Before You Read

How much do you know about Coco Chanel?

Reading

An Icon of Style—Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel

Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel was born in France in 1883. Chanel had a poor life when she was little. Her mother washed clothes for others and her father sold things on the street. They were not married, so when Chanel's mother died, her father sent her and her two sisters to a children's home.

During the time in the children's home, Chanel became very good at sewing. Two of her lovers helped her open the first store in 1910. They also helped her hats become popular with rich women. Her career grew once theater actress Gabrielle Dorziat wore her hats in a play in 1912. Interestingly, her name "Coco" came from another job. She was once a singer and was called "Coco" in the club.

In 1913, Chanel opened another store and she started selling clothes for leisure and sport. Chanel rose to become Paris' top fashion designer in the 1920s. Her comfortable, yet elegant clothes were popular across Europe. Women felt free when they wore her clothes. Many of her clothes are still fashionable today like the Little Black dress, the Breton top and two-color shoes. And her perfume, Chanel No. 5, is still loved by many people now.

Chanel's designs broke a gender barrier, too. For example, in Chanel's time only men could wear pants. Because of her, it is okay for women to wear pants now. Everything Chanel did was different from the past. She changed the lives of women through her magic design.

icon 偶像　France 法國　sew 縫紉　leisure 休閒　elegant 優雅的 perfume 香水　gender barrier 性別阻礙

＊Adapted from Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel

(en.islcollective.com and famouspeoplelessons.com)

After You Read

1. Write True or False based on the reading.

(**F**) Chanel came from a rich family. Her parents took good care of her.

(**T**) Chanel was a hat designer first. Later, she started to design clothes.

(**F**) Women loved Chanel's clothes because her clothes were expensive.

(**T**) Thanks to Chanel, woman now have more choices when wearing clothes.

2. If you have a chance to design clothes, what changes will you make? Please show us the design below.