

## **APRON STRINGS**

**Note to teachers:** This supplement includes a discussion guide, lessons and Michigan Content Standards to use with the Michigan Time Traveler page. You may reproduce the pages in this supplement to use with students.

### **DISCUSSION GUIDE**

*(SOC.1.1. Time and Chronology; SOC.1.2. Understanding the Past; SOC 1.3. Analyze and Interpret the Past; ELA.1. Meaning and Communication in Context)*

- **What Is an Apron?** What is the meaning of the word “apron” as it refers to a piece of clothing? Describe some aprons you’ve seen or worn. Use the dictionary to find and discuss other meanings of apron as a part of home construction, a stage and an airport.
- **Who Wears Aprons?** Why do aprons sometimes bring back memories? Name some occupations that had specific kinds of aprons. Think about your community. Name some stores or restaurants where people wear aprons. Can you describe the aprons (style, color, company logo).
- **Michigan on an Apron.** What was important about aprons in Rhonda Marvin’s life when she was young? Is there an apron story in your family? What would you put on an apron if you made one? What would you look for if you wanted to buy an apron?
- **Aprons in History.** What were some reasons people wore aprons during the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the United States? What are some of the reasons they stopped wearing aprons as often or at all?

### **ACTIVITY ONE: Influences on Clothing Styles**

*(SOC.1.1. Time and Chronology; SOC.1.2. Understanding the Past)*

Discuss the time line of changes in apron styles on the Michigan Time Traveler page. What important historical events in 20<sup>th</sup> century America had an influence on clothing styles? Generate a list and make a time line of the events to post in the classroom. These events can provide discussion starters:

- Woman suffrage (ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment in 1920)
- Availability of moderate-priced automobiles to the general public (1915-1929)
- Stock market crash and Great Depression, 1929-1941
- Rock and roll music; popularity of television, 1950s
- The peace movement, “flower children” and the folk music of the 1960s
- National Organization for Women (NOW) formed at the Third National Conference of the Commission on the Status of Women, 1966; the women’s movement (feminism)
- Title IX of the Educational Amendments Act of 1972 (schools and colleges that accept federal funds must provide athletic opportunities for women)
- Wars: WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam

## **ACTIVITY TWO: A Career in Aprons?**

*(CES.2. Career Planning)*

Can you have a career in aprons? Well, not exactly, but a person who finds aprons interesting might be someone who enjoys working with textiles and fabrics. Some are artists who design fabrics for clothing. Others are scientists who create stronger or softer or easier-to-care-for fabrics. Still others study and teach about the role of clothing in history.

Ask students to suggest careers that involve working with fabrics, fashion or its history. Perhaps they will mention retail jobs in department and clothing stores or in fabric shops. List their suggestions on the board. Suggest these for the list as needed: fashion and costume designer, wardrobe stylist for stage, screen and TV productions; textile and fiber engineer; textile chemist; textile designer, illustrator or stylist; textile librarian; textile researcher; textile or apparel manager; fashion advertiser or journalist; museum curator, conservator of textiles or conservation technician; textile machine operator; tailor, dressmaker or sewer; interior designer; upholsterer; laundry or dry cleaning worker.

Ask groups of 2-3 students to choose one of the careers, research it at the library and/or on the Web and complete the handout (page 4). Older students might also investigate salary or wages typical for the occupation.

Ask students to find newspaper or magazine articles about the career or a person who works in it and classified ads for employment in the job (if available in your community). If employment in the career is available locally, suggest that they interview someone who works in it. Ask students to present an oral report about the career to the rest of the class, using the answers on the handout and any other information or visuals they have located. (Note: The *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Web site has a search feature that lets users search for career information using key words such as textile or fashion. It is available at [www.bls.gov/oco/](http://www.bls.gov/oco/).)

## **ACTIVITY THREE: Design an Apron**

*(ART.2. Visual Arts)*

Discuss the different styles of aprons shown on the Michigan Time Traveler page and on the Apron Strings Web site ([www.michiganhistory.org/aprons.html](http://www.michiganhistory.org/aprons.html)). Which aprons have a historical look, use an interesting combination of fabrics, patterns or prints, or make a statement? Aprons are made for many reasons beyond protecting clothing. Cancer survivors have made aprons as therapy. Artists make aprons into pieces of art. Tourist attractions sell specially designed aprons to visitors who want a souvenir. Ask students to design an apron. Use the handout (page 4) or let students draw their own full or half-apron style. After the students finish, ask them to present their designs to the class with an explanation of the choices they made in designing it.

## **ACTIVITY FOUR: Say “Cheese!” Is the photo candid or posed?**

*(SOC 1.3. Analyze and Interpret the Past)*

Look at the lumbering-era photograph of men on a wanigan. Discuss whether this was a candid (natural, informal or spontaneous) or a posed shot. Are the aprons clean or dirty? What about the counters and the floor? Have these men just finished baking the pan of rolls? (Is the pan hot? How is the man holding it?) Look at other photographs in the newspaper. Which are candid and which are posed? How can you tell?

## Career Exploration Worksheet

1. Job title: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Describe the job. \_\_\_\_\_

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3. List the job's tasks or responsibilities. \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What are the working conditions? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. People who do this job usually have these interests and abilities: \_\_\_\_\_

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6. What education, training or certification is necessary to be hired for this job? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. What would you like about this job if you had it? \_\_\_\_\_

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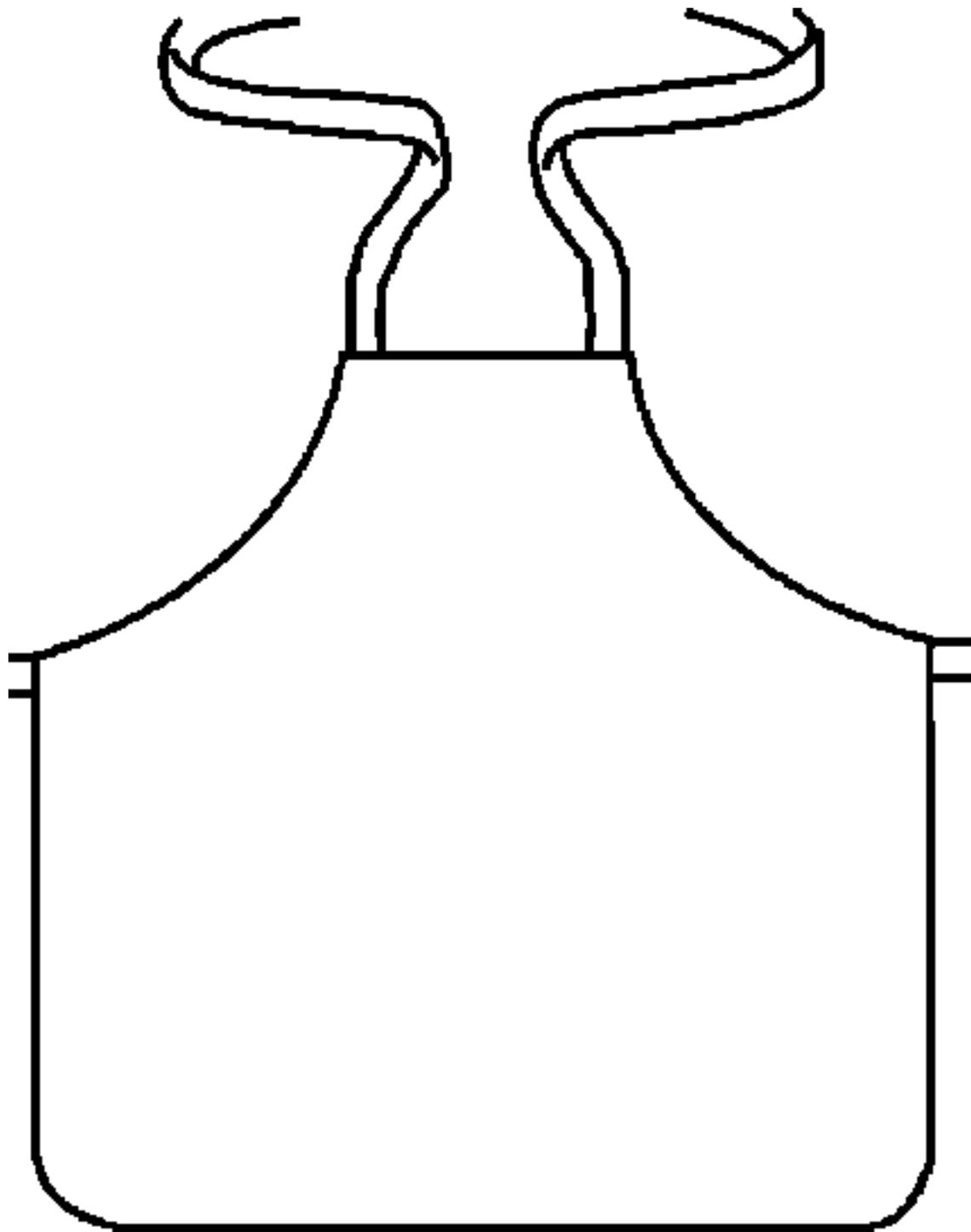
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8. What would you not like about this job if you had it? \_\_\_\_\_

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Design: \_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_