

18.1.21

Can I investigate and evaluate different
types of cushions?



Nowadays, cushions are an everyday item which most homes have. However, in the past, they were a **luxury** object, available only to the wealthiest of people – the more you owned, the richer you were seen to be. The earliest known use of cushions is around 7000BC, in the Mesopotamian civilisation. Both the fabric and the dye to colour it were very expensive, so cushions became ‘**artworks**’ that displayed a person’s taste and wealth.





This doesn't look too comfortable to me!

During the Egyptian period, around 3000BC, cushions took the form of **headrests**. They were raised platforms made from **wood** or **stone**. These hard cushions have been found in many Egyptian tombs, supporting the heads of the mummies.





At the time of the Jin Dynasty in China, around 350AD, hard cushions were still used. They were made out of materials such as **ceramic**, **bamboo**, **wood** and **bronze**. They were softened by laying **fabric** over them.



These cushions were still used in some parts of China as recently as the 1910s!





In Japan, cushions were not just used for supporting the head but as a form of **seating** as well. These large, flat cushions are called **zabutons**, and are still widely used today. They are roughly 50–70cm square – large enough to protect the sitter's knees and ankles from the floor.

By the Victorian period, around 1850AD, cushions were no longer luxuries only for the rich. Due to the **industrial revolution**, the producing and dyeing of fabric became easier, quicker and cheaper, which in turn meant that cushions were more **affordable**. Victorians used cushions to add both comfort and style to bedrooms, sofas and chairs.





In the present day, cushion usage is wide and varied. We have bean bags, inflatable cushions and even ring cushions for weddings!



Cushions can be designed to have both **functional** and **aesthetic** features.
Do you know what these terms mean?



Think, pair, then share your ideas.

Functional means it is practical
and useful.



Aesthetic refers to how appealing it
is to look at.

Can you explain how cushions can have **both** functional and aesthetic features?
Think, pair, then share your ideas.



Discuss the **functional** and **aesthetic** features of these cushions with a partner:



