**Career: Fashion Designers**

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If you spend endless hours poring through fashion magazines or putting together your own new looks, you may want to consider a career in fashion design. Using their flair for color and style, designers create trendy new fashions as well as practical garments, such as sportswear. Fashion design is also a labor of love, requiring long hours and little chance of superstardom -- but for many, the work itself is the reward.

Fashion designers use flair and know-how to create everything from hospital uniforms to the eye-popping outfits worn by rock stars and models.

**“Fashion is architecture.”** Coco Chanel

**Are You Ready To...?**

* Invent new designs
* Choose fabrics
* Attend fashion shows
* Collaborate with a team
* Keep up with trends
* Work hard to build a career and keep it

**It Helps To Be...**

Full of drive and ambition: the glamorous allure of the fashion world draws a lot of competition. You’ll also need to have the talent and the artistic vision to back it up.

**Make High School Count**

* Study art. It will help you develop the eye for color, design, and proportion that you’ll need.
* Sign up for home ec and learn how to sew.
* Sharpen your math skills: measurement and proportion are fundamental to good design.
* Try your hand at costuming by working on the school play.

**Did You Know?**

Fashion came into its own when Elias Howe invented the sewing machine in 1846, making it possible to reproduce garments cheaply and rapidly.

**Outlook**

The number of jobs for fashion designers between 2010 and 2020 should see little or no change, according to government economists. Jobs in design firms and for self-employed designers will likely grow. Jobs in clothing manufacturing, however, should decline rapidly.

Expect a lot of competition when looking for work since this is a glamorous career and relatively few positions will be available. You’ll have better chances with a formal education in fashion design, experience in the field, and a strong portfolio. You should also be willing to move because most of the salaried jobs are in New York and California.

**Compensation**

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports an average annual income of $73,930 for fashion designers in 2011.

**EDUCATION**

You'll need at least an associate's degree to become a fashion designer.

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