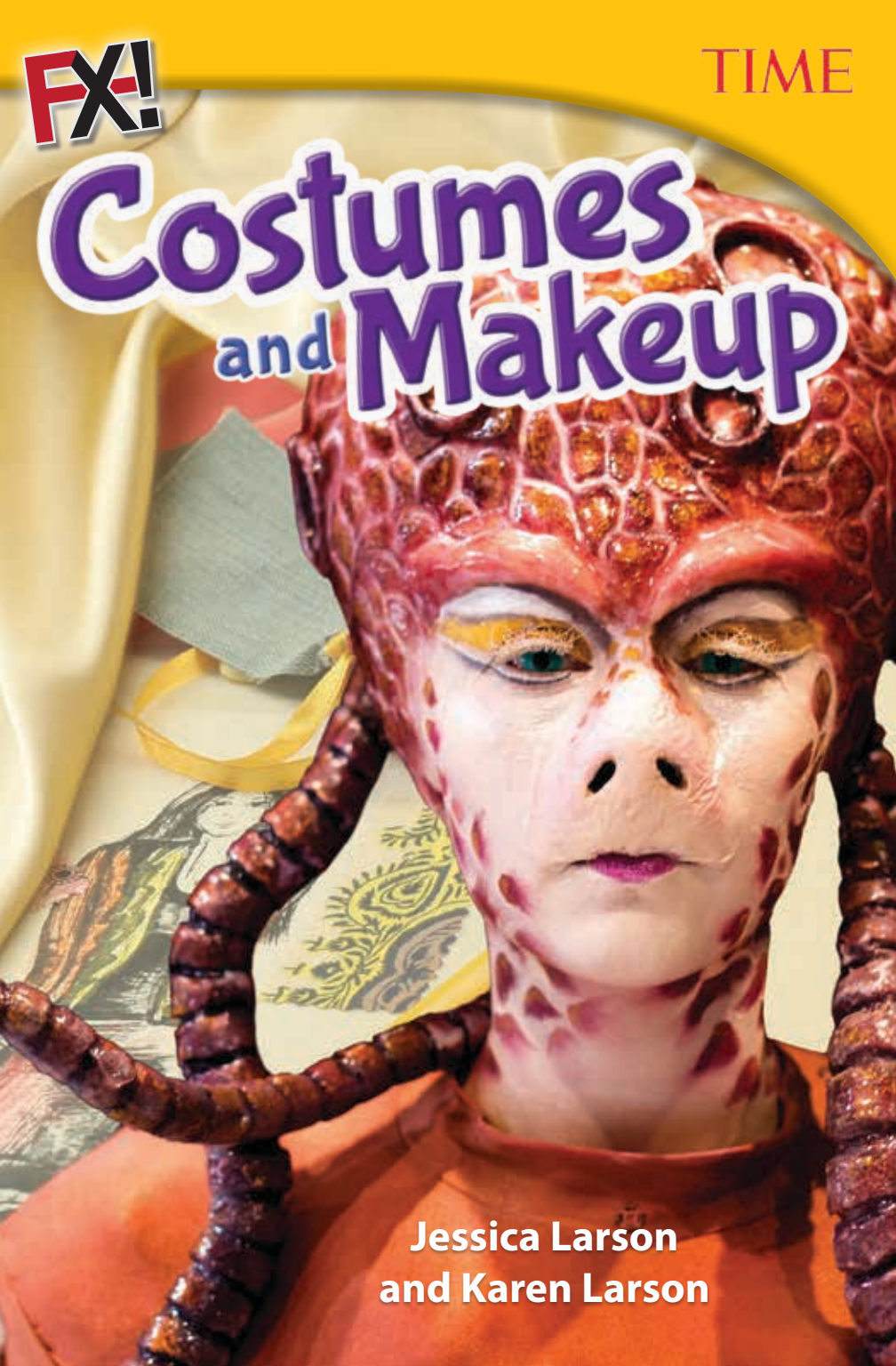
FX!

TIME

Costumes and Makeup



Jessica Larson
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Behind the Curtain

For teachers' inspection ONLY

"Costumes are the first impression that you have of the character."—Colleen Atwood (Academy Award®-winning costume designer)

When you join a theater audience, you are invited into a new world. The lights are dimmed, the stage is set, and the actors deliver their performances. On stage, there are always invisible hands at play—**artisans** who have done their work long before the actors say their first lines. These talented people help you to fall fully into the world of the play with their precise hands, careful research, and creative ideas.

Costume designers and makeup artists have the exciting task of bringing characters to life. The costumes give audiences a better sense of who the characters are. Similarly, makeup artists transform actors into glamorous characters or hideous creatures.

Now, picture a scene from your favorite play. How do the costumes and makeup help convey the story? In what ways do the costume designers' and makeup artists' choices **enhance** your understanding of the characters?

Step behind the curtain to discover how costumes are created from start to finish and how makeup enhances the characters and storyline.

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In the Spotlight

The Phantom of the Opera is the longest-running Broadway show with more than 11,000 performances. Stage costumes need to be able to endure long performance runs and quick changes. Designers must keep this in mind when crafting a costume for the stage.

Lights! Camera! Action!

With the introduction of film came the close-up. Costume pieces in movies have to be much more detailed and historically accurate to maintain the **suspension of disbelief** for the movie-going audience.

Costuming History

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Theatrical performances date back to the ancient Greeks in 700 BC. Theater (also spelled *theatre*) comes from the Greek word *theatron*, meaning "a place for viewing." They developed out of religious **rituals**. Each town had an outdoor theater, and thousands of people showed up for performances. All actors were men, and the costumes were everyday clothing. The audience would know the character's gender, age, and even social status by the clothes he wore. Costumes and masks have played an important part of the storytelling process ever since.

Ancient Greek Theater

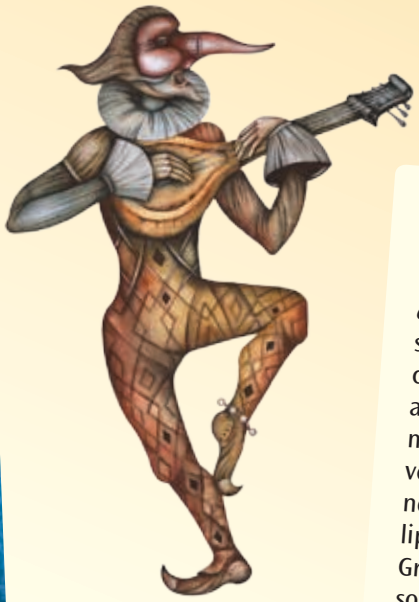


Ancient Greek Theater

Knee-length **tunics** were worn for male characters, while female characters wore longer robes with pieces of cloth draped over their shoulders. When playing women, men wore **body stockings** designed to imitate the female figure. Each performer dressed for his part. Actors playing strangers wore colorful costumes, tragic characters wore tall boots, high-class characters wore platform shoes, and comedic actors wore plain socks.

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Commedia Dell'Arte



Commedia dell'Arte

In sixteenth century Italy, ***commedia dell'arte*** was in full swing. There were six types of characters in this theatrical style, and each character had its own mask and costume. The masks had very strong **features**, such as pointy noses, thin mustaches, or plump lips. The costumes, like those of the Greeks, told about the characters' social statuses and personalities.



Masks in Theater

The comedy and tragedy masks we associate with theater came from Greek mythology. Japanese *Noh* drama uses painted and carved wood masks to portray 60 different characters. During the Renaissance, performers wore masks to entertain the royal court. Masks continue to be used in modern theater and throughout world cultures.

For teachers' inspection ONLY

Kabuki Theater



Kabuki Theater

Kabuki theater began in Japan in the seventeenth century with women performing all roles. In later years, male actors took over. They wore face makeup and costumes specific to their character types. The colors and lines on an actor's painted face tell the audience who he is. The face, neck, and hands are painted white with red lines around the eyes and lips. Other colored lines are added if the character is a villain or a hero. Each character also has a special type of wig. Traditional **embroidered** silk kimonos with an **obi** are worn with long pants that trail behind the actors.

No Sweat

Most Kabuki costumes are thrown away after the run of the play because the actors' sweat has ruined them.

For teachers' inspection ONLY

Elizabethan Theater

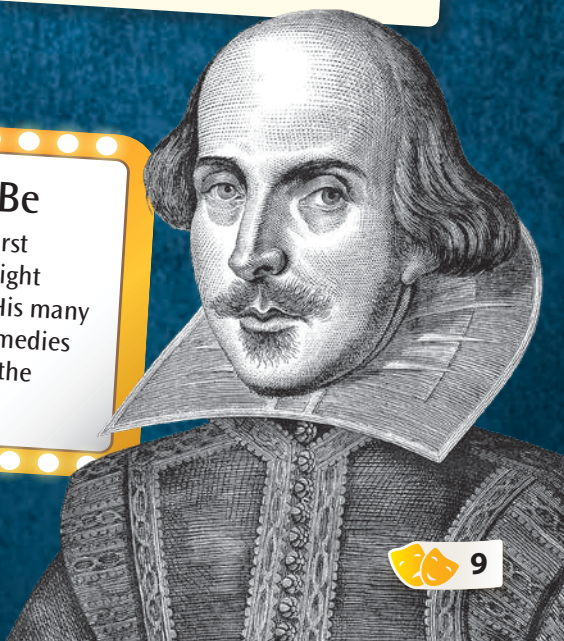


Elizabethan Theater

In Elizabethan times (1558–1603), only men acted in plays. A costume for a female character included a **corset**, stockings, **pantalets** and underskirt, a gown, a full skirt dress, a high collar, and tie-on sleeves. A male character wore a shirt, stockings, a corset, **britches**, a well-fitted coat with tie-on sleeves, a high collar, a **cravat**, an overcoat, a cape, and a hat. The costume usually weighed more than the person who wore it! Makeup of a white face, red cheeks, and a blonde wig would turn a boy actor into a young woman. If two characters wore the same makeup and wig, they were twins!

To Be or Not To Be

William Shakespeare was first an actor and then a playwright during Elizabethan times. His many histories, tragedies, and comedies are still performed all over the world.



Reader's Guide

For teachers' inspection ONLY

1. What clothing and makeup trends from the past have been repeated in modern times?
2. How can lighting affect makeup and costume design?
3. What are some ways you can begin building a portfolio to become a costume designer or makeup artist?
4. What skills are important for designers to have to do their jobs well?

