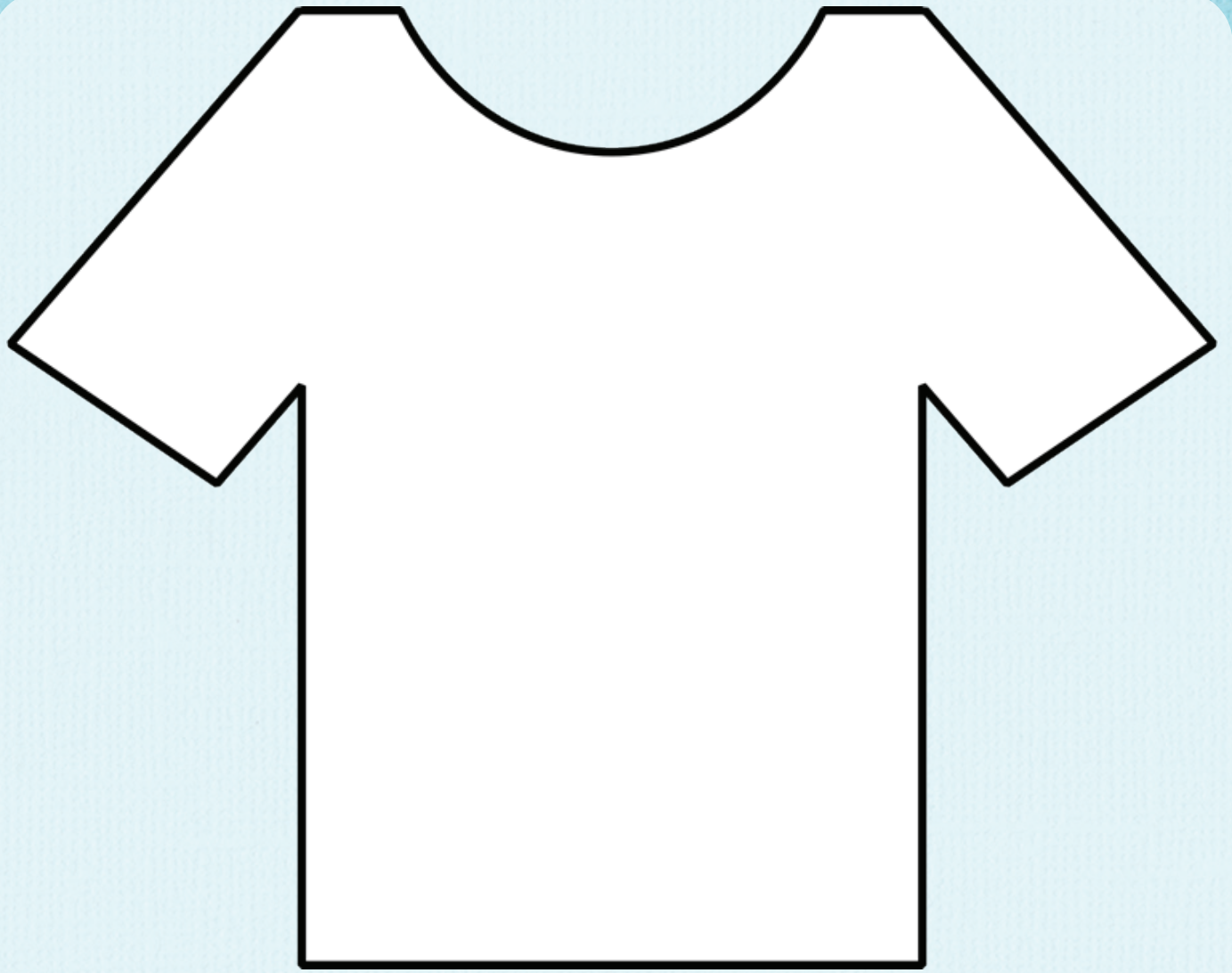
ACTIVITY: Research what the word “trend” means. Research some clothing trends that are current and some from different time periods (e.g. 50's, 70's, 80's, etc). Ask members of your family about trends they remember growing up. Make a timeline with different fashion trends.

DISCUSSION: Why do you think some trends seem funny or strange after they're no longer in trend?

ACTIVITY: Explore images created using negative space (e.g. google “Rubin's vase” for a classic example). Create your own artwork using the concept of negative space.

ACTIVITY: *Your personal style*

Put together a few different outfits from your clothes at home: what would you wear to: school, on the weekend, to a fancy restaurant, to a fancy dress party, to play sport. Take photos and explain what you love about your personal style.



Shirt image by Andrew Butko - [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:T-shirt_\(White\).svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:T-shirt_(White).svg)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

Maxine Beneba Clarke is a widely published Australian writer of Afro-Caribbean descent. Maxine's short fiction, non-fiction and poetry have been published in numerous publications including *Overland*, *The Age*, *Meanjin*, *The Saturday Paper* and *The Big Issue*. Her critically acclaimed short fiction collection *Foreign Soil* won the ABIA for Literary Fiction Book of the Year 2015 and the 2015 Indie Book Award for Debut Fiction, and was shortlisted for the Matt Richell Award for New Writing at the 2015 ABIA's and the 2015 Stella Prize. She was also named as one of the *Sydney Morning Herald's* Best Young Novelists for 2015. Maxine has published three poetry collections including *Carrying the World*, which won the Victorian Premier's Literary Award for Poetry 2017 and was shortlisted for the Colin Roderick Award. *The Hate Race*, a memoir about growing up black in Australia won the NSW Premier's Literary Award Multicultural NSW Award 2017 and was shortlisted for an ABIA, an Indie Award, the Victorian Premier's Literary Awards and Stella Prize. Maxine has written three books for children: *Fashionista*, *Wide Big World* and *The Patchwork Bike*, which was a CBCA Honour Book for 2017.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE NOTES

Murray Nance is a primary school teacher in Sydney, Australia. He has completed a Bachelor of Music (Honours) and a Bachelor of Education from the University of Western Sydney. He is passionate about literacy, the creative arts, technology, soundtracks, and is a fan of Doctor Who.