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# The History of Sunglasses

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sunglasses,sun glass

It may shock you to learn that sunglasses weren't always used to protect people's eyes from the sun. The history of sunglasses dates back to ancient China and Rome. It has been reported that the Roman emperor Nero enjoyed watching gladiator fights through polished gems. In China, sunglasses were used in the twelfth century or even earlier. Sunglasses were first made out of lenses that were flat panes of smoky quartz. These types of sunglasses could not correct vision, or protect from harmful UV rays, but did reduce glare. Chinese judges used the smoky quartz glasses to hide their facial expressions when they interrogated witnesses.

Sunglasses did not undergo further changes until about the eighteenth century because of the work of James Ayscough. He experimented with tinted lenses in spectacles. Ayscough was steadfast in the belief that glasses tinted with a blue or green color could potentially correct specific vision problems. Ayscough was not concerned with protecting the eyes from the sun's rays.

Sunglasses underwent the change into the popular item they are today when Sam Foster introduced them to America in 1929. These sunglasses were designed to protect people's eyes from the sun. Foster sold his sunglasses on the beaches of Atlantic City, New Jersey. Foster's sunglasses were sold at Woolworth on the boardwalk.

In 1936, sunglasses became polarized when Edwin H. Land began using his patented Polaroid filter when making sunglasses. Around this time, even more Americans started buying sunglasses. Famous movie stars and musicians also began to wear sunglasses. They started to become not only a way to protect against sun glare, but also a way to be "cool." Sunglasses became a cultural phenomenon, and some people wore them even when it wasn't sunny, or when they were indoors.

Today, sunglasses continue to have advances. UV protection has almost become an industry standard, and there are sunglasses available for a variety of sports. There are numerous tints available for sunglasses, and sunglasses have changed styles over the years. Prescription glasses have also been given tints that only appear when the sun's rays hit the glasses. In 2004, Oakley developed a brand of sunglasses that had a built-in digital audio player. Many blind people now wear sunglasses, and many recognizable celebrities can be found wearing sunglasses. Even fictional characters can be seen wearing them. Sunglasses have come a long way from their early Roman and Chinese history!

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