

Read and listen.

Clothes crimes

Clothes can be comfortable and casual, smart and fashionable, or colourful and eccentric. That's fine, but beware if what you're wearing is too different or daring. When Lady Gaga wore a dress that was made of raw meat to the MTV Music Awards in 2010, many people were horrified. Clothes, it seems, can still provoke a very strong reaction.

There are many historical examples of clothes which have attracted the attention of the law. The inventor of the top hat, for example, was arrested in London in 1797 for wearing 'a tall structure calculated to frighten timid people'. People screamed and panicked when they saw it.

Women have also caused controversy with their clothes. In 1926, the actress Marlene Dietrich wore a man's suit and tie with a matching hat in Paris. She was warned that her clothes were causing offence.



Trousers weren't accepted as women's clothing until the 1960s, but today they are worn by women in most countries. Miniskirts caused similar shock waves in the sixties because some people thought they were 'immoral'.



You may think that people are more open-minded

now, but that isn't always true. The latest clothes 'criminals' are teenagers. In Britain, young people wearing hoodies aren't allowed to go into some shopping centres because hoodies are sometimes worn by criminals who want to hide their faces.

Many people think that this is unfair. They argue that hoodies are practical clothes that aren't only used by criminals, and it's irresponsible to persecute people who like wearing them.

In the United States, it was baggy jeans which caused a problem. Lots of young people started wearing baggy jeans which showed their underwear – an 'outrage' which was made illegal in some American towns. This probably wasn't because the jeans were indecent or unusual, but because some people thought that showing your underwear was typical of the disrespectful nature of some teenagers.

Maybe the day will come when people are judged on what they do and not on the clothes that they wear.