Hands On Learning
with Reading Museum Service

FIFTEENTH CENTURY LORD AND LADY H43/A

The clothing of the upper classes in the fifteenth century was grand and sumptuous. Rich, colourful materials were used to make gowns, headdresses and accessories, which were often decorated with jewels and trimmed with fur.

Lady

This lady is wearing her hair in two buns over her ears and has a headdress covering the buns, which is called a Templer. These were beautifully decorated and made in various shapes such as boxes, cones and pyramids. A veil was sometimes worn and made to stick out at the sides with wire.



In the fifteenth century gowns for men and women were the same shape and gathered in at the waist with a belt decorated with jewels and beads. The fur collar on the lady's gown gives an extra touch of extravagance.

Ideas of what was a fashionable body shape changed during different periods of time. In the fifteenth century gowns like this were designed to emphasise the stomach below the high-waisted belt. They would turn back their long, wide sleeves to the elbow so that they could show off the rich fabric of the lining.

It was also fashionable for women to wear pointed shoes. This woman has brown pointed shoes poking out from under her gown. The skirts were often so long that they needed to be lifted up so they didn't drag in the mud!

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Lord

This lord's gown is made of a silky black material with a dramatic bright lining. The waist is gathered with a belt and the neck is decorated with gold thread. Like the lady, his sleeves are very wide so that he can show off the rich materials of the lining.

His black, velvet hat has a long tail, known as a liripipe, draped over one shoulder. Sometimes the liripipe would be wrapped around the head several times like a turban.

His boots are pointed. Towards the end of the fifteenth century the fashion changed and shoes became more rounded at the toe.

