

Adornments

PEOPLE have been using adornment to enhance their beauty, to indicate their status, or signify cultural traditions for thousands of years. Over time some adornments have changed, but many have remained traditions. In this lesson you will learn about different types of adornments as well as adornments in different countries.



Objective:



Summarize adornments, and analyze adornments used in different cultures.

Key Terms:



acrylic nails

esthetic

piercing

adornments

hair extensions

scarification

body adornment

henna

turban

clothing adornment

lip plug

tattoo

Adornments

SUMMARIZE ADORNMENTS

Adonments are embellishments made to a person to enhance their beauty or to signify beliefs or status. The use of adornments has been happening for centuries.

Body Adornment

There many different types of body adornments including tattoos, piercings, hair styles, nail augmentation, and scarification. **Body adornment** is the modification of a person's body to

enhance beauty or define characteristics. A **tattoo** is a permanent design made by injecting ink into the skin. According to an article in Chron, men get full sleeve tattoos the most while women tend to get their tattoos on their hips. A **piercing** is a hole placed in the skin. The piercing is often kept open with the insertion of a piece of jewelry. Different hair styles can be used to adorn a person. Hair can be modified by having it cut, adding extensions, coloring, or adding a barrette or band. **Hair extensions** are additional hair (synthetic or real) attached to a person's hair.

The most common nail augmentation is painted finger or toe nails with nail polish. Acrylic nails are also common. **Acrylic nails** are an artificial nail made from combining powder and liquid chemicals that harden to form a solid which is placed over the real nail. **Scarification** is the cutting of skin to create marks in a decorative pattern. Scarification is most commonly used in African and Asian countries.



FIGURE 1. The most common nail augmentation is painted finger or toe nails with nail polish.

Clothing Adornment

Clothing adornment is the use of embellished garments to enhance beauty or to signify status or culture. Uniquely woven fabric, beads, and distinctively shaped garments are all examples of clothing adornment.

ANALYZE ADORNMENTS USED IN DIFFERENT CULTURES

Adornments have been used since the earliest of times. Archeological digs often uncover tombs of adorned deceased. An **archeological dig** is an excavation site purposed with discovering the history of the area. Art and storytelling often refer to adornment both on the body and clothing.



FURTHER EXPLORATION...

ONLINE CONNECTION:

What You Wear and Who You Are: A World of Choices

The types and use of adornments has changed over time. In the video What You Wear and Who You Are: A World of Choices, it shows shifting images of these changes. To learn more, access the video at <https://www.moadsf.org/wells-fargo-heritage-center-overview/adaptation/>

Africa

The people of Africa have been using adornments since before 4000 B.C. Red clay was used to cover their hair and paint designs on their skin. The use of red clay signified important events such as a successful hunt. White clay was used to create spiritual designs on the body. Scarification has also been used by Africans. The pattern and placement of the scarring signifies what tribe they are from, their status, or for esthetic purposes. **Esthetic** is an interpretation and appreciation of beauty. Clothing adornment has also been used by African people. Beads and elaborate headpieces have been found that are estimated to be over 50,000 years old.

Central and South America

South American countries such as Ecuador, Peru, and Chile have a rich history of using fabric with intricately woven patterns and bright colors. Beads, feather and metal beads were added to further adorn the traditional costumes. Early Central and South American communities such as the Maya, Aztec, and Inca people altered their teeth by either dyeing them, altering the shape, or creating holes. Lip plugs were used to change the shape of their mouth, stretching the lip. A **lip plug** is piece of wood or clay placed in a hole in the lip. Some would paint themselves with different colors to indicate status. Elite Aztec women would paint much of their body yellow.

India

Indian men and women have been practicing adornment for at least 4,000 years. The type and color of fabric and style of clothing can indicate status, region of origin, or religion. The traditional sari can be tied in different ways to communicate a person's place in society. Men often wear turbans which are sometimes adorned with jewelry. A **turban** is a long piece of cloth wound around the head to completely cover it. Indian women often wear jewelry in their hair, nose piercing, arms and toes. A married women of eastern India wears red mark, called a sindur, where the skin shows when she parts her hair. Henna has been used as a body adornment in India for centuries. **Henna** is a plant which produces a dye used to create elaborate designs on the skin.



FIGURE 2. Henna has been used as a body adornment in India for centuries.

Summary:



In this E-unit you learned about different types of adornments as well as adornments in different countries. And now that you have learned that people have been using adornment to enhance their beauty, to indicate their status, or signify cultural traditions for thousands of years you are more aware of its history. Lastly, you have learned that adornments continue to change over time, while some remain traditions.

Checking Your Knowledge:



1. What does the term adornment mean?
2. What are some types of body adornments?
3. How is a tattoo made?
4. How long have people been using adornments?
5. What is henna?

Expanding Your Knowledge:



Why do you think people have used adornments? Why do you think certain cultures use specific types of adornments today? Can you think of different types of adornments that people you know use?

Web Links:



Adornment, Personal Ornamentation, and the Construction of Identity: A Global Archaeological Perspective

<https://core.tdar.org/collection/65007/adornment-personal-ornamentation-and-the-construction-of-identity-a-global-archaeological-perspective>

‘Art of Adornment’ display tells part of the human

<https://www.centredaily.com/entertainment/this-weekend/article42848985.html>

What Is Body Adornment?

<https://www.reference.com/world-view/body-adornment-e470146bca5b59a9>