

# ELIZABETH KECKLY: FASHIONING A PUBLIC IMAGE

## TEACHER TOOL 4: GUIDE FOR THE PDF SLIDE SHOW

Use this document as your guide as you share the PDF slide show with your class.

Slide Number	Featuring	Suggested Discussion Questions, Notes, and Activities
2	<p>Winslow Homer's <i>A Visit from the Old Mistress</i></p> <p>This piece of art is currently in the Smithsonian.</p>	<p>What do you see in this picture?</p> <p>How is the clothing of the women alike and different?</p> <p>What can we learn about these women from their clothing?</p> <p>What kinds of work they do, social roles, class or status?</p> <p>What is fashion? Take a few definitions and then provide a dictionary definition.</p>
3	<p><i>The Dandy Slave: A Figure in Baltimore, Maryland</i></p> <p>This is a sketch of an enslaved person and his mistress in Baltimore, Maryland.</p>	<p>Describe the clothing you see in the picture?</p> <p>Who is more fashionable?</p> <p>What does the picture tell us about the relationship between the two people?</p> <p>What does the clothing tell us?</p> <p>Is the man dressed like you imagine enslaved people to dress?</p> <p><i>The male is an urban slave and has been hired out by his mistress to work as a waiter on steamboats or in hotels; he had to give most of his earnings to his mistress, but he could keep some of his wages. Because slaves in cities generally had more independence and had access to money, they could acquire finer and more fashionable clothes than slaves in rural areas who were at the mercy of their owners for their clothing allotments.</i></p>
4	<p><i>Group of Contraband at Follers House, Cumberland, VA</i></p> <p>This image presents a group of enslaved people during the Civil War.</p>	<p>Using the information provided in <b>Teacher Tool 3</b>, discuss the topic of the clothing of enslaved and poor people compared with that of wealthier people.</p> <p>Ask students to describe the fashion elements or cultural elements they see in the clothing (i.e. the head wraps are African influenced).</p>

		After students describe the garments they see in the pictures, ask them to notice small differences in the personal clothing styles of the people in these pictures.
5	<p><i>The Servant of the Douglas Family: Woman of Color in Tignon</i></p> <p>This image presents a woman with elegant head wrap.</p>	<p>This picture exemplifies the kind of elegant fashion statement African Americans made with their head wraps and other head adornments.</p>
6	<p><i>Negro family representing five generations on Smith's Plantation, Beaufort, S.C.</i></p> <p>This is an image of a family portrait of a group of enslaved people in South Carolina.</p>	<p>What does the clothing tell us about the people and the conditions under which they lived?</p> <p><i>Plantation field slaves were usually given limited fabric from which to make clothing because fabric was costly; the used, tattered condition of these garments reflects that fabric for slave clothing was rationed on plantations and used by slaves until it was worn and "raggedy."</i></p>
7	<p><i>Domestic Slave with Planter's Family, Virginia ca. 1859-64</i></p> <p>Portrait of a white family with a young enslaved girl who is a caretaker for the family's baby.</p>	<p>Ask students to consider why house slaves were better dressed than those who worked in the fields?</p> <p><i>House slaves often had close personal and even blood relationships with the family and were given "hand-me-downs;" poorly attired house slaves could reflect poorly on their owners; the higher the slave's status, the more access they had to resources, including cloth or money for clothes and other goods. Enslaved people who worked in the "big house" were generally better-dressed than those who toiled in the fields all day.</i></p>
8	<p><i>Madam Elizabeth Keckley</i></p> <p>and</p> <p><i>Portrait of Mary Todd Lincoln</i></p> <p>These are images of Elizabeth Keckly and Mary Todd Lincoln, wife of President Abraham Lincoln.</p>	<p><i>Do not tell the students the identities of these two women.</i></p> <p>Ask students to look at the two women and describe the women and their dress. What is similar? What is different?</p> <p>What is their social status? Are they wealthy? Ask them how they can tell?</p> <p>Ask them if they think one of these women could have been a slave? Could one of these ladies have been the First Lady of the United States? Who's who?</p>

		<i>Note: The woman on the left is Elizabeth Keckly.* She has a white father and black mother. She is very well-dressed. The woman on the right is Mary Todd Lincoln, the first lady of the United States. Mrs. Keckly was a former slave and was Mrs. Lincoln's dress designer and confidante.</i>
9	<p><i>Madam Elizabeth Keckley</i></p> <p>Elizabeth Keckly: Fashioning a Public Image</p>	<p>Use the information in <b>Teacher Tool 1</b> or what you learned from reading selections from <i>Behind the Scenes</i> to provide an overview of Keckly's life and her rise from enslaved seamstress to major figure in the fashion industry of her day and personal fashion designer and confidante to Mary Todd Lincoln.</p> <p>Why do you think Mrs. Lincoln wanted a personal dress designer?</p> <p>If you worked hard to buy your freedom, would you try to help others?</p> <p>What are some jobs people do now to help others look good? Do you know someone who has this kind of job? Have they ever told you about helping someone famous?</p> <p>How would you feel if you were a famous person and you allowed someone into your private life and they wrote a "tell-all" book about the details of your life and personal letters you wrote to them?</p>
10	<p><i>Mrs. Abraham Lincoln</i></p> <p>Mary Todd Lincoln is wearing a dress designed by Elizabeth Keckly.</p>	For this slide and the next, use the information provided in <b>Teacher Tool 2</b> to discuss antebellum fashion in America.
11	<i>Gown made by Elizabeth Keckley for Mary Todd Lincoln, about 1864</i>	

\*Elizabeth Keckly's name is being spelled as she spelled it without the second "e." This is not the most common spelling of her name, however scholars advise the use of her own spelling of her name. In this document where the titles of images are presented, Keckly's name is spelled as it appears in the original title, which usually includes the second "e."

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