



# THE STORY OF CHANEL

– Extra

## Level 3

This level is suitable for students who have been learning English for at least three years and up to four years. It corresponds with the Common European Framework level B1. Suitable for users of TEAM magazine.

## SYNOPSIS

*The Story of Chanel* tells the story of one of the world's most famous fashion houses. It all began with the birth of the company's founder, Gabrielle Chanel, to a poor family in the west of France in 1883. After her mother's death, the young Chanel was brought up in an orphanage run by nuns. When she left school, she worked in a shop, and then as a singer in local clubs. It was there that Gabrielle acquired her nickname 'Coco'.

Her life changed dramatically when she met a man called Balsan. She went to live at his grand home and was introduced to the world of French 'society'. Around this time she started to design and make her first clothes – hats – and sell them to society women. Soon she had opened her first clothes shop in Paris. This was followed by another shop in the fashionable seaside town of Deauville and then another in Biarritz. Chanel's practical yet elegant designs were becoming more and more popular. In the 1920s she also turned her attention to perfume, and after the launch of Chanel No. 5 her perfume business was a great success too. Over the years, she introduced lots of new fashions that are still popular today, for example short hair and trousers for women, fake jewellery, and the little black dress.

Chanel was friends with an exciting group of creative people in Paris, including artist Pablo Picasso, composer Igor

Stravinsky and writer Jean Cocteau. However, her love life was not always happy. She had serious relationships with several men – some of them members of the British and Russian aristocracy – but she never married.

During World War Two, Chanel closed her fashion house. When the war ended, the fashion world was very different and Chanel had to fight to prove she was still on top. She did this with a new collection in 1954, which was a big hit around the world. Chanel lived until the age of eighty-seven, and she continued working until the end of her life. After that, Karl Lagerfeld became head designer at Chanel, and the fashion house continues to be one of the most successful in the world.

## MEDIA LINKS

**DVD:** The film *Coco Before Chanel* (2009) tells the story of Chanel's early life. *Coco Chanel & Igor Stravinsky* (2009) shows her when she is already a successful fashion designer.

**CD:** A recording of *The Story of Chanel* is available on CD to accompany the Scholastic Reader.

**Internet:** The Chanel website is at [www.chanel.com](http://www.chanel.com).

**Books:** There are many accounts of Chanel's life. One of the best ones is *Coco Chanel: the Legend and the Life* by Justine Picardie.

## HOW TO USE YOUR SCHOLASTIC READER

### Choosing and motivating

Is this the right story for your class? Are the students interested in the history of fashion? Do they know anything about Coco Chanel and her influence on what we wear? Motivate them with background information (see the Synopsis above) and by reading aloud pages 6–7.

### Organising

Plan a class reading schedule. Decide how many pages to set for reading each week. Select exercises from the Self-Study section at the back of the reader and extra activities from this resource sheet to go with each chunk of reading. (All the answers can be found on page 4 of this resource sheet.)

### Using the CD

Students can listen and follow in their books. They can listen and then read. They can read and then listen. All these activities will improve their reading speeds and skills.

### Glossary

Go to 'New Words' at the back of the reader. Translate the words with the class or get students to find meanings at home. The Vocabulary Builder on page 3 of this resource sheet practises the new words in a different context.

### Fact Files

Set these as self-study or use for whole class work. These provide background information about current top designers, other jobs in the fashion industry, and the modern equivalent of 'high society' or the 'in crowd'.

### What did they think?

Get everyone to do a written or spoken review of *The Story of Chanel*. Compare opinions. Did you like it? Let us know at [readers@link2English.com](mailto:readers@link2English.com).

### COMPETITIONS AND UPDATES

Check [www.scholasticelreaders.com](http://www.scholasticelreaders.com) for competitions and other activities related to the Scholastic Readers.

RESOURCE SHEET STUDENT ACTIVITIES



THE STORY OF CHANEL

– Extra

People and places

1 Find words on pages 4–5 to complete these sentences.

- a) Coco’s real first name was *Gabrielle*.
- b) Chanel lived at an ..... in Aubazine.
- c) The city of ..... was Chanel’s home for most of her life.
- d) Chanel and Pierre Wertheimer started a ..... company together.
- e) Karl Lagerfeld was the House of Chanel’s main ..... after Coco Chanel died.
- f) Balsan lived in a ..... called Royallieu.
- g) Capel was from ..... but he lived in France.
- h) Chanel opened her first shop outside Paris in .....

Chanel: A Fashion Classic – Chapter 2

1 Circle the correct word in italics in these sentences.

- a) Coco Chanel was born in the *south* / *west* of France.
- b) As a girl, Gabrielle liked to go to the local *library* / *graveyard*.
- c) After Gabrielle left school, she worked as a *shop assistant* / *manager*.
- d) Balsan often gave *lessons* / *parties* at his house.
- e) In the Pyrenees, Chanel and Capel spent a lot of time *driving cars* / *riding horses* together.
- f) Capel and Chanel moved to *Paris* / *London* together.

2 Answer these questions.

- a) Who died in 1895? ..... *Chanel’s mother* .....
- b) Who was Louise? .....
- c) Who sang *Ko Ko Ki Ko* in clubs? .....
- d) What did Chanel and Balsan like to watch in Deauville? .....
- e) What clothes did Chanel make and sell to Balsan’s friends? .....
- f) Who did Chanel describe as ‘her father, her brother, her whole family’? .....

Chapters 3–5

1 Complete the sentences with the words in the box.

Boy Capel   Chanel’s business   Ernest Beaux   pearls  
Russian workers   World War One

- a) Capel secretly put more money into *Chanel’s business* ..
- b) When ..... began, the time was right for Chanel’s style of clothes.
- c) ..... died in a car accident.
- d) Chanel’s new perfume was made by .....
- e) Chanel gave jobs to many .....
- f) Chanel mixed real and artificial ..... together.

2 Look at ‘From Corsets to Trousers’ (pages 22–23) and match the sentence halves.

- |                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| a) From 1890 to 1914 women’s clothes | i) worked outside the home.             |
| b) Corsets made women’s waists       | ii) still look strong and fresh today.  |
| c) During World War One more women   | iii) before she sold them to customers. |
| d) Chanel had a suntan because       | iv) were usually not very practical.    |
| e) Chanel wore all of her new styles | v) she liked to play sports outside.    |
| f) Chanel’s designs                  | vi) look smaller.                       |

Chapters 6–8

1 Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)? Correct the false sentences in your notebook.

- a) La Pausa was Chanel’s new house in England.  F
- b) Bendor wanted to have a son.
- c) A lot of people lost money in the Wall Street Crash.
- d) Everyone loved Chanel’s designs for Hollywood.
- e) In 1936 Chanel’s workers stayed at home.
- f) Spatz was an officer in the French army.
- g) Chanel did not like to start her designs with a sketch.

2 In your notebook, change these sentences into indirect speech with the verb *told*.

- a) ‘Chanel’s new shop is the most exciting news this summer.’  
*Vogue told its readers that Chanel’s new shop was the most exciting news that summer.*
- b) ‘I don’t want your pearls!’
- c) ‘I’ll come with you to the US.’
- d) ‘You can stay at the Ritz Hotel with us.’
- e) ‘I’m not in prison, and I’m living in Switzerland.’

**RESOURCE SHEET STUDENT ACTIVITIES**

**3 Read 'The Stories Behind the Designs' (pages 36–7). Match the descriptions with the symbols.**

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| a) For Chanel, these were a sign of good luck.                           | i) lion's head |
| b) This was Chanel's favourite flower.                                   | ii) CC         |
| c) Chanel kept this in her flat instead of flowers.                      | iii) wheat     |
| d) This symbol is on Chanel's gravestone.                                | iv) camellia   |
| e) Some people think that this comes from the first letters of her name. | v) stars       |

**Chapters 9–10**

**1 Put these sentences in the right order.**

- a) Pierre Wertheimer told Chanel to continue designing clothes.
- b) In her last show, the fashion world celebrated her life and work.
- c) Chanel clothes became very popular with the rich and famous in the US.
- d) A London newspaper did not like Chanel's first collection after the war.  1
- e) Chanel died at the age of eighty-seven.
- f) The company started to sell watches.
- g) Alain Wertheimer became the boss of the company.

**2 Read about the Chanel look (page 50). Correct these sentences.**

- a) The skirt comes just <sup>below</sup> above the knees.
- b) Pearls must be real.
- c) Always wear pink lipstick.
- d) The shirt should have pockets.
- e) Keep your hair long.
- f) An elegant woman shouldn't wear perfume.

**FINAL TASKS**

**1 Look at the quotations by Coco Chanel at the start of each chapter. What does each one mean? Do you agree with it? Why or why not?**

**2 Look at the 'Classic Chanel designs' boxes in the book. Make a list of the three designs that you think most changed women's fashion. Compare with a partner and explain why you have chosen each design.**

**3 Choose an important moment from Chanel's life. Write a diary entry by Coco Chanel. Include what has happened and write how you feel about it.**

**4 Make a timeline of Coco Chanel's life. Choose the most important events. Then put the dates on a long line and write a caption for each date.**

**VOCABULARY BUILDER**

**1 Choose the correct word from the 'New Words' at the back of your reader.**

- 1. Rings and earrings are examples of this. ..... jewellery .....
- 2. People wear this to smell nice. .....
- 3. Children are taken here when they have no parents. .....
- 4. This is a woman who is part of the church. .....
- 5. This is a quick picture of something. .....
- 6. When people do this, they stop work. .....
- 7. This is a way of making clothes. .....
- 8. You can wear this around your head. .....
- 9. People can wear this to look thinner. .....
- 10. You use several of these to make a meal. .....
- 11. Many companies put this kind of small picture on the things that they make. .....
- 12. This is a line of colour on clothes. .....

**2 Complete the sentences.**

- 1. Our cat likes to play with a ball of ..... string .....
- 2. I love her beautiful ..... earrings.
- 3. They have a great ..... – they decide everything together.
- 4. I wear ..... clothes because I work outside a lot.
- 5. You usually have to be tall and thin to be a successful .....  
.....
- 6. She bought some ..... and made a beautiful dress with it.
- 7. He had an ..... leg because he lost his real leg in the war.
- 8. There is always a big ..... on the factory gates at night.
- 9. He wore a wonderful ..... in our play.
- 10. She never goes out without ..... on her face.
- 11. Every month I put flowers on my grandfather's .....  
.....
- 12. She looked so ..... in her beautiful long dress.

## FACT FILE FOLLOW-UP

**FROM CORSETS TO TROUSERS (pages 22–3)****Picture gallery**

Ask students to use the library or the Internet to research women's fashions of the *belle époque* (the years from 1890 to 1914). Have them copy designs and create a picture gallery of the fashions of the period. They can write a caption for each picture.

**THE STORIES BEHIND THE DESIGNS (pages 36–7)****Stories behind the new designs**

Ask students to imagine that they are fashion designers. Have them choose three or four symbols that they could use again and again in their designs. They should present these symbols to the rest of the class and explain what personal meaning these symbols have for them.

**CHANEL AND THE STARS (pages 54–5)****Your product, your star**

In small groups, students choose a product or brand, for example a make-up brand, a car or a soft drink. They then choose a star to represent it. They give a short presentation to the class, explaining why they have chosen this person.

**TOP DESIGNERS (pages 56–7)****Designer profile**

Students write a profile of their favourite fashion designer. They should use the profiles in the Fact File as a model, and include pictures of the fashions if possible. Display the finished profiles on the wall and ask the class to choose their favourite.

**SO YOU WANT TO BE A FASHION DESIGNER? (pages 58–9)****Ideas file**

Ask students to start their own fashion ideas file, collecting design ideas from nature, buildings, other fashions, and so on. They can share their ideas file with the rest of the class and explain the reasons for their choices.

**Research**

Have students use the Internet or library to research other jobs in fashion, for example pattern maker, textile designer, fashion buyer, fashion editor, stylist.

**THE IN-CROWD (pages 60–1)****Tourist brochure**

In groups, students imagine they own a hotel, island or yacht that they want the in-crowd to stay in/on for their holidays. They decide on some features that will appeal to the rich and famous, for example 5km of private beach, a jacuzzi, or an all-night dance club. They then work together to write a short text for a tourist brochure, describing the destination and its key features.

**CD FOLLOW-UP****Listening for key words**

Choose five key words or phrases from a chapter of the reader and write them on the board. Students write down one piece of information to go with each of the key words while they listen.

*Example:* Chapter 3: 1. Rue Cambon 2. Deauville 3. World War One 4. Biarritz 5. December 23rd, 1919

*Possible answers:* 1. Chanel's first shop in Paris was on this street. 2. She opened her first shop outside Paris in this seaside town. 3. Chanel stayed in Deauville when this started. 4. Chanel's first true fashion house was in Biarritz. 5. Boy Capel died in a car accident on this day.

**ANSWER KEY****Self-Study Activities (pages 62–4)**

- 1 a) corset, jewellery b) model, nun c) elegant, practical
- 2 a) vii b) viii c) i d) ii e) iv f) iii g) v h) vi
- 3 a) No b) France c) perfume
- 4 a) Yes b) No c) Yes d) No e) No f) Yes
- 5 a) F. Coco's parents were poor.  
b) T  
c) F. Boy Capel was the 'love of her life'.  
d) F. Her first true fashion house was in Biarritz.  
e) F. White and blue striped shirts were usually worn by sailors.  
f) T
- 6 a) ingredient b) string, pearls c) relationship  
d) headband, logo e) artificial f) costumes
- 7 Open answers.
- 8 The correct order is: c, f, d, e, a, b.
- 9 a) up down b) actor film-maker c) mistake success  
d) France Italy e) London New York
- 10 a) strike b) sketch c) chain
- 11 Open answers.
- 12 a) iv b) ii c) vi d) i e) v f) iii g) vii
- 13 a) T  
b) T. But after a time, she moved back to her own flat.  
c) F. Churchill refused to meet Chanel in Spain.  
d) F. It was more popular in the US than in France.  
e) T  
f) F. She thought they should come below the knees.  
g) F. The company introduced ready-to-wear clothes after Chanel's death.
- 14 Open answers.

**Resource Sheet Activities****People and places**

- 1 b) orphanage c) Paris d) perfume e) designer f) house  
g) England h) Deauville

**Chanel: A Fashion Classic – Chapter 2**

- 1 b) graveyard c) shop assistant d) parties e) riding horses  
f) Paris
- 2 b) Gabrielle's aunt c) Gabrielle/Coco Chanel d) horse racing  
e) hats f) Boy Capel

**Chapters 3–5**

- 1 b) World War One c) Boy Capel d) Ernest Beaux  
e) Russian workers f) pearls
- 2 b) vi c) i d) v e) iii f) ii

**Chapters 6–8**

- 1 a) F. La Pausa was her new house in France.  
b) T  
c) T  
d) F. Some people said the clothes were too quiet and elegant for Hollywood.  
e) F. They came to the workrooms but they didn't do any work.  
f) F. Spatz was an officer in the German army.  
g) T
- 2 b) Chanel told Bendor that she didn't want his pearls.  
c) Misia told Chanel that she would come with her to the US.  
d) The Germans told Chanel that she could stay at the Ritz Hotel with them.  
e) Spatz told Chanel that he wasn't in prison and he was living in Switzerland.
- 3 b) iv c) iii d) i e) ii

**Chapters 9–10**

- 1 The correct order is: d, a, c, e, b, g, f.
- 2 b) must don't have to c) pink red d) shirt suit e) long short  
f) shouldn't should

**Vocabulary Builder**

- 1 2. perfume 3. orphanage 4. nun 5. sketch 6. strike 7. sew  
8. headband 9. corset 10. ingredient 11. logo 12. stripe
- 2 2. pearl 3. relationship 4. practical 5. model 6. fabric  
7. artificial 8. chain 9. costume 10. make-up 11. grave  
12. elegant