



LEVIS: THE STORY OF BLUE JEANS

I. BEFORE YOU READ.

You are going to read an article about the origin of blue jeans. Before you read, find the meaning of the words below in a dictionary. Then use the words to complete the sentences underneath, using each word once only.

tailor canvas cotton cloth fabric overalls thread

- a. _____ is a material which comes from a plant grown in warm countries.
- b. We've decided on the style of our new sofa but we haven't chosen the _____ yet.
- c. Tents are often made from a heavy material called _____.
- d. Before Gary fixed the car, he put on his _____ to protect his clothes.
- e. Michaela needed some white _____ to sew the button on her blouse.
- f. For his wedding, Tim had his suit made by a _____.
- g. Abigail used some soapy water and a piece of _____ to clean the window.



LEVIS: THE STORY OF BLUE JEANS

2. NOW READ THE ARTICLE AND ANSWER THE QUESTION BELOW.

The article has been divided into four parts, A, B, C and D. For each part of the article, select the best subtitle from the list below.

The Solution is Rivets!

A Legal Partnership.

The Levi's Brand is Launched

Levi Strauss Goes West

The Birth of Blue Jeans

A _____
Levi Strauss came to San Francisco in 1853 to open a west coast branch of his brother's New York textile business. He was 24 years old and had spent a number of years learning the trade in New York after emigrating there from his native Germany. Shortly after his arrival in San Francisco, a tailor by the name of Jacob Davis asked what Mr Strauss was selling. When Strauss told him he had canvas to use for tents, Mr Davis said, "You should have brought pants!." Davis explained that he couldn't find a pair of pants strong enough for the local miners to wear. Levi Strauss thought this was an interesting idea and had the canvas made into waist overalls for Davis. Davis supplied the new pants to local miners who liked them, but complained that they were uncomfortable to wear. So, Levi Strauss replaced the canvas with a cotton cloth from France called "serge de Nimes." The fabric later became known as denim.



LEVIS: THE STORY OF BLUE JEANS

B _____

Denim became popular with the miners. However, among Davis's customers was a difficult man who kept ripping the pockets of the pants that were supplied to him. Davis tried to think of a way to strengthen the man's trousers, and one day came up with the idea of putting metal rivets at the points where the pants ripped most easily. These riveted pants were an instant success, but Davis worried that someone might steal this great idea. He decided he should patent the process, but didn't have the \$68 that was required to make the formal application to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office .

C _____

Davis needed a business partner and he immediately thought of Levi Strauss. In 1872 Davis wrote a letter to Levi Strauss to suggest that the two men hold the patent together. Strauss, who was an astute businessman, saw the potential for this new product and agreed to Davis's proposal. On May 20, 1873, the two men received patent no. 139, 121 from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. That day is now considered to be the official "birthday" of blue jeans.

D _____

The "Levi's" brand that we know today was not the idea of Strauss or Davis. It originated with the public, just as the public invented the term "Coke" for Coca-Cola. But when the public started referring to the pants generically as "Levi's," the company quickly trademarked the name. No item of clothing is more American than the blue jeans invented and perfected in the last quarter of the 19th century by Jacob Davis and Levi Strauss. These two visionary immigrants turned denim, thread and a little metal into the most popular clothing product in the world – blue jeans.



LEVIS: THE STORY OF BLUE JEANS

3. STUDY THE VERBS FOUND IN THE ARTICLE.

The words in list A are verbs from the article. Choose the correct definition for each verb from list B.

A	B
complain	tear or make a hole in something
rip	have the official right to be the only one to produce something
supply	register the name of a product so that you are the only one who can use that name
strengthen	provide somebody with something
patent	say that you are unhappy or dissatisfied about something
trademark	make something stronger

The following expressions are used in the article:

"You should have brought pants!"

"..kept ripping the pockets of the pants.."

Complete the rules for these constructions using these phrases: *should have + past participle* ; *keep verb+ing*

We use _____ to say that someone does something continuously and repeatedly.

We use _____ to say that someone did the wrong thing in the past.



LEVIS: THE STORY OF BLUE JEANS

4. READ THE TEXT AGAIN.

Decide if the statements below are true (T) or false (F).

	T	F
Strauss was born in New York City	___	___
Strauss came to San Francisco with the intention of making pants for miners.	___	___
Davis had the idea of putting metal rivets in the pants.	___	___
Strauss was looking for a business partner when he met Davis.	___	___
Strauss could see the commercial possibilities of Davis's idea.	___	___
The Coca-Cola Company didn't invent the 'Coke' trademark.	___	___

5. EXPRESSION.

What kind of clothes do you like wearing? Do you have favourite colours or materials? What would you wear to a family wedding? What would you wear on a picnic with friends?