

Quadrant II – Notes

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Unit 2: Understanding Categories, Styles and Production Methods of Fashion Accessories

Module Name: Brief history, common style, components, materials and production methods (Handbags)

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Notes :

A Brief History of Handbags

Handbags are probably the oldest accessory. As far back as 38,000 B.C.E., early humans used pouches to carry around food and tools. The very first handbag style was probably the drawstring purse, which was worn on a belt by both men and women. The drawstring purse was popular in ancient Rome and was still being used during the Renaissance 1,000 years later.

From Pocket to Purse

Before the handbag, there was the pocket. Both men and women carried small items in the pockets but with one big difference: women's pockets were separate from their clothing. These "pockets" were actually small bags that were worn tied around the waist to hang under the skirts. Since women's skirts were big, bulky and multi-layered, it was pretty easy to hide little bags of stuff under them. This practice was common all the way up to the 1700s.

When dress styles became simpler and slimmer at the end of the 1700s, women could no longer wear their pockets under their skirts. Instead, they began carrying them around as

small bags. This was known as the reticule, also the indispensable. These earliest handbags were used to carry items like a fan, perfume, face powder and visiting cards.

And it was an absolute scandal. For centuries, women's pockets were hidden away. They were worn under clothing, which technically made them undergarments. The first women to carry their pockets publicly where people could see them were daring and scandalous, the feminists of their day who broke with common convention, according to the Women's Museum of California.

Despite all the tongue-flapping and eyebrow-raising, handbags caught on. Now, they're considered to be a truly essential part of women's fashion, just as indispensable as those very first handbags.

Handbag

Handbag, shoulder bag, clutch bag, purse, tote, backpack...there are a lot of different types of bags used to carry stuff around. So what makes a handbag a handbag and what's the difference between a handbag and a purse? By strict definition, a handbag is a bag that is held in the hand or hung from a shoulder strap that is used for carrying money and personal items, according to Merriam-Webster. Collins gives the handbag a bit of a looser definition, defining it as a small bag that's used to carry items.

A purse is defined as a bag with straps that can be worn over the shoulder. Originally, purses were simply small pouches used to hold money. In this sense, a purse could also be called a wallet. But by the rules of fashion, the two words are pretty much interchangeable. In fact, the worse "purse" is becoming more and more outdated. Now, it's acceptable to refer to just about any bag used to hold money and personal items as a handbag, whether it's worn as a shoulder bag or carried by hand.

Different Types of Handbags

Go to the handbag section of any department store and you could be surrounded by dozens and dozens of very different-looking bags. Handbags are made in all kinds of different styles, colors and sizes. However, there are some standard types of handbags that have specific, defining style features.

Accordion Handbag

The accordion handbag has a long or short strap so it can be carried by hand or worn as a shoulder bag, depending on the design. The length of the strap and the size of the bag vary because the real feature of the accordion bag is the expandable sides. Accordion handbags are made with sides that have extra material, so they can expand to hold more items as needed and look smaller when fewer items are inside.

Backpack Purse

As the name suggests, the backpack purse is little more than a smallish backpack. Due to the fact that it is one of the larger handbags on our list, this is definitely a casual-only kind of bag. Still, few backpack purses are large enough to actually be used as a standard backpack.

Style - That said, there are a number of high-end designers who seem interested in challenging the idea that large and loose is meant for casual wear. At the same time, the backpack purse is a fairly common choice for athletic wear as well due to convenience and size. Backpack purses are available in just about any color, style and size you can imagine. There are several variations of the backpack purse.

Variations - The **daypack** is marketed as a hiking backpack that's somewhat smaller in size than a standard backpack. Daypacks typically have a streamlined style with several compartments of varying sizes. They have a somewhat elongated, slim style. The haversack is distinct for its one-strap style. Haversack styles are commonly used in the military. This is why the haversack can also be called a **field bag** or a **field pack**. When it's made for style, the haversack is often called a **sling bag** because of its one-strap shoulder bag design. A **knapsack** is a traditional backpack that's big enough to hold books and other supplies. A knapsack or backpack can also be called a **rucksack**. This large style can be used as a laptop bag, too. The **randoseru** is the backpack used by Japanese schoolchildren. These bags cost a great deal of money because they're meant to last through all six years of primary school. They are typically made of leather or synthetic leather. Girls usually carry red randoseru and boys carry black, according to Urban Dictionary. These bags are very sturdy and stiff. They have a very sleek, simple design on the outside and many different compartments and sleeves inside.

Baguette Bag

The baguette bag came to fame in the late 1990s and was truly the original “It” bag that every woman had to have. The baguette bag owes its place in fashion fame to one person: Carrie Bradshaw. The iconic main character of “Sex & the City” carried the Fendi baguette bag on the show and the bag suddenly became the only handbag that mattered in the entire world.

Style - The baguette bag is a slender, tapered handbag that, yes, resembles the French bread that inspired this bag’s name. It’s a small bag with a short handle and a flap closure that is now a legendary part of fashion history.

Barrel Bag

The barrel bag is a practical handbag that is long and barrel-shaped. It’s carried either with a short handle or a shoulder-length strap. Barrel bags are great for travel, according to Catwalk Yourself. The barrel bag and the baguette bag are often confused for one another, though the baguette bag is meant to lay flat. The barrel bag is obviously cylindrical in shape and is also generally a bit larger than a baguette bag. This bag will also often have slightly longer straps to allow for a better drop and to accommodate the occasional foray into the medium-size category. This bag can be dressy or casual, depending on the specific design and size.

Basket Bag

The basket bag, which may also be called a **straw bag**, was made famous in the 1970s when it was frequently seen on the arm of Jane Birkin. She was photographed multiple times with her basket handbag, which soon became the height of trendy fashion. But before it was a hot fashion item in the modern era, it was carried around by people living in the ancient era.

History - Basket-making is one of humanity’s oldest art forms. There is always a practical need to carry items and store things. Weaving reeds and other plant materials was only natural, as ancient people found ways to use all the materials available to them. Soon, basket-weaving became so refined that ancient people could create watertight baskets. Baskets were still widely in use until the medieval era. They continue to remain in use as small accessories throughout the Renaissance. However, it wasn’t until the modern era that they became an inspiration for handbag styles.

Style - Basket bags are made in a variety of styles and sizes. The important thing is that they are woven. Basket bags may have a handle or a strap, depending on the design.

Modern Fashion - Handbags might be the most perfect accessory, but the industry sees little reason for being creative with their names. In this instance, the basket bag often looks like a basket with a firm bottom and sides that can stand up on their own. These bags will regularly be a bit on the larger side, but their crisp lines allow them to be worn with a wide variety of different clothing styles. All the same, the basket bag is best suited for a slightly more casual look, though the setting and size can give you some leeway to experiment. This is a great everyday bag for when you're running errands or shopping.

Bermuda Bag

The Bermuda bag is a round-shaped bag that has a wooden handle and removable cloth covers. The phrase first came into use in 1960, according to Merriam-Webster. The Bermuda bag is a smaller bag that's easy to carry and made in all sorts of colors and patterns. The bag was highly popular in the 1980s and has now become a retro classic.

Boston Bag

From the 1860s to the 1890s, the Boston bag was a must-have for every fashionable woman who lived in the city. This was the bag of the Bostonian female.

Style - The Boston bag is about one foot high and one foot wide. It has a flat bottom and short handles. A strap closure keeps the bag secure. Often, the bag is made of leather.

Bowling Bag

The Prada bowling bag handbag was a bit of a catch-on design. Though unveiled in 2000, the bag didn't actually gain trendy status until a few years later. Clearly inspired by the bowling bag styles of the 1960s that were used to carry actual bowling balls, this high-end bag was made with a sleek, curving shape. When it caught on, the bowling bag handbag really caught on. This is now a fashion classic that's still very much in style.

Box Clutch

Though technically not a clutch bag, the box clutch is a very trendy look. This handbag is styled to literally be a small, rectangular box. The box clutch has a lot of structure and unlike classic clutch styles, has a small handle. Really, the box clutch looks like a mini briefcase.

History - Though the box clutch is totally on trend today, this handbag has been around for quite a while. The box clutch dates to around the 1950s when it was carried by all the stylish ladies of the day. You can see none other than Grace Kelly, the future Princess herself, carrying one in the 1954 movie "Rear Window," according to Allure.

Bucket Bag

The bucket bag is a perfect choice when you need a roomy, everyday bag that's still stylish. Louis Vuitton created the bucket bag, though it wasn't originally a handbag. Vuitton was a luggage maker and the bucket bag was meant to carry champagne bottles safely during travel. The first bucket bag could hold five bottles. The bucket bag has been made by many designers in many sizes and styles since.

Style - The bucket bag is fairly similar to the basket bag except its base is generally round instead of rectangular. On top of that, the bucket bag is often taller than it is broad, but the sides are not as firm as with other self-standing bags. The bucket bag is also known for its drawstring closure as well as a longer strap with short handles. In this way, it is a bit like a cross between a bowling bag and a basket bag. Generally, this bag is worn with casual wear, especially with a Bohemian look.

Canteen Bag

The canteen bag or canteen purse is a small, usually round handbag with a long shoulder strap that's designed to resemble a canteen or flask. These bags are structured to maintain their shape. Canteen bags became incredibly trendy in the late 2010s and they're still a stylish, casual shoulder bag that looks great.

Carpet Bag

The carpet bag or carpetbag is a fad handbag that was inspired by another trendy new invention: the railroad. As the railroad began to connect the country in the 1840s and 1850s, carpet bags swept the nation as a practical piece of luggage for traveling.

History - Saddle makers began making carpetbags, so named because they were literally made from old pieces of carpeting. By the 1860s, everyone carried carpet bags while traveling. The bags were so well-known as luggage that it gave rise to the term "carpetbagger," which

referred to out-of-towners who were visiting a new place, usually somewhere in the southern U.S.

Crossbody Bag

The crossbody bag is a very stylish accessory that's perfect for any casual day out. This style has been worn by the trendiest celebs and it has appeared on countless runways but the design is actually centuries old.

History - Small bags made of cloth or leather fabric were worn across the body back in the 1600s by both men and women. The design became more refined in the 1700s. Back then, these bags were known as utility bags because they were often used to hold small tools or mail.

Style - Crossbody bags in the modern era are typically small, streamlined designs with long straps that are worn across the body to rest on the hip. Crossbody bags are sold in all colors, styles and sizes. Crossbody bag styles have become popular for men, too. Inspired by the fanny pack styles of the 1980s, new men's crossbody bags are small pouches worn on a strap that goes across the shoulder.

Clutch

The clutch bag is one of the most recognizable handbags in the fashion world. This small, slim bag is the accessory of choice for evening wear. And though clutch bags are associated with high fashion and elegant modern style, the origins of this handbag go back a long, long way.

History - The clutch purse is a direct ancestor of the reticule, the first purse that was carried by women as a handbag and visible fashion accessory. The reticule was hot in Victorian fashion but faded from popular use as more modern handbag styles developed. The clutch came back into fashion in a big way during WWII, when everyone was downsizing in all aspects of their lives. The clutch became the most fashionable evening accessory for stylish women. It has become so synonymous with formal wear, the clutch may also be known simply as an evening bag.

Style - There are few handbags that are as distinctive as the clutch or as versatile. The clutch is also one of the few handbags that are often designed without a strap, forcing the wearer to hold the bag in their hands, hence the name. Clutch handbags are simple rectangular bags

that are made in a huge array of colors and patterns to match evening gowns. Clutches can be customized and custom-made to perfectly match a specific dress.

Variations - There are several types of clutch bags. The size of the clutch is pretty standard, with most designed to be somewhat small and flat. But the way the clutch opens and closes varies between different designs. Snap closure clutches that look like large change purses are common but it's the **envelope clutch** you've probably seen most often. This clutch is named because it's designed to look like a large envelope, with a flap closure that comes down over the front of the design and snaps closed. The **kiss lock clutch** is distinct for its closure, not its style. Kiss lock clutch bags can be just about any size. They may be structured or slouchy. But they all have an opening that is supported by a long bar that runs the length of the opening. In the middle of each of the two bars that come together to close the bag is a protruding piece of metal that ends in a small ball. The two balls snap together to create the kiss lock that gives this bag its name.

Doctor's Bag

The doctor's bag is perhaps best known for being a truly functional bag for doctors, but fashion designers have adopted this look to turn it into high style. The doctor's bag is also known as the **gladstone bag**, named for UK Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone. He carried this style of bag often.

Style - The gladstone bag has an instantly-recognizable shape and it's typically made of leather. The gladstone is another handbag that is taken directly from a more practical bag and adapted for fashion purposes. These are good-sized bags with a flat bottom that can hold a lot of items. This bag generally features short handles and a firm bottom that allows the bag to stand upright. The rigid frame and metal clasp closure allow this larger bag to work with dressier looks. If you want a stylish leather bag, a gladstone is a great choice.

Drawstring Bag

The drawstring bag has a simple design. This is a sacklike bag with a drawstring closure and one or two carrying straps or handles. Drawstring bags are made with cloth and the design is so simple and so useful, this design dates to at least ancient Egypt.

History - Ancient Egyptians carried drawstring bags as little pouches around their waists. The design continued to be popular through the middle ages and Renaissance.

Modern Style - Drawstring bags became popular again in the 1920s and again in the 1950s. Drawstring bags have never totally faded from fashion and today, they're made in a huge variety of colors, patterns and sizes.

Duffel Bag

The duffel bag is a classic travel sidekick but in smaller sizes, it's also a super cute handbag. Duffel bags are shaped like cylinders and they're designed to hold a lot of items. Usually, duffel bags have both carry handles and a shoulder strap. The duffel bag can also be spelled as duffle bag.

Style - The duffle bag generally has rounded ends and a longer strap to balance out its roomier capacity. While the most common type of duffle bag is larger, making it better suited for casual and athletic wear, there are some smaller silhouettes and expensive designer styles available as well. Still, this is rarely a bag you wear with a dressy outfit.

Fanny Pack

The fanny pack is perhaps the most famous — rather, infamous — bag of them all. This much-maligned fashion accessory has been worn by both men and women and, despite its reputation for being a total fashion flop, it's still around. Whether it's been re-branded as a **belt bag** or a **waist bag**, whether you wear it like a crossbody bag or snap it around your waist, the fanny pack is an instantly recognizable and iconic style element.

History - An Australian designer is credited with inventing the fanny pack, or belt bag, in 1962, though she called it the **bumbag**. In UK English, "bum" is a slang word that means the same thing as "fanny" in American English. Her design was inspired by kangaroos, who have those convenient pouches right on their tummies. The fanny pack actually probably dates to the 1950s, where it came to fame as a popular accessory for skiers. Then, it was known as a **stomach bag**. But the fanny pack really hit its stride and its legendary fashion status in the 1980s. This is the decade when suddenly, everybody had a fanny pack.

Style - The fanny pack design is incredibly simple. It's a small, zippered pouch on a wide single strap that is adjustable. The strap securely locks together to stay in place. The fanny pack has been worn and marketed as a perfect accessory for athletes and anyone on the go, as it's a convenient and easily-accessible place to store essentials safely. Many, many celebrities, stars and style mavens have worn the fanny pack. And yet, this bag's reputation as a fashion faux

pas has been going strong since it faded from the style trend scene in the late 1990s. It's unknown whether or not the fanny pack will ever overcome its reputation as a really bad bag idea.

Flap Bag

Famous fashion designer Chanel was the first to introduce the flap bag, one of fashion's most recognizable handbags. The flap bag has been redesigned by many other labels and it's a style that's definitely here to stay.

History - The flap bag was introduced by Coco Chanel in 1955 with a design that is now very widely known. It's a small bag that has a large front flap closure and a shoulder strap made with a chain. The first bag was the 2.55, named for its launch date in February 1955. The flap bag has been re-released in new designs by Chanel several times, but the sleek, rectangular design, small size, chain strap and flap closure are still the hallmarks of this bag.

Frame Bag

Frame bag styles were widely used in the Renaissance, with many bags in the 1400s being made with metal frames that have fabric or leather over them. Frame bags became less common as handbag techniques developed but history shows that these bags will come back again and again.

History - Frame bags became popular again in the 1800s. Embroidered and beaded bags were all the rage at this time and the frame allowed the intricate designs to be displayed beautifully. The frame was found again in bags made in the early 1900s, this time when mesh bags and velvet bags became trendy accessories.

Style - Frame bags have returned to the modern style scene. A supportive framework can keep a purse upright even when it's sitting on an unstable surface, like a bed or couch. This is a perfect bag to carry if you're worried about placing your bag somewhere it may fall over on its side. The frame bag's trapezoidal shape is somewhat unique and provides straight lines to provide for both business and casual wear. This is another bag that often eschews the shoulder strap for a smarter, handled design.

Foldover Bag

Also known as the folder purse, the foldover bag is a larger bag style that's characterized by the ability to fold down. These bags are made in tall styles with soft cloth or leather so they can be folded down. Foldover bags are made in a huge variety of sizes and styles, but the foldable top is always the same.

Half Moon Bag

The half moon bag is distinct for its shape. This bag is shaped like a half-circle or a half moon. The curve is usually at the bottom of the bag, with a zipper closure on the long side at the top. The half moon bag has a shoulder strap in most designs. This design can be a leather bag or a fabric bag.

Hat Box

Hat boxes are a piece of luggage used to transport hats, something that's needed less and less these days because people so rarely wear the type of hats that require a special box. However, because hat boxes are available from a number of luxury luggage makers and made in such a huge variety of designs, they are sometimes used as a large handbag. Usually round in shape, hat boxes are a fun, sort of quirky purse alternative.

Hobo Bag

The hobo bag has been a part of the fashion world for almost a century. It has an instantly recognizable profile, a large bag with a wide center opening and handles that are made with the same material as the rest of the bag in a continuous design. And while the name and the slouchy style of the bag make it perfect for casual wear, hobo bags have also gone couture.

High Fashion - Countless designers have created their own very high-end hobo bags, selling them at enormous designer prices. This is part of the reason that term "hobo bag" itself, and yes even the fashion of the bags themselves, has sparked some controversy in the fashion world. There are very few handbags that can be accused of having a dark history, sparking a debate or being offensive in any way...but the hobo bag is surrounded by scandal.

Controversial Bag - It's not really the design of the hobo bag that's a problem. It's just a large, casual bag that's easy to carry that can be made in a huge variety of materials, colors, patterns

and designs. But the bag's name and those who inspired it continue to spark controversy and debate in the fashion world. The word "hobo" was used to describe migrant workers who traveled from town to town in search of seasonal work. They often rode freight trains to get around the country, moving from place to place. They carried a few belongings with them in large pieces of cloth tied into bags, or simple cloth sacks that could be easily transported. Yes, they were casual, unstructured bags with simple, improvised handles. It inspired a fashion trend in 1936 when the first hobo bags were invented. The country was coming out of the Great Depression and hobos were a huge part of daily culture. Writers like John Steinbeck wrote about them and people felt inspired by their seemingly devil-may-care, transient lifestyle.

In more recent years, however, the term "hobo" and the roots of the bag have been called into question. There is actually nothing glamorous or glorious about the homeless lifestyle, detractors say, and naming expensive handbags after hobos is not an homage in any sense. As Vogue points out, a hobo bag can be accurately defined as a "homeless person bag." Some point out that the popularity of the hobo bag as a high-end luxury item is part of a larger problem in fashion that seems to celebrate the homeless look. Selling incredibly expensive fashion that's modeled to look like clothing and accessories worn by people living on the streets doesn't feel like an homage. To some, it feels mocking.

There have been many cries from designers and fashion devotees to change the name of the hobo bag. But in spite of all the controversy, it doesn't look as though the name or the bag is going anywhere anytime soon. And now, you'll always have something interesting to talk about when you see someone carrying this highly recognizable bag design!

Style - This bag rose to prominence with designers again in the mid-2010s and shows no signs of slowing down. The slouchy silhouette of this bag is great for casual wear and shows up most prominently with the Bohemian style. Hobo bags will occasionally be designed to stand upright and regularly eschew the strap for handles with a longer drop.

Kelly Bag

The Kelly bag is named after Princess Grace of Monaco, who was known first as A-list actress Grace Kelly. Though she appeared in many films as a Hollywood glamor girl, Grace Kelly is best known for being an American who married European royalty. Kelly was truly the first real-life fairytale princess to capture the public attention, long before Kate Middleton and Meghan

Markle were ever born. The Kelly bag is a Hermes bag that was so associated with Princess Grace, it was renamed in her honor.

History - Grace Kelly was a fashion icon. The actress was widely known for her glamorous style and known for carrying a Hermes bag. Specifically, Kelly liked the trapezoid-shaped Sac a depeches bag, which had been released by Hermes in the 1930s. An extremely well-known photo of the Princess was taken early in her marriage where she is seen carrying the bag, which she used to hide her stomach from the paparazzi. Princess Grace was pregnant with her first child at the time. The photo and the bag became legendary. The photograph was seen all over the world and Kelly's Hermes bag is front and center in the picture. The public quickly re-branded the bag the "Kelly bag" and every woman wanted to have it. Women all over the U.S. and Europe ran out to buy the bag and Hermes started making as many as they could to meet the demand.

Style - The Kelly bag is still extremely popular in women's bags. It has a flat bottom and a short carrying handle. The Kelly bag is usually made in a simple, elegant material in a pretty, relatively unadorned design. If you want something classic and highly fashionable, the Kelly bag is the perfect bag for you.

Kiondo Bag

True Kiondo bags are made in Kenya by various Bantu tribes in the region. The word kiondo itself means "something where you keep your valuable stuff." These bags are handwoven from Sisal threads and fitted with leather handles. Kiondo bags are made to be large to carry many items. The bags are a big part of the local economy in Kenya, where they are woven in a variety of color and pattern combinations.

Style - The Kiondo bag has become a hot fashion item in women's bags because it's made with renewable resources. The Sisal plant used to weave the bag is never fully depleted because the weaving materials are harvested from the plant's outer layers.

Knot Bag

The knot bag has a very simple but extremely ingenious design. The knot bag is typically made of fabric and it's so simple, you can actually make your own knot bag whenever you need a roomy, casual handbag that's perfect for a day out.

Style - The knot bag is made in a curving design that somewhat resembles a bib when it's laying out flat. The bag is made with two loop handles, one on either side, that are made from the same material as the rest of the bag. One of these handles is slightly longer than the other. This allows you to carry the knot bag in a unique way that actually gives this bag its name. To close the knot bag, the longer handle loop is placed through the shorter loop. The longer loop can now be carried around the wrist. This unique way of closing and carrying the bag is what gives the knot bag its name.

Messenger Bag

The messenger bag isn't just an icon of fashion...it's a TV icon, too. In the famous Seinfeld episode "The Reverse Peephole," Jerry Seinfeld is seduced by the practical fashion of the "European carryall," which is really a messenger bag. Also known as a **man purse** or **murse**, the messenger bag has been carried by men and women both. It's made an appearance on the battlefield, on the runway and even on your favorite TV shows.

History - The messenger bag is a simple design. It's a bag, usually somewhat square in shape, with a single shoulder strap that can be worn on one side or can be worn crossbody fashion across the shoulder, chest and hip. It's actually an extremely old design that dates through the centuries. Messenger bags were carried by ancient Roman soldiers and it's been used to haul stuff around ever since.

Variation - The messenger bag is just an updated version of the **satchel bag**, a large bag with a foldover flap that was standard-issue for U.S. soldiers during WWI and WWII. Legendary film character Indiana Jones carries a satchel on his various adventures, proving that the satchel bag can be hella masculine. The satchel is pretty much the quintessential business bag and resembles a cross between a messenger bag and a saddlebag. The classic satchel will feature a flat bottom with stiff sides that allow it to stand upright, though it generally is not one of the larger bags. On top of that, the satchel bag has a foldover top with a clasp closure that both saddlebags and messenger bags favor. Finally, it also comes with a long strap to wear crossbody but also has a handle for versatility.

Style - The messenger is actually one of the few handbags that are appreciated by both men and women, though the two genders' messenger bags will often differ a bit. Specifically, women's messenger bags have a tendency to be on the smaller side. On top of that, these bags usually have a foldover top that is closed with a clasp. This bag will also generally have a

fairly long strap that allows it to be worn as a crossbody bag. This bag can be both casual or business, but it is rarely suitable for formal wear.

Modern Style - According to HeSpokeStyle, the modern messenger bag was designed in the 1950s by a company specializing in canvas products. They created the bag specifically for telephone linemen to make tools easily accessible while they work. Modern messenger bags are made in a variety of materials and vary in size. They've become a popular accessory for students and office workers of all gender identities as a briefcase alternative. So call it a carryall, call it a purse, call it whatever you want. By any name, the messenger bag is here to stay.

Minaudiere

You probably didn't know the name, and definitely not how to pronounce it, but you've seen the minaudiere clutch lots of times. This is one of the oldest clutch styles that became extremely popular in the 1920s and 1930s. Unlike other clutch designs, minaudieres are hard, box-like clutches that are designed to look like a piece of jewellery. In fact, a jewellery designer created this clutch style.

History - The minaudiere was inspired by socialite Florence Gould, who was known for carrying her belongings in a metal cigarette case. Jewellery maker Van Cleef & Arpels created the minaudiere, inspired by her style. Other jewellery makers, including Tiffany and Cartier, released their own designs.

Modern Style - Softer clutch styles are more popular now and minaudiere designs are not easy to find. However, some jewelry makers will still make these items as custom orders. These clutches are made with high-end materials and painstakingly designed, which commands a luxury price tag. This is technically not a "bag" and is instead a case as noted by the hinged design. Regardless, the minaudiere is meant to make a statement, especially on formal occasions. Often about the size of a clutch or envelope clutch, the minaudiere will feature stiff sides that are usually embellished with some kind of glittering accent. On occasion, this type of bag will come with a strap that is long enough to provide an elegant drop.

Muff

The muff isn't seen a ton these days, but this is definitely a famous winter accessory that's associated with wealth and glamor and old-time paintings featuring horses pulling people in sleds through the snow. But muffs have always been used as a winter purse. In modern designs, purse muffs are available in a huge variety of colors and styles.

History - The muff is pretty much synonymous with Victorian fashion, but it actually dates to 1570, according to Fashion History Timeline. Fur was totally trendy at this time and many accessories were being made with this material, including cylindrical handbags that were open and roomy on either side with a storage compartment in the middle. Muffs are both hand warmers and handbags, which makes them extremely practical for any winter's day. Muffs were so popular that both men and women used them in the 1600s. By the time the 1800s dawned, however, they had become exclusively a female accessory.

Style - Muffs made it back into popular fashion in the modern era, appearing on runways and in an episode of "Sex & the City," which pretty much made muffs an "it" accessory. The newest muff designs are made to look even more like handbags, often with visible pockets and flaps.

Pochette

The pochette was first created by iconic designer Louis Vuitton and sparked a style craze in the 1990s. This was an "it" bag for the era. Derived from the French word for pocket, the pochette is a small bag with a carry handle and it set the style world on fire. All the "it" girls of the era had a pochette, distinct for its mini size.

Reticule

The reticule was one of the earliest fashion handbags, used as much for style as it was used to hold small items. Reticules were very small purses made of leather or cloth that were often highly embellished, often made to match specific gowns.

History - Reticules were exclusively carried by women, who did not have pockets in their clothing to store items such as hand fans, gloves and face powder. Reticules were often finished with ribbons, which women tied around their wrists.

Modern Style - Reticules evolved into the more modern handbag styles we have today. However, the tiny purse trend has appeared in the fashion world again and again. Tiny handbags are super chic, proving that fashion really does repeat its best trends.

Quilted Bag

The fashion game changed when Coco Chanel debuted the 2.55 handbag, which is already responsible for another type of bag on this list. With this bag, the Chanel brand launched itself as a serious trendsetter in the world of handbags. The flap bag is now iconic but so is another important style element that is now considered to be strictly Chanel: the quilted design. Today, any Chanel bag displaying the diamond stitch pattern may be called a quilted bag. However, not every quilted bag is also a Chanel.

Saddle Bag

The saddle bag, or saddlebag, is a fairly new handbag style. The saddlebag handbag takes its namesake from the fact that it is based on the traditional saddlebags used before automobiles. These bags are usually fairly large and have more capacity than most. The saddlebag is also the handbag least likely to be made from fabrics and favors leather instead.

History - The saddle bag was presented on the runway by Dior in 1999 and instantly set the fashion world on fire. Soon, the likes of style icons like Sarah Jessica Parker were seen carrying the bag, cementing the saddle bag in fashion history. These bags have since become some of the most high-end leather handbags on the fashion scene.

Style - This bag has a top that folds over and closes with a clasp like a messenger bag. Saddlebags have a softer, rounded bottom with a short carrying handle. Needless to say, this is almost strictly a casual bag. It has become one of the most popular women's handbag styles, despite being somewhat new on the fashion scene.

Speedy Bag

Often, fashion designers inspire celebrities to wear the latest fashions, get the trendy accessories and create amazing looks. But sometimes, it's the celebrities who inspire the designers. Such is the case with the Louis Vuitton speedy bag. Though the bag's origins date to the 1920s, the modern version of the speedy bag exists thanks to style icon Audrey Hepburn.

History - The origin of the speedy is the keepall, a bag offered by Vuitton in 1924. This bag had a silhouette much like a classic duffel, but smaller in size. The keepall was made of canvas so that it could easily be folded and placed in a suitcase when not in use. Vuitton began offering the bag in a monogram canvas, setting the stage for the more modern speedy that would follow.

In 1930, Vuitton introduced the express, a somewhat smaller version of the keepall. This became known as the speedy. However, the bag would go through one more change before it achieved fame as an “it” bag. Film legend and fashion icon Audrey Hepburn liked the speedy bag, but it wasn’t quite perfect. She asked Louis Vuitton to create the bag in an even smaller version to turn it into more of a handbag and less of a piece of luggage. This request changed women’s handbags and made style history. Vuitton created the Speedy 25, offering the bag in leather and providing the world with a go-to high fashion bag for decades.

Style - The speedy bag is a triangular handbag with a flat bottom and two carry handles. In the classic design, it’s made with monogrammed Louis Vuitton leather or canvas with contrasting handles, also made with leather. Since Louis Vuitton created the classic silhouette, many others have offered their own version of the speedy bag. However, the Vuitton speedy will always be the original and the most-coveted among style seekers. This is the perfect handbag to have when you want a conversation piece.

Tote Bag

Tote bags are pretty much everywhere. Often called **shopping bag**, **shopper bag** or **beach bag**, this is generally one of the largest types of handbags. You probably have at least one of these ubiquitous bags. They’re given away in cloth versions for promotions, they’re used as grocery bags and they’re even available in super-expensive high fashion designs. But it wasn’t a high-end label or a famous couture designer who made the tote bag a popular fashion item. The tote bag can thank L.L. Bean for its popularity.

History - Tote bags really have been around for a long, long time. The word tote itself, meaning “to carry,” dates to the 1600s. The bag was carried in the U.S. in the 1800s. In the 1940s, L.L. Bean, known primarily for providing outdoor clothing items, made the tote bag famous. In 1944, L.L. Bean introduced the ice bag, a precursor of the tote bag. Later, L.L. Bean introduced the now-iconic boat bag. This is the tote bag blueprint that so many others have followed. L.L. Bean’s boat bag is made of canvas in a simple, open design with large, contrasting canvas handles that are sewn directly to the outside of the bag. The L.L. Bean boat

bag also has an extra piece of fabric around the bottom of the bag that extends up only about one inch all the way around, creating a distinct look that has been mimicked many times over.

Style - The bottom of a tote bag will sit flat on the ground with the sides rising high, though the sides need not be stiff. This type of bag will generally use a set of longer handles allowing it to be carried by hand or on the shoulder. The size of this bag generally relegates it to more casual wear, but it does often provide the largest average capacity. Canvas totes seem to be everywhere, but leather tote bag styles exist, too.

Trapezoid Bag

The trapezoid handbag is a relative newcomer on the fashion scene. This bag is notable for its distinct shape, sort of like an accordion handbag with the sides already pushed out instead of folded in. In a trapezoid bag, the sides extend outward so they are wider than the base, tapering outward so that the sides are biggest at the top of the bag, which has a very wide mouth and short carrying handle.

Wristlet

This may or may not be its own kind of handbag depending on who you ask. The wristlet is really a type of clutch design that comes with a short strap meant to be worn around the wrist. More often than not, the wristlet will favor the smaller envelope clutch silhouette or have a zippered, accordion design with sides that expand.

Variation - The **bracelet bag** has only relatively recently burst onto the fashion scene. This stylized wristlet deviates from the classic clutch silhouette, though they still have a strap that slips on over the wrist. Bracelet bags tend to have more vertical styles, rather than horizontal, and look quite a bit like mini tote bags in terms of shape.

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